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# O LUGAR DO *ANIMAL SYMBOLICUM* NO MUNDO CONTEMPORÂNEO

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## Resumo

Aponta-se à reflexão sobre a relação entre o simbólico e as mudanças sociais, culturais e políticas, colocando o homo symbolicus como figura de proa na compreensão nas dinâmicas de poder e identidade nos dias de hoje. Explora-se o conceito de animal symbolicum como abordagem para compreender o ser humano na sociedade contemporânea. Ao abordar as noções de símbolo assim como de linguagem, este texto examina como estes elementos moldam a identidade, a política e as relações sociais no contexto contemporâneo. Tendo como ponto de partida as perspetivas teóricas de autores como Ernst Cassirer, procura-se contribuir para um melhor entendimento sobre quais são as consequências do simbólico como elemento central na construção do sujeito e nas dinâmicas políticas atuais, destacando a relação entre o simbólico, o poder e a governança.

## Palavras-chave

Perceção, Simbólico, Identidade, Contemporaneidade, Poder.

## Abstract

It aims to reflect on the relationship between the symbolic and social, cultural and political changes, placing *homo symbolicus* as a figurehead in the understanding of the dynamics of power and identity today. The concept of *animal symbolicum* is explored as an approach to understand the human being in contemporary society. By addressing the notions of symbol as well as language, this text examines how these elements shape identity, politics, and social relations in the contemporary context. Taking as a starting point the theoretical perspectives of authors such as Ernst Cassirer, it seeks to contribute to a better understanding of what are the consequences of the symbolic as a central element in the construction of the subject and in current political dynamics, highlighting the relationship between the symbolic, power and governance.

## Keywords

Perception, Symbolic, Identity, Contemporaneity, Power.

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# O LUGAR DO *ANIMAL SYMBOLICUM* NO MUNDO CONTEMPORÂNEO

**BRUNO J. M. BESSA**

## Introdução

Uma premissa fundamental é a de que o ser humano é, na sua essência, um animal simbólico. Pode-se verificar isto mesmo em tradições filosóficas e antropológicas, e é esta premissa que permite sustentar que a capacidade humana de criar, de comunicar e de interpretar símbolos não é apenas um atributo acessório, mas antes uma das características estruturantes da nossa existência. O conceito de *animal symbolicum* diz exatamente respeito a esta capacidade singular que distingue os seres humanos dos restantes animais: a habilidade de infundir o mundo de significados e de significantes que nos orientam, que recheiam as interações sociais e que nos permitem construir identidades. Por outras palavras, o ser humano não se limita a viver a realidade, mas permite-se a construí-la continuamente através de representações simbólicas. Se, no passado, o ser humano se adaptava ao mundo, hoje, ele cria e reorganiza o mundo através dos símbolos.

Cassirer (1944) define o ser humano como um *animal symbolicum* pois na sua perspetiva a diferença mais básica em relação aos outros seres é a sua capacidade de produzir signos e símbolos na relação com o mundo (p. 50). Nesta capacidade de criação e pensamento simbólico está a base para o animal político ou o *animal rationale* visto que se relacionam.

O conceito de *animal symbolicum* coloca a produção simbólica no centro da experiência humana, que representa a capacidade única do ser humano de conferir significados, seja através da linguagem, de imagens, da arte ou das instituições. Ernst Cassirer (1944) diz-nos que a cultura se constrói basicamente através de símbolos. Os símbolos não são apenas representações de qualquer coisa, eles detêm um poder simultaneamente transformador e estruturante, detêm em si algo de transcendente. Na nossa sociedade os símbolos que nos veiculam à realidade estão em constante mudança, tornando-se relevante compreender como representações das várias realidades nos moldam a ação, visão e, consequentemente, as relações de poder. O simbólico e a sua construção não se constitui como algo apenas subjetivo como apêndice da vida social, trata-se efetivamente como uma parte integrante da construção do real social como processo tanto individual como coletivo.

Explora-se o conceito de *homo symbolicus* como perspetiva fulcral na leitura do papel dos símbolos na própria constituição enquanto indivíduos e nas dinâmicas de poder e

identidade na sociedade. À medida que as camadas sociais se transformam devido a fenómenos tais como a globalização, a inovação tecnológica e a comunicação digital, a importância do simbólico aumenta consideravelmente. Desta forma, os significados que medeiam as relações (sociais, culturais e políticas) estão em constante mudança, sendo permanentemente reinterpretados e negociados. Todos os campos do real social encontram-se interligados com as transformações simbólicas, desde questões políticas, questões relacionadas com a identidade individual e também coletiva, bem como as próprias experiências sociais individuais. O estudo do *homo symbolicus* torna-se parte fundamental neste quadro para uma melhor compreensão dos desafios que marcam o século XXI, tanto no seio dos Estados como na arena internacional.

Cassirer (1929) afirma que os sujeitos não recebem e transformam os dados sensíveis, mas os recebem já impregnados de significado.

> *por "pregnância simbólica" há de entender-se o modo como uma vivência perceptual, isto é, considerada como vivência "sensível" entranha ao mesmo tempo um determinado "significado" não intuitivo que é representado concreta e imediatamente por ela* (p. 238).

A questão com a qual se lida a seguir centra-se, portanto, na forma como os símbolos moldam as interações ou relações sociais e a política, quer no panorama interno dos Estados, quer nas relações internacionais. O pilar está nas obras de autores como Ernst Cassirer, famoso por conceber o ser humano como essencialmente simbólico e Clifford Geertz, que proporcionou uma visão antropológica da cultura como sistema de significados partilhados. O conceito de *animal symbolicum* de Ernst Cassirer deve ser colocado em análise de acordo com a nova realidade social e política vigente no mundo, em que os símbolos desempenha um papel ativo na sua construção e não se tratam apenas de representações de uma realidade subjetiva.

Uma questão que é e será cada vez mais importante, é a relação entre simbolismo e identidade. A identidade, amplamente vista como algo fixo e atribuído de forma automática, pode ser hoje percecionada como algo fluido que é moldado constantemente através de negociações permanentes de significados. Nesta aldeia global, as identidades cruzam-se, sejam elas culturais, nacionais, de género ou de classe, levando a que os indivíduos sejam forçados a reconstruir identidades devido aos símbolos difundidos, partilhados e por eles próprios renegociados. Esta permanente reconstrução torna-se dilatada pelo espaço público digital criado pelas redes sociais. Neste espaço a identidade é afirmada e moldada por um ciclo de visibilidade versus invisibilidade simbólica. O *homo symbolicus* contemporâneo é um sujeito ativo na emissão de significados altamente suscetível aos símbolos que existem no universo digital.

Um aspeto é explorado neste artigo consiste na governança simbólica. Trata-se de um conceito que se destina a descrever a forma sobre como o poder se exerce através de uma consistente e intensa manipulação de representações culturais e simbólicas. O poder não consiste apenas uso ou ameaça do uso da força coerciva ou da coação às normas, mas, nos dias de hoje, da capacidade de influenciar a realidade, de construir e legitimar as interpretações almejadas da realidade já que

ideational rather than material forces shape the social world in the first instance; agents and structures are mutually constitutive; internalisation and social learning legitimise and reproduce social reality; and symbols and symbolic power are central to this (Theiler, 2005: p. 15).

Esta governança simbólica aponta ao controlo da perceção, através da internalização de significados para garantir o consenso e o consentimento generalizado às estruturas de poder criadas. O *homo symbolicus* é assim ator social imerso profundamente nas lógicas simbólicas que estão por detrás do tecido organizacional da sociedade.

Para a compreensão da condição do *homo symbolicus* no seio das sociedades contemporâneas, é essencial reconhecer que o mundo simbólico, apesar de estar longe da realidade objetiva, é em si mesma a base sobre a qual se estruturam as relações, sociais e políticas, ou entre indivíduos e destes com as instituições.

Ao longo das próximas linhas procura-se entender mais aprofundadamente como é que as dinâmicas simbólicas se ligam a formas de poder e de identidade no mundo contemporâneo.

## *Animal Symbolicum* entre definições e fundamentos

O conceito de *animal symbolicum* apesar de o parecer não se reduz a uma abstração filosófica. Trata-se, acima de tudo, de um conceito capaz de se colocar no centro da discussão do ser humano enquanto elemento constituinte de sociedades e da sua relação com o mundo. No decorrer da História, alguns paradigmas, quer de carácter filosófico, quer de carácter antropológico, visaram destrinçar o ser humano dos restantes animais pela sua habilidade de simultaneamente criar e de manipular símbolos. A ideia do ser humano enquanto ser fundamentalmente simbólico pode ser originalmente vista em Ernst Cassirer, que, no início do século XX, apresentou uma abordagem sui generis sobre o tema. O autor considerou o símbolo como o fator decisivo na constituição da cultura e do próprio ser considerando-o, mais do que racional um ser simbólico. Para Cassirer, o ser humano não se limita a interagir com o meio que o rodeia de forma direta como ser biológico, mas também a transformar a sua realidade através de sistemas simbólicos, como a linguagem, a mitologia, a arte, etc. O autor argumenta assim que a cultura é toda uma complexa rede de significados, cujos símbolos não se limitam a um papel de representação, mas como instrumentos estruturais à própria experiência humana.

## Ernst Cassirer: A essência do simbólico

O filósofo Ernst Cassirer estabeleceu um marco ao desenvolver o conceito de *animal symbolicum*, representando o ser humano como ser simbólico por excelência. Na obra Filosofia das Formas Simbólicas (1956), Cassirer explora o *universo simbólico* onde os seres humanos vivem, por outras palavras, o ser humano filtra e reinterpreta o mundo que o rodeia através de sistemas de significados. Desta forma, o ser humano não é mero observador no mundo, vive uma realidade envolvida em símbolos e é um criador de realidades através de significados. Linguagem, arte, ou religião são, de acordo com Cassirer, expressões simbólicas que, moldam – cada uma à sua maneira e todas em

conjunto – as experiências humanas. Para Cassirer (1956) o conhecimento do mundo pelo ser humano dá-se através das formas simbólica.

> *por "forma simbólica" há de entender-se aqui toda a energia do espírito em cuja virtude um conteúdo espiritual de significado é vinculado a um signo sensível concreto e lhe é atribuído interiormente. Neste sentido, a linguagem, o mundo mítico-religioso e a arte se nos apresentam como outras tantas formas simbólicas particulares* (p. 163).

Cada forma simbólica oferece uma forma própria de compreender e modificar a realidade, permitindo transcender a simples perceção sensorial. Desta forma, o símbolo não é mais um simples elemento do mundo, mas um importante instrumento de construção da realidade para o ser humano. A linguagem, uma das formas simbólicas, deixa de ser meramente utilizada para descrever o mundo e torna-se ferramenta para construção, uma vez que moldam o entendimento das sobre as coisas. Ao explorarmos ainda mais as formas simbólicas, a arte e a religião, são formas simbólicas que entendem, exprimem e transmitem aspetos da existência do ser humano aos quais não se conseguem ter acesso pela razão ou pelos sentidos. Cassirer abandona uma posição algo exclusiva sobre o ser humano como ser puramente racional e abraça o lado simbólico, colocando-o no cerne da existência humana. O *animal symbolicum* alia ao ser racional uma aptidão natural de criar e interpretar significados que o permitem estruturar uma determinada visão que se estende a toda a realidade.

## Clifford Geertz: A cultura e os significados

Ainda que Cassirer tenha sido fundamental no estudo do simbólico, o aprofundamento de determinadas formas simbólicas continuou com outros autores. A conceção da cultura como sistema simbólico foi desenvolvida por autores como Cliford Geertz. Este autor propôs, na obra A Interpretação das Culturas (1973), uma perspetiva antropológica na análise da cultura colocando os símbolos como no âmago desta. A cultura é um "*sistema de significados*" (Geertz, 2008: p. 4) partilhados, que norteia as práticas sociais e a organização social. A cultura é desta forma vista como um processo de construção de significados coletivos, que envolvem os indivíduos e através do qual é possível a construção das suas identidades.

Como sistemas entrelaçados de signos interpretáveis (...) a cultura não é um poder, algo ao qual podem ser atribuídos casualmente os acontecimentos sociais, os comportamentos, as instituições ou os processos; ela é um contexto, algo dentro do qual eles podem ser descritos de forma inteligível – isto é, descritos com densidade (Geertz, 2008: p. 10)

Deste modo a cultura não é apenas a soma dos comportamentos ou instituições, mas transforma-se numa complexa rede de símbolos, capaz de moldar o comportamento humano. Geertz (1973) faz uso da expressão *teia de significados* de modo a ilustrar como os indivíduos vivem ligados uns aos outros e estes a um mundo simbólico que se traduz na interpretação e reinterpretação de significados, "*à procura do significado*" (Geertz, 2008: p. 4). À cultura deixa de estar reservado o plano secundário no qual as ações do indivíduo tomam forma, mas o meio pelo qual essas ações têm sentido. Esta postura em

relação à cultura enfatiza a interpretação dos símbolos como um processo coletivo, com repercussão nos grupos e nas sociedades, recusando o fenómeno como meramente subjetivo ou sem repercussão na vida ativa dos indivíduos. Ao interpretar a cultura como sistema simbólico, o autor demonstra o quão importante é a envolvência na produção e partilha dos significados, o que nos diz que as identidades culturais são algo sempre sujeito a reinterpretação e não fixo.

## Linguagem: o campo de batalha do simbolismo

A relação entre identidade, linguagem e poder torna-se numa tríade que se pode designar como fundamental ao analisar o ser humano enquanto ser simbólico. A linguagem configura-se como campo de batalha do simbolismo ao invés de simples meio de comunicação. A linguagem carrega significados que vão além do que palavras e expressões significam, a linguagem detém em si própria poder e controlo. Em Foucault (2008) a linguagem é em si própria um dispositivo de poder, pois quem controla a produção dos significados controla também a perceção e por sua vez a ação social.

o enunciado circula, serve, se esquiva, permite ou impede a realização de um desejo, é dócil ou rebelde a interesses, entra na ordem das contestações e das lutas, torna-se tema de apropriação ou de rivalidade (Foucault, 2008: p. 124)

Nesta senda de percebemos que os discursos, várias vezes contraditórios, multiplicam-se constantemente, essencialmente na esfera publica digital e mediática, o simbolismo na linguagem é uma das armas mais importantes na construção da realidade e na legitimação das estruturas existentes de poder. Por mais que o quiséssemos a linguagem não é neutra. Drulak (2006) refere que nas Ciências Sociais "... *language is seen not only as a simple mirror of social reality but as a médium of its own, wich contributes to the very constitution of the social reality*" (p. 3). A linguagem detém em si mesma a capacidade de disputa e de negociação de relações de poder. Na política a influência dos símbolos, através de slogans, imagens ou discursos, tem esse intuito de legitimação de poder, de autoridade. O ser humano é assim ativo nesta construção simbólica através da linguagem até mesmo em contexto de disputa ideológica.

## O papel na construção identitária

Nos dias de hoje a identidade é na sua essência simbólica. Os "*significados intersubjetivos têm atributos estruturais que não apenas limitam ou capacitam atores. Eles definem também sua realidade social*" (Adler, 1999: p. 211) levando a que a própria identidade se torne algo dinâmico, discutível, de negociação de significados.

A identidade, como o *animal symbolicum* demonstra, não deve entendida apenas como de caracter biológico ou psicológico, trata-se antes de uma construção simbólica, que é continuamente reconfigurada através de uma intrincada teia de símbolos, símbolos esses de múltiplas esferas – culturais, sociais e políticas. À data, este conceito de identidade tornou-se altamente difuso. Os sujeitos são hoje obrigados a definirem e a redefinirem constantemente quem são, recorrendo a símbolos culturais que circulam na sociedade, seja no plano físico ou digital.

O processo de construção de identidades pode ser mais facilmente constatado no mundo do consumismo, nas redes sociais ou nos processos de tentativa de mobilização política. Num mundo globalizado, as identidades existentes não estão ancoradas a territórios ou regiões, são sim amplamente construídas via símbolos que se constroem e circulam a nível global. A internet revolucionou as formas de relacionamento dos sujeitos com os símbolos, assim como a própria criação simbólica.

## A Política e a importância do Simbólico

Este conceito de *animal symbolicum* transcende o ser humano, elevando-o da sua condição natural. As suas determinações, decisões ou ações, são estruturadas por símbolos que invariavelmente agem no subconsciente, e a política insere-se nesta lógica. A política reflete a dimensão simbólica dos sujeitos. A *sociedade do espetáculo*, como nos transmite Guy Debord (1997), demonstra a importância que imagens e símbolos adquiriram na legitimidade política. Esta, transformou-se em pouco mais, do que num combate constante pela dominação sobre as representações sobre as narrativas na esfera pública. É uma disputa simbólica, onde os significados e a quantidade de indivíduos aos que se chega e imprime as imagens pretendidas é mais importante do que qualquer política especifica.

Os grandes conflitos políticos continuam a fazer-se em momentos de resistência e de mutação social. Nestes contextos denota-se o *animal symbolicum* na forma como os indivíduos e os grupos de indivíduos mobilizam símbolos em prol da sua luta. Estes movimentos mobilizam símbolos, onde as imagens e os slogans são cruciais na propaganda, tornando-se verdadeiros dínamos na mobilização e recrutamento dos sujeitos contra as estruturas existentes.

## O papel do simbólico na política no presente

É no campo da política onde encontramos com grande papel principal o simbólico. Isto porque se no passado a ideologia política se ligava acima de tudo a uma corrente de pensamento ou a teorias económicas, na contemporaneidade a disputa pelo poder faz-se no campo do simbólico. Como nos diz Bourdieu (1998) o poder simbólico é *"poder de constituir o dado pela enunciação, de fazer ver e fazer crer, de confirmar ou de transformar a visão do mundo e, deste modo, a ação sobre o mundo, portanto o mundo..."* (p. 14). O poder, nos dias de hoje, não está marcadamente ligado à propriedade material ou à coerção, hoje as formas de poder encontram-se na manutenção das narrativas e no controlo sobre os símbolos que modelam a perceção da sociedade.

Temos então hoje um poder que se exerce através da influência e controlo dos símbolos que estruturam a vida em sociedade. Trata-se de agir de modo a que haja uma aceitação por parte dos indivíduos evitando o confronto direto. O poder político exerce-se não através da imposição de normas ou de ideias, exerce-se sim através do poder simbólico, na influência ou, se se preferir, do moldar das perceções dos indivíduos de forma a que aceitem de livre vontade o que se pretende.

A luta pelo poder tornou-se hoje, a luta pelo domínio da verdade, ou da disputa pela construção das narrativas, tal como Bourdieu (1998) nos expõe existe *"uma luta propriamente simbólica para imporem a definição do mundo social mais conforme aos seus interesses..."* (p. 11).

O nosso mundo é hoje um local saturado de símbolos. As campanhas políticas, por exemplo, são autênticas disputas pelo controlo e manutenção do simbólico, senão vejamos, as campanhas eleitorais ou as manifestações políticas são fortemente associadas a representações visuais ou verbais, as partes entram em confronto, não para um debate de razões pelas melhores ideias políticas, mas sim pelo controlo das representações na esfera mediática, já que permitirá a dominação do espaço público, ou seja, *"a dominação também se dá no plano simbólico, o simbólico revisitado aqui na força oculta da linguagem, da fala e do poder de quem tem a fala"* (Setton, Rego & Pereira, 2023: p. 13).

Ao simbólico é-lhe atribuído um papel crucial na esfera política. Não o devemos confundir somente como comunicação ou até como elemento de persuasão, mas antes como elemento estruturante do poder. O poder político é exercido através deste controlo de símbolos que por sua vez afetam a receção das mensagens, alterando a perceção do público em geral e moldando as relações entre indivíduos. A revolução da comunicação através da elevação das novas tecnologias digitais da informação e comunicação agregaram ainda mais valor à política do espetáculo, transformando como campo de disputa as próprias redes sociais, onde se disputa legitimidade e autoridade.

## Manipulação dos significados – discursos e poder

Através da visibilidade almejada ou da criação de determinadas imagens, o poder simbólico procura algo concreto, a manipulação dos significados e a construção e manutenção de narrativas. Landtsheer, De Vries & Vertessen (2008) sublinham o papel que as metáforas exercem no discurso político, nomeando-as como *"indispensable devices for politicians who want to convey persuasive messages"* (p. 224). Bourdieu (1996; 1999) fala-nos no poder simbólico da linguagem e demonstra o facto de que a linguagem é um instrumento simbólico eficaz na construção da realidade.

Nos dias de hoje, o controlo ou a manipulação do simbólico envolve mais do que apenas as elites tradicionais, tais como agentes como os meios de comunicação ou grandes corporações empresariais. Algo que é visto como verdadeiro ou justo pode, na realidade, ser o resultado de um longo processo simbólico, de uma operação de moldagem de construção e de perceção. O poder, entendido nestas linhas, não é coercivo, nem normativo, mas sem dúvida o poder é simbólico. Quem domina os símbolos domina a realidade, influenciando os indivíduos e a normas. A legitimidade das forças políticas passa pela aceitação das narrativas construídas e amplamente disseminadas através de símbolos. O sucesso da construção destas narrativas de justificação de ações ou inações junto dos indivíduos está dependente da dominação simbólica. Este poder exerce-se sobretudo em termos simbólicos, na comunicação com os indivíduos, onde as imagens e os discursos se impõem como cruciais no estabelecer de uma realidade desejável pelos proponentes do poder, num período da pós-verdade, onde, na exteriorização das ideias políticas a honestidade não está entre as prioridades (D'Ancona, 2017: p. 17).

## A construção da identidade

A identidade é desta forma também construída pelos indivíduos e disputada pelos intervenientes políticos. Este tipo de identidade é construído através de uma continua exposição simbólica, onde se pretende que os indivíduos se envolvam, se associem aos símbolos, às imagens e às narrativas, que os irão definir perante os outros indivíduos e à sociedade. O conceito de hegemonia, proposto por Antonio Gramsci (1955), trata de construir, por parte das elites dominantes, uma visão do mundo para todos, que fará com que os indivíduos aceitem como natural, permitindo uma consolidação da autoridade pelos poderosos.

Esta ação visa precisamente operar no reino simbólico onde as ideias e os valores são internalizados. Nos dias de hoje questões raciais, de classe, de género ou de identidade são orientadas por uma panóplia de ações que visam moldar, influenciar, manipular as perceções individuais e dos grupos. Existe toda uma disputa em ação nos meios onde se veiculam as mensagens, algumas mais subtis do que outras, pelo controlo pela interpretação da realidade.

## Elemento central de governança: O Poder Simbólico

Podemos perceber o poder crescente dos símbolos na organização social, nas relações de poder e na formação de identidade. A centralidade do poder simbólico é inseparável da política contemporânea, contaminada pelo espetáculo e construções simbólicas, onde a comunicação e as plataformas digitais transformam a forma como o poder se obtém e mantém. Bourdieu diz-nos que o poder simbólico é "*um poder de construção da realidade*" (Bourdieu, 1989: p. 9)

O *animal symbolicum* está envolvido diretamente neste processo simbólico, estando na centralidade do campo das disputas simbólicas que permeiam todos os aspetos da realidade e onde não se alheia de ser simultaneamente agente ativo na construção de significados.

## A identidade no nosso mundo

A identidade é uma construção simbólica. A imersão em conteúdos simbólicos, nos dias de hoje, é incessante devido à constante ligação da globalização e digitalização, o que orienta os indivíduos, inconsciente ou conscientemente, nas suas escolhas e comportamentos, como nos mostram, aliás, conceitos como o de Zygmunt Bauman (2001) com a modernidade líquida.

Os fluidos se movem facilmente. (…) contornam certos obstáculos, dissolvem outros e invadem ou inundam seu caminho. (…) A extraordinária mobilidade dos fluidos é o que os associa à ideia de "leveza" (p. 07).

A construção identitária é dinâmica. Ela é alimentada simbolicamente através do consumo de elementos simbólicos veiculados pelas interações sociais e internalizados através dos mass media e das redes sociais. Estes elementos demonstram como o ser humano se rodeia de símbolos e os utiliza para marcar e definir o seu lugar no mundo.

Esta fluidez é melhor observável nas questões relacionadas com temas específico, como com o género, etnia ou nacionalidade, onde os símbolos tratam de desenhar os sentimentos de pertença/exclusão. As redes sociais, como espaço predileto no espaço digital de mobilização simbólica, desempenham um papel já mencionado de reivindicação e de conflitualidade. Por um lado, indivíduos ou grupos procuram cimentar a sua posição em determinada senda, por outro travam-se confrontos por legitimidade e reconhecimento.

A identidade é uma construção simbólica, moldada por interações sociais e culturais, mas também, e cada vez mais, tecnológicos.

A construção do *eu* não está dependente, apenas, de experiências particulares ou de qualquer introspeção privada. Acima de tudo, hoje, está particularmente ligada à exposição a símbolos coletivos que direcionam os indivíduos nas sociedades, tal como Taylor (2011) nos diz "*o meu descobrir a minha identidade não que dizer que a trabalho em reclusão, mas que a negócio através do diálogo, parcialmente exposto, parcialmente internalizado, com outros*" (p. 55). A identidade é então um elemento fluído, moldável, suscetível de mudança. Deixa de ser um reflexo do indivíduo, mas antes um reflexo das como algo interações do indivíduo com os outros e com as estruturas simbólicas que os rodeiam.

A comunicação e produção cultural de hoje, proporciona um ambiente de intensa construção simbólica.

## A fluidez identitária

O conceito de fluidez, nos moldes propostos por Bauman, é essencial numa compreensão mais completa da identidade na contemporaneidade. Nesta modernidade líquida, as estruturas aparentemente sólidas de identificação, tais como o Estado-nação, a classe social, a religião ou a família, dissolvem-se, surgindo em contrapartida uma variedade de novas formas de pertença e de identificação, que por sua vez, podem ser substituídas ou reformuladas. Esta fluidez identitária demonstra a efeméride das relações e a transitoriedade cultural, onde os limites identitários se revelam porosos.

Uma vida dedicada à procura da identidade é cheia de som e de fúria. Identidade significa aparecer: ser diferente, por essa diferença, singular – e assim a procura da identidade não pode deixar de dividir e separar. E, no entanto, a vulnerabilidade das identidades individuais e a precariedade da solitária construção da identidade levam os construtores da identidade a procurar cabides que possam, em conjunto, pendurar seus medos e ansiedades individualmente experimentados e, depois disso, realizar os ritos de exorcismo em companhia de outros indivíduos também assustados e ansiosos. É discutível se essas "comunidades-cabide" oferecem o que se espera que ofereçam – um seguro coletivo contra incertezas individualmente enfrentadas; mas sem dúvida marchar ombro a ombro ao longo de uma ou duas ruas, montar barricadas na companhia de outros ou roçar os cotovelos em trincheiras lotadas, isso pode fornecer um momento de alívio da solidão (Bauman, 2003: p. 21).

A identidade é moldada pelo consumo, pelas imagens mediáticas e pela constante interação, quer com outros que partilham semelhantes fluxos simbólicos, quer com outros que aparentemente numa categoria contraria permite a negociação identitária,

cujas trocas vão reconfigurar os fluxos simbólicos. Há toda uma lógica de mercado em torno das trocas simbólicas de narrativas e símbolos cujas mensagens podem modelar comportamentos e crenças. Bauman (2005) diz-nos que "*neste nosso mundo fluido … as identidades são para usar e exibir, para armazenar e manter*" (p. 96). O *homo symbolicus* experimenta desta forma uma construção identitária flexível e adaptável, como resposta às novas formas de comunicação e construção simbólica na esfera pública.

## O consumo do simbólico

A cultura do consumo é, de acordo com Arnould & Thompson (2005) um arranjo social em que as relações entre a cultura vivida e os recursos sociais, e entre as formas significativas de vida e os recursos simbólicos e materiais dos quais elas dependem são mediadas pelos mercados (p. 869) e a própria construção identitária está, como vimos até agora, intrinsecamente relacionada com um consumo do simbólico. Somos consumidores de símbolos. Este consumo não é um qualquer processo passivo, é um processo ativo, de escolha de símbolos com os quais os indivíduos se identificam e com os quais existe uma reconstituição criando nesta interação nos sentidos para os símbolos a partir de cada indivíduo ou grupo de indivíduos.

Baudrillard (1995) diz-nos que o consumo de objetos não se dá pela sua função, mas antes pelo que significa adquirir esse mesmo objeto, o próprio consumo torna-se desta forma simbólico, relacionando-se com a afirmação do indivíduo ou com a procura pelo reconhecimento.

## A pegada digital do *animal symbolicum*

A formação da identidade do *animal symbolicum* dá-se essencialmente nas plataformas digitais e em grande parte através destas. A identidade já não se constitui a um nível meramente intrínseco ou no seio de um determinado grupo, mas ao nível de transmissão contínua de símbolos e da sua negociação constante de significados e representações que circulam nessas redes. As redes sociais, tornaram-se palco desta nova forma de identidade política criada através destas negociações simbólicas lembrando que "*o processo histórico de individualização pressupõe um desenvolvimento gradual das relações de mútuo reconhecimento em formas cada vez mais complexas de interacção*" (Lóia, 2009: p. 201).

Esta construção identitária é amplamente influenciada pala procura de uma voz própria, ou do reconhecimento. A necessidade de ser reconhecido e ouvido orienta a forma como se pretende projetar uma imagem e uma mensagem na esfera digital moldando a posição política. As *métricas simbólicas* deste posicionamento têm em conta as quantidades de interações nas redes sociais como os *likes*, os *seguidores* ou os *reposts*, simbolizando o grau de aceitação social daquele movimento em específico ou daquele indivíduo.

## A procura do reconhecimento

A identidade relaciona-se com o conceito de política do reconhecimento, um tema debatido por autores como, por exemplo Charles Taylor (2011), que nos diz que

A importância do reconhecimento é agora universalmente reconhecida de uma forma ou de outra; em um plano pessoal, estamos todos cientes de como a identidade pode ser formada ou malformada em nosso contato com outros significantes (p. 57).

A política do reconhecimento trata da luta por reconhecimento e validação por parte dos indivíduos e grupos na sociedade. Esse reconhecimento pode ser social ou simbólico e, à data, a luta por reconhecimento e validação é central na construção das identidades políticas.

As redes sociais são um meio privilegiado de disputa deste reconhecimento sociopolítico. Grupos minoritários, como grupos indígenas, raciais, ou como comunidades *LGBTQIA+*, usam as redes sociais desta forma, como meio para afirmação das suas identidades. Simultaneamente, este mesmo meio funciona como palco por outros grupos para disputa e contestação, contribuindo para a reconfiguração de identidades.

Estes processos de reconhecimento são basilares na construção duma identidade coletiva e para uma declaração de direitos numa comunidade democrática. Vista desta forma, a identidade, não é apenas uma construção individual per se, trata-se duma negociação coletiva de significados que implica questões de poder e sentimentos de pertença, tal como Lóia (2009) explica "*seria extremamente difícil manter um horizonte de significado pelo qual nos identificamos se não fossemos reconhecidos por aquilo que somos*" (p. 203).

## O papel da globalização

A globalização tornou ainda mais complexa a construção identitária por todo o mundo. O intenso fluxo de informação, a multiplicação de imagens e a partilha entre culturas tornam as identidades muito pluridimensionais. O *animal symbolicum* contemporâneo é por isso um ser que navega por dentro dos diferentes espaços culturais e simbólicos, permanentemente consumindo e reinterpretando símbolos de diversas origens geográficas e sociais.

A perceção e a influência são a chave. Tudo é permanentemente reinterpretado e recontextualizado pelos indivíduos e de acordo com o grau de influência do remetente da mensagem. Os indivíduos, mediados pela sua perceção maleável, criam uma identidade que não está exclusivamente associada a um espaço geográfico ou cultural, mas sim a uma rede universal de significados, tratando-se de uma construção plural e também conflituosa o que denota a complexidade do mundo atualmente.

## A reter

A formação da identidade é um processo simbólico. A identidade é uma construção dinâmica, moldada pelas interações sociais, pelas imagens veiculadas pelos media e pelo reconhecimento. A fluidez das identidades, a centralidade do simbólico e do consumo do simbólico, assim como o impacto das redes sociais atualmente, redefinem a forma como entendemos os indivíduos na atualidade e o seu lugar no mundo.

## Conclusão

O conceito de *animal symbolicum* oferece uma forma para a compreensão do papel dos símbolos no quotidiano, seja na formação do indivíduo, seja na dinâmica da política no contexto contemporâneo. A aptidão natural que o ser humano tem ao nível de criação e interpretação de símbolos e da internalização de significados contribui significativamente para a organização social assim como de forma preponderante na construção da base identitária individual e coletiva. Os símbolos são mais do que meras representações da realidade, eles atuam diretamente no exercício do poder e na fixação das estruturas de autoridade ao longo do tempo. Nestas linhas explora-se o simbólico no panorama contemporâneo em diferentes frentes.

Primeiro, observa-se que a própria condição humana não pode ser separada de sua habilidade de criação simbólica. Ao criar um universo de significados, o *animal symbolicum* não só molda a sua própria existência, mas também organiza as suas comunidades, lançando os alicerces para a formação da cultura e das instituições. Cassirer e Geertz oferecem instrumentos valiosos para entender como as sociedades se estruturam através de sistemas simbólicos e a importância da interpretação desses sistemas na formação das relações na sociedade. Portanto, a importância do simbólico ultrapassa a mera questão epistemológica e coloca-se como parte integrante da vida.

No âmbito político, observa-se uma significativa mudança nas formas de governança e nas relações de poder ao analisar-se o poder simbólico. Segundo Bourdieu, Debord, ou Foucoult o poder não é apenas uma questão de força física ou coação, mas sim uma disputa pelas narrativas que direcionam a ação da comunidade. A política do espetáculo, impulsionada pelos meios digitais, meios de comunicação ou redes sociais, transforma-se numa arena simbólica, onde imagens, memes ou slogans possuem capacidade para mobilizar as massas, criar legitimidade e redefinir relações de poder. Dessa forma, controlar o simbólico é a ferramenta de governança vital no panorama político atual, internalizando normas e determinadas categorias, quer ao nível dos Estados, quer ao nível das relações internacionais.

No que diz respeito à identidade, constata-se que se trata de uma construção dinâmica e fluida. Como nota Bauman, a fluidez identitária é um traço característico do indivíduo contemporâneo, que está em permanente redefinição no seu lugar no mundo através dos símbolos a que está sujeito e dos significados que cria através da sua própria perceção. A globalização e a revolução nos meios digitais expandiram as áreas de atuação onde estas trocas simbólicas ocorrem, dilatando os momentos de formação de identidade, e por outro lado intensificando os conflitos relacionados ao reconhecimento, à pertença ou à exclusão. A identidade não é um fenómeno individual, é sim coletivo, influenciado por processos culturais e sociais, através de imagens e narrativas. A política de reconhecimento, debatida por Taylor ou Lóia, manifesta-se atualmente nas interações digitais, tornou-se num local onde grupos marginalizados procuram visibilidade e legitimidade, empregando os mesmos mecanismos simbólicos que frequentemente os marginalizavam.

Em suma, demonstra-se que o simbólico, continua a ser a força motriz por detrás das transformações sociais, culturais e políticas. Através duma reflexão crítica sobre estas dinâmicas, é possível compreender melhor como o simbólico estrutura a vida social e

política permitindo aos indivíduos adotar um instrumento poderoso e desafiante na construção de sentido e de pertença na contemporaneidade.

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# GEOPOLITICA E PENSAMENTO COLECTIVO. ESTUDO DE CASO DOS JOGOS DE XADREZ E DE GO ENQUANTO MANIFESTAÇÕES DAS CONCEPÇÕES ESTRATEGICAS DAS CIVILIZAÇÕES ORIENTAIS E OCIDENTAIS. APONTAMENTOS PARA O ESTUDO DO PENSAMENTO ESTRATÉGICO

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## Resumo

Este trabalho explora o estudo da geopolítica através do prisma dos jogos de Xadrez e de GO, enquanto proposta de representação material das conceções estratégicas das civilizações ocidentais e orientais. A presente análise centra-se na questão: a geopolítica deriva de um pensamento de Estado, própria dos políticos e militares que a estudam, sintetizando-a com vista à sua aplicação , ou será algo mais profundo, pertencente ao coletivo, que nasce, se transforma e reside num inconsciente, tendencialmente coletivo, de agir perante o desafio das escolhas? Como desenho de pesquisa far-se-á um estudo de caso dos jogos mencionados, procurando-se entender como as regras, estratégias e táticas dos mesmos podem ou não refletir as abordagens e pensamento teórico geopolítico. Para comparação, ainda que simplificada, num estudo exploratório, considerou-se recorrer a Clausewitz e Sun Tzu - que enformam, a nosso ver, as bases do ensino teórico das nas civilizações ocidental e oriental. Desta forma comparando-se as semelhanças entre o semelhante e o diverso entre estes quatro elementos. O presente estudo permite assim apontar que o xadrez, e a sua conceção baseada no confronto direto, permite espelhar e compreender a abordagem ocidental, enquanto o GO, com o seu foco na conquista gradual e refletida do território, pode, por ser lado ser o prisma da visão oriental, reconduzindo para algo mais coletivo do que o que é ensinado dentro da Academia. Paralelamente, são aqui propostas definições contemporâneas de Geopolítica e Geostratégia, Recorreu-se à à revisão bibliográfica, à análise empírica, suportada em inquérito a especialista nos dois jogos. Este estudo contribui assim para a compreensão do pensamento estratégico, oferecendo uma perspetiva, que não sendo original encontra-se ainda alheia das bases do ensino junto das Academias, contrariamente ao que há muito ocorre nos Altos Estudos Militares Norte-Americanos. . Através desta lente procuráramos oferecer uma nova compreensão do pensamento estratégico, demonstrando que as suas complexidades podem ser encontradas até mesmo num jogo de tabuleiro de qualquer escola ou rua, no pensamento coletivo das civilizações.

## Palavras-chave

Geopolítica, Geoestratégia, Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, Jogos.

## Abstract

This work explores the study of geopolitics through the prism of Chess and GO as a proposal for the material representation of the strategic conceptions of Western and Eastern civilizations. This analysis centers on the following question: does geopolitics derive from a State-oriented thought process—typical of the politicians and military personnel who study and synthesize it for practical application—or is it something more profound, belonging to the

collective, which is born, transformed, and resides as a form of a tendentially collective unconscious when acting before the challenge of choice? The research design consists of a case study of the games, looking to understand how their rules, strategies, and tactics may reflect geopolitical approaches and theoretical thought. For comparison, albeit simplified in an exploratory study, we considered the works of Clausewitz and Sun Tzu, which form the foundations of theoretical teaching and geopolitical action in Western and Eastern civilizations. This study suggests that Chess, with its conception based on direct confrontation, mirrors and aids in understanding the Western approach, while GO, with its focus on the gradual and reflected conquest of territory, serves as a prism for the Eastern vision, pointing towards something more collective than what is typically taught within the Academy. Parallel to this, contemporary definitions of Geopolitics and Geostrategy are proposed. The method relied on a literature review, empirical analysis, and an interview with an expert in both games. This study contributes to the understanding of strategic thought by offering a perspective that stays estranged from the foundational teaching in Academies—unlike what has long occurred in North American Higher Military Studies. Through this lens, we looked to offer a new understanding of strategic thought, proving that its complexities can be found even in a board game from any school or street, within the collective thought of civilizations..

**Keywords**

Geopolitics, Geostrategy, Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, Games.

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# GEOPOLITICA E PENSAMENTO COLECTIVO. ESTUDO DE CASO DOS JOGOS DE XADREZ E DE GO ENQUANTO MANIFESTAÇÕES DAS CONCEPÇÕES ESTRATEGICAS DAS CIVILIZAÇÕES ORIENTAIS E OCIDENTAIS. APONTAMENTOS PARA O ESTUDO DO PENSAMENTO ESTRATÉGICO

**PEDRO HENRIQUE DA SILVA HORTA**

## Introdução

Uma dissertação, independente da sua natureza, não pode temer questionar, ainda que não seja certo que alcance uma resposta. Assim o disse Heidegger (2000, p.2). E assim, como exórdio, iniciaremos o nosso artigo: com a aventura da pergunta, da procura dos conceitos e das relações que entrelaçam e que nos permitirão desconstruir o tema que nos propomos. No entanto, não procuraremos, de antemão, o infortúnio da resposta, como nos alertou Maurice Blanchot (Blanchot, 1969).

Partindo da Geopolítica, caminharemos para a Geoestratégia, e daqui para a noção ampla de Estratégia, procurando, de forma dialética, revelar alguns dos seus elementos, que, embora não a definindo na sua plenitude, possibilitarão comparar, e desta forma revelar-nos, um corpo sólido e distintivo de conceitos presentes, quer nas duas grandes obras, quer nos dois jogos mais reconhecidos de Estratégia do Oriente e do Ocidente.

Falamos da Arte da Guerra de Sun Tzu, Da Guerra de Clausewitz, do Jogo de GO e do Xadrez.

Tal caminho, perscrutando, comparando, aproximando e afastando, agrupando o semelhante e separando o distinto de tais obras e regras, culminará numa análise sintética sobre as aproximações e distanciamentos do pensamento estratégico presente nestes quatro objetos de análise, que nos permitirão apontar uma chave de análise e um caminho a percorrer.

Até encontrarmos a forma de tal chave, utilizaremos um caminho hermenêutico de análise, que recorrerá às seguintes perguntas que teremos de percorrer, i) que elementos caracterizam os pensamentos especificamente geoestratégicos de Sun Tzu e de Clausewitz? ii) que aproximações e distanciamentos poderemos encontrar nos mesmos? iii) que elementos caracterizam a estratégia nos jogos de Xadrez e de GO? Iv) que aproximações e distanciamentos poderemos encontrar nos mesmos?

Das quais, poderemos verificar, em síntese necessariamente breve, sobre a existência ou inexistência de similitudes consistentes entre elementos de estratégia presentes, respetivamente, entre o pensamento de Sun Tzu e o jogo de GO e entre Clausewitz e o jogo de Xadrez, que não estão presentes em todos os objetos de análise.

Desta forma no presente artigo pretende constituir-se a base de uma pesquisa prévia para o estudo natureza da estratégia e consequentemente Geoestratégia e Geopolítica, quanto, não ao estudo dos seus elementos, mas quanto à origem do próprio pensamento, que possa responder à questão: Porque as sociedades adotam, ou adotaram, pensamentos estratégicos comuns que se revelam depois em diversas atividades concretas e tão díspares, com a correspondente definição de objetivos e gestão de recursos, e porque é que diferentes sociedades adotaram diferenciadas formas de o realizar.

Tal permitirá constituir um contributo para a base de um trabalho que procure explicar a natureza e transmissão civilizacional dos elementos de estratégia que para além da sua aplicação prática, poderá conduzir ao estudo da própria homeostasia da Humanidade, abarcando conceitos tão diferenciados como a psicologia, a estratégia e a biologia.

## Metodologia e caminho exploratório

Para a elaboração do presente artigo fizemos uso, a título exploratório, do texto de David Lai sobre a semelhança entre o pensamento estratégico de Sun Tzu e o Jogo de GO e foi dele que partimos noutra direção, para perguntas não exploradas naquele que foi um trabalho destinado, há mais de 20 anos, a ensinar estratégia chinesa a generais norte-americanos, através da materialização dos princípios de Sun Tzu que o autor descobriu num jogo de tabuleiro.

Daí partimos para a leitura dos clássicos Arte da Guerra (2007) e Da Guerra (s/d), concentrando-nos nos aspetos afinidade direta com a componente geográfica da guerra.

Assim o presente estudo será um ensaio, um caminhar de natureza filosófica que questionará o tema, promovendo através da pesquisa bibliográfica, empírica, percorrendo um caminho indutivo, que partindo das quatro questões referidas acima, procurará concluir sobre a possibilidade e viabilidade de estudo que promova a pesquisa sobre a natureza e características de um hipotético pensamento coletivo que enformará o pensamento estratégico.

## Conceitos de Geoestratégia e Geopolítica

No entanto, antes de partirmos para a análise impõe-se definir, ainda que apenas para o presente propósito, os seus objetos de análise.

Desde logo Geopolítica e Geostratégia.

Para tal aderimos a Pezarat Correia (2012) em que argumenta que a designação corrente de geopolítica se aplica predominantemente a elaborações teóricas que estão no domínio

da geoestratégia. Essa derivação semântica abre assim caminho para uma nova abordagem da geopolítica.

É com Rudolf Kjellén que o termo Geopolítica se impôs, no seu livro O Estado como forma de Vida (Kjellén, sd), o que segundo Pezarat Correia (2012), já tinha sido apresentado em 1901 num artigo do mesmo autor, denominado "A Política como Ciência", em que se abordava a relação do Estado com a sua moldura geográfica, através de um processo de interpretação que em que o Estado é visto, enquanto objeto de estudo, como o Individuo.

Surge, assim, a Geopolítica como o campo específico da relação da política com a geografia, afirmando "Geopolitics is the study of the state as a geographical organism, or a manifestation in space" (Kjellén, s/d, p. 30).

Ao que Pezarat, na esteira do pensamento nacional do então Instituto de Altos Estudos Militares afirma e sintetiza, afirmando a Geopolítica ser o estudo dos fatores geográficos em função da decisão política (2012, p. 231)

Para nós aqui, ainda que à margem, proponho uma outra definição, arriscando, exclusivamente para efeito deste trabalho, que, considerando-se o mundo atual em que existem atores não estatais a competir e a colaborar na Governança Global, em espaços que podem não ter apenas o estatuto de geográfico como o temos entendido até ao conflito russo-ucraniano: *Geopolítica é o estudo das condicionantes do espaço, real ou virtual, em função da decisão de uma entidade coletiva, com influência transnacional.*

Abrindo assim caminho para a virtualização e complexidade crescente da geografia e dos atores, bem como, e considerando o mote do presente trabalho, a proto ligação entre um estudo que seja possível recorrer às mesmas ferramentas, quer estejamos em presença da Rússia ou de um Ser individual. Ou seja, a perceção e desbravar de um fio condutor que permita entender a necessidade biológica de sobrevivência de um individuo, ou de parte dele, como um gene, e as sucessivas associações coletivas, desde a família, clã, etnia, Estado, enquanto superestruturas dessa mesma sobrevivência no espaço.

E o que dizer então da Geoestratégia? De facto, a Geostratégia surgiu em meados do Sec. XIX, portanto 100 anos antes da Geopolítica, referindo-se ao estudo do uso da coação no espaço:

E se a violência se subordina à Política, sendo um instrumento daquela, como podemos justificar que tenha que ocorrido uma subversão atual de tais definições? É igualmente Pezarat Correia que nos aponta a polaridade ocorrida após a 2.ª Guerra Mundial, com a Política a dedicar-se à gestão dos conflitos permanentes (Estratégia), que tenha levado a que apesar de ter prevalecido o termo Geopolítica, na prática foi a Geostratégica que a absorveu (Pezarat Correia, 2012, p. 240)

Pelo que aqui, e na esteira do que assumimos quanto à Geopolítica, teremos então de definir, consequentemente: *Geostratégia como o estudo das condicionantes do espaço, real ou virtual, em função da estratégia de uma entidade coletiva, com influência transnacional.*

A Geoestratégia enquanto subdivisão da Geopolítica, esta enquanto superestrutura daquela, no caminho que liga a política à ação tática do soldado em determinado conflito, ou de um funcionário de embaixada em determina negociação.

E assim chegados ao Estratégico, no âmbito da grande discussão que é a Geopolítica, não como forma de estudo parcelar em si, mas como abordagem de uma particular face da grande complexidade do tema, como forma de contribuir para o seu estudo global, recaindo aqui definindo como fluxo do emprego de meios, incluindo de coação, para o atingir os objetivos políticos.

O que nos transporta para as ações que são necessárias à prossecução da decisão de uma entidade coletiva.

Desta forma teremos as definições balizadas para procedermos ao estudo da Estratégia tanto em Sun Tzu, como em Clausewitz, com vista ao confronto dialético com os jogos de tabuleiro e suas ações particulares e forma de jogar.

## Sobre a atualidade e objeto para a Chave

Por outro lado, se temos definidos, em proposta, os termos anteriores teremos igualmente de adotar um problema atual que nos permita por um lado validar a importância ou relevância do estudo de milenares jogos e pensamentos para as situações incertas do hoje, para a qual precisamos de uma chave que nos permita descodificar.

Assim, a par desta proposta de alargamento da Geopolítica e da Geostratégia ao espaço virtual e à decisão de entidades coletivas - arrojada e possivelmente fraturante- traremos como referencial empírico a mais atual doutrina chinesa de manipulação de informação, que é sintetizada e alvo de recente análise no artigo "Cognitive warfare masterclass: China’s doctrine for strategic narrative superiority" (Tong, 2025)

A estratégia atual da China já não se limita ao território físico, mas expande-se para o domínio da perceção. Ao integrarmos o conceito de FIMI nestas definições, compreendemos que a Geostratégia moderna é, em larga medida, o estudo das condicionantes desse espaço virtual em função de uma vontade coletiva, numa teia de Estados e Coletivos, ainda que proxies, que procuram a superioridade narrativa antes de qualquer movimento cinético.

Ora tal, sendo um instrumento novo, tem raízes, como queremos defender, num pensamento coletivo, materializado, por exemplo através de conceções milenares da Guerra e que se materializam e podem ser alvo de estudo eclético, como por exemplo, repetimos, como por exemplo, mas não só, no jogo de GO.

Se após leitura do presente artigo, uma nova leitura integral daquele apontamos, se tornar mais clara, teremos a tarefa por concluída:

> *Across the South China Sea/West Philippine Sea, the East China Sea, and the waters around Taiwan, the PRC is not simply sending ships or aircraft: it is embedding every manoeuvre within a cross-platform influence operation. State-driven media, digital proxies, legal instruments, environmental claims,*

> *and "routine" patrols form a multidomain front aimed at transforming contested features and international opinion without the risk of direct military confrontation* (Tong, 2025).

## Pensamento Oriental e Ocidental

E aqui esclarecidos, iniciemos a nossa tarefa de, sem exaustão, traçarmos um caminho lógico e de validação que nos permita concluir no final.

Diferenciar exaustivamente o pensamento Oriental do Ocidental quanto à Arte da Guerra, para além extrapolar o âmbito do presente trabalho, é controverso.

Existe? E em que consiste o pensamento Ocidental, e o que o distingue do Oriental quanto à construção do desenrolar do conflito diplomático, económico ou bélico?

A título introdutório da questão debrucemo-nos no seguinte:

> *Clausewitz não considera que a natureza da guerra se avalie pela quantidade de danos e sofrimentos causados aos beligerantes. A natureza da guerra define-se pelo objetivo de impor a vontade política de um Estado a outro. Todavia, ao contrário de Sun Tzu, Clausewitz não se demora demasiado na consideração da guerra mínima que consistiria na eficácia da simples ameaça do uso da força em alternativa ao uso da força propriamente dito* (Soromenho-Marques, 2019, p. 758).

Contudo a forma, i.e. a estratégia, de, perante o conflito, perante a dialética de vontades, relativa ao momento, ao uso dos recursos, incluindo a violência, estarão presentes diferenças, e será sobre eles que nos debruçaremos, procurando realizar o exercício mental de reduzirmos à essência e ao sentido mais lato de conflito, procurando desta forma compreender a sua verdadeira natureza, e os símbolos que lhe foram emprestados permitindo-nos transportar entre uma zona de conflito e um tabuleiro de Xadrez ou de GO.

Assim teremos que, das obras em questão, proceder a uma análise que nos propusemos:

- Que elementos caracterizam os pensamentos especificamente geoestratégicos de Sun Tzu e de Clausewitz? e,
- Que aproximações e distanciamentos poderemos encontrar nos mesmos?

Tratando-se de uma dissertação exploratória, decidimo-nos limitar a elementos concretos do pensamento, ínsitos nas obras seminais destes autores, em concreto a questão geográfica da estratégia, quer porque diretamente relacionada com Geopolítica.

Desta forma temos duas obras em análise que foram escritas em locais, tempos e contextos diferentes.

## A Arte da Guerra

Sun Tzu, General e Estratega, cuja própria existência é colocada em causa - como tantos outros da história da Humanidade que nos deixam obras e pensamentos fundamentais – terá escrito A Arte da Guerra durante o século V a.c., sendo que o contexto da obra é rodeado, e dele terá recebido influência, do conturbado período das Primaveras e Outonos (entre 770 a.C. a 476 a.C.), caracterizado por constantes guerras entre estados feudais na China, numa época caracterizada assim pelo conflito permanente.

A obra é dividida em capítulos em que é abordada a preparação, planeamento, tática e até o uso da espionagem na Guerra.

Para a elaboração da mesma, para além do contexto político-militar, temos por claro que as influências do Taoismo são presentes, nomeadamente no conceito de Tao em si: O Caminho que tudo subjuga e ao qual devemos estar atentos e seguir, como nos ensina o Tao Te Ching:

> *Caso um rei peça conselhos a um mestre do Tao,*
> *que o seu conselho não seja*
> *"exibir a glória do reino pela força de suas armas".*
> *Tal ação certamente encontraria uma reação.*
> *Toda força excessiva logo encontra outra força contrária.*

Aliás esse será o nosso ponto de partida: Em Sun Tzu, na Arte da Guerra, há um caminho, uma harmonia, uma forma correta de fazer a Guerra, mas acima de tudo de a evitar, de a ganhar (campo da política) e que ele descobre e propõe revelar.

Compreender isto é iniciar-se ao pensamento de Sun Tzu. E que forma distintiva, e elementos nos são propostos?

O seu livro encontra-se dividido em 13 capítulos em que cada um aborda um especto fundamental da Arte, afirmando logo no inicio que "A Arte da Guerra é de importância vital para o Estado" reconhecendo a sua importância e subordinação à política, avisando-nos que, por ser uma matéria de vida ou morte para o Estado, deve merecer a nossa meditação, ou seja estudada, e ponderada, conduzindo desta forma a Arte da Guerra a proposta de reflexão sobre uma ação a conduzir dentro de limites, dentro das razões que apresenta.

E se são 13 os capítulos, são cinco os fatores de análise: O Tao ou Caminho, o Tempo, O Terreno, o Comando e a Disciplina. Quem os compreender, diz Sun Tzu poderá ganhar a batalha.

Uma breve referência ao Tao ou Caminho porque sendo um conceito que hoje entendemos como a Vontade[1] era definido por Sun Tzu como "O caminho é o que faz com que as ideias do povo estejam de acordo com a de seus governantes. Assim, as

[1] Refiro-me à equação do Poder de Ray Cline que criou a célebre "Equação do Poder" :P=(C+E+M) x(S+W), em que P – Poder, C – Massa Crítica, E – Capacidade Económica, M – Capacidade Militar; S – Saber, W – Vontade.

pessoas irão compartilhar do medo e da aflição da guerra, porém, estarão ao lado dos interesses do Estado, quaisquer que seja o caminho escolhido" (Sun Tzu, 2007

Neste seguimento existe em Sun Tzu, a convicção de que antes da batalha já o resultado é conhecido, não por intervenção divina ou mérito moral, mas pela análise que cada um dos Generais deve realizar aos seguintes pontos, que são as perguntas permanentes dos que conduzem a Guerra:

> *Qual o povo que escolheu seu caminho?*
> *Qual o comandante que tem mais habilidade?*
> *Qual dos lados tem a vantagem do clima e do terreno?*
> *Qual dos exércitos manifesta uma disciplina mais efetiva?*
> *Qual dos lados possui a superioridade militar?*
> *Qual dos lados tem os soldados mais bem treinados?*
> *Qual dos lados possui um sistema de recompensas e de castigos mais justo e claro?*

Aquele que sabendo tal compreender e responder, obterá o resultado da vitória antes do combate, permitindo que se evitem guerras desnecessárias ou inglórias. Tal é fundamental.

Desta forma poderemos esquematizar alguns princípios que nos importam para a análise comparativa:

A Dissimulação; Este princípio é fundamental, considerando a base da ação militar em Sun Tzu e compreende, para além do conceito geral, a apresentação de algumas táticas conducentes à sua concretização:

> *Um comandante militar deve atacar onde o inimigo está desprevenido,*
> *Provocar o Orgulho do inimigo,*
> *Provocar a desunião das suas tropas,*
> *Deve fingir-se despreparado e incapaz,*
> *Deve oferecer uma isca para fascinar o inimigo que procura vantagem,*

Gestão da Guerra: O General deve providenciar uma guerra rápida e ter em atenção que só a pode conduzir quando reunir os recursos necessários. Deve igualmente ter consciência que a Guerra consome os recursos da Nação e que a empobrece e por isso, quanto mais rápida esta finalizar e lhe for possível obter os recursos em solo inimigo terá vantagem. Por outro lado, a guerra demorada importará na desmoralização das tropas, momento que pode ser usado pelo inimigo.

Estratagemas: É neste ponto que encontramos um dos aspetos caracterizadores mais distintivos de Sun Tzu, ao qual ele considera ser o princípio geral da Guerra e que pela sua importância reproduzimos antes de o analisar:

> *Manter o estado do inimigo intacto, dominar seu o exército e forçá-lo à rendição é melhor do que esmagá-lo (…) Excelência mais alta está em obter-se uma vitória e subjugar o inimigo sem, no entanto, lutar* (Sun Tzu, 2007).

O que é realizado segundo três estratégias por ordem de importância: Atacar estratégias, atacar alianças, atacar soldados, sendo que atacar cidades e subjugar territórios é a pior política.

O que nos remete para princípios de não combate, e quando estes ocorrem, deixando sempre as populações civis de lado ("atacar cidades"), não apenas por isso, mas porque tais ataques resultarão em grandes perdas para quem ataca, devido à fortificação das mesmas.

Aliás, apesar de não tratar neste capítulo, mas no anterior, Sun Tzu determina o bom tratamento dos prisioneiros. Pelo que devemos entender que a Arte da Guerra propõe a subjugação do inimigo, mas não na sua destruição, primeiro por evitar a Guerra, depois por a conduzir dentro de uma Moral e caminhando sempre com vista dos três princípios anteriores.

Compreendendo assim o pensamento de Sun Tzu quanto à forma de conduzir a batalha e qual o seu objetivo, deixemos alguns aforismos presentes na Arte da Guerra e que agora estaremos em condições de compreender e que serão úteis para a análise subsequente:

> *Aquele que conhece o inimigo e a si mesmo, lutará cem batalhas sem perigo de derrota,*
> *O perito pode tornar-se invencível, mas não pode garantir como certa a vulnerabilidade do inimigo,*
> *Quando não há nenhuma chance de vitória, assuma uma posição defensiva; quando há uma chance de vitória, lance um ataque,*
> *Na avaliação do terreno, ele deve verificar as características físicas de um campo de batalha,*
> *A descoberta dos pontos fortes e fracos permite que o exército caia sobre seu inimigo como uma pedra sobre ovos,*
> *O general deve adotar táticas frontais, se quiser confrontar o inimigo e táticas de surpresa, se quiser conquistar a vitória,*
> *O inimigo não pode opor resistência o seu ataque, porque este irrompe nos seus pontos fracos,*
> *Há algumas estradas que não devem ser percorridas; e inimigos que não devem ser atacados. Há algumas cidades que não devem ser capturadas, alguns territórios que não devem ser contestados, e algumas ordens do soberano que não precisam ser obedecidas.*
> *Quanto mais você penetrar em território hostil e seus soldados estiverem coesos, mais difícil será para os defensores o derrotar,*

Dirigimo-nos assim, sucintamente para a compreensão da essência de Sun Tzu, dos princípios fundamentais que analisaremos em comparação com Clausewitz, sendo que os últimos aforismos, permitirão dirigir a nossa atenção para as regras particulares da batalha quando associada ao desenvolvimento dos jogos de tabuleiro, e a eles deveremos voltar

## Da Guerra

Antes de passarmos a Clausewitz, teremos de ter por assente que à data da publicação (póstuma), e já em vida deste, a obra de Sun Tzu tinha chegado ao conhecimento europeu, através de um livro de Amiot (1772), que abordando em tema A Arte dos Chineses, apresentava uma secção sobre os 13 capítulos de Sun Tzu. Pelo que, podendo ter ocorrido ou não a leitura por parte de Clausewitz, não é possível afirmar que Sun Tzu se tenha mantido incógnito do Ocidente até aos Sec. XIX.

Carl von Clausewitz, cuja obra seminal "Vom Kriege" ("Da Guerra"), é considerada uma das mais influentes e profundas na teoria militar ocidental foi, tal como Sun Tzu, um estrategista militar, neste caso, prussiano, tendo participado nas Guerras Napoleónicas.

Viveu entre 1780 e 1831, num período pós-vestefaliano, com o Estado moderno definido nos seus princípios, mas incerto e revolucionário, do ponto de vista político e consequentemente militar.

A sua obra foi escrita entre 1813 e 1831, data da morte, com publicação póstuma, sendo dividida em oito livros, sendo que no presente trabalho focar-nos-emos nos elementos dos três primeiros livros: i) Da Natureza da Guerra, ii) Da Teoria da Guerra e iii) Sobre a Estratégia em Geral.

A forma como é escrito Da Guerra, já nos remete para Kant e para uma escrita, profundamente definida, lembrando-nos quer a obra de Espinoza (Ética), onde o pensamento surge esquematizado partindo de definições para conclusões, ou se quisermos, a Guerra é exposta como diria uma criança dos dias de hoje, com as regras bem definidas.

Ou seja, saímos muito dos princípios e sendo um manual de estratégia é igualmente um manual de tática militar. Aliás tal não é nosso, mas do próprio que o refere em Prefácio na sua obra:

> *O seu [Da guerra] caráter científico consiste numa tentativa de investigar a essência do fenómeno da guerra e de indicar os vínculos existentes entre esses fenómenos e a natureza das suas partes componentes. Nenhuma conclusão lógica foi evitada, mas sempre que o fio deste tecido se tornou demasiadamente fino, preferi rompê-lo e voltar aos fenómenos relativos à experiência* (Clausewitz s/d).

Vejamos:

O primeiro capítulo de "Da Guerra" de Carl von Clausewitz, intitulado "Sobre a Guerra em Geral" é fundamental para estabelecer os alicerces teóricos e conceptuais que enformam toda a obra.

Neste capítulo inicial, Clausewitz explora a natureza da guerra, sua definição e suas relações com a política e a sociedade.

Clausewitz começa por definir a guerra como um "ato de força para compelir o nosso adversário a cumprir a nossa vontade" estabelecendo a guerra como um meio de alcançar

objetivos políticos através do uso da força. Integrando, como vimos a guerra na política nacional e internacional. O que é o mesmo conceito que encontramos em Sun Tzu.

A Guerra para Clausewitz apresenta-se como um fenómeno complexo, multifacetado:

Interdependência com a Política: inseparável da política, descrevendo-a, naquela que foi uma frase que é repetida e mimetizada, "como a continuação da política por outros meios",

Variabilidade e Incerteza: Para Clausewitz a guerra, é uma atividade onde "a incerteza em si mesma é um fator que afeta o curso da ação", devido às variáveis em constante mudança, como as ações do inimigo, as condições do terreno e os recursos disponíveis.

A Importância da Vontade, na condução da guerra: A guerra não é meramente um confronto de forças físicas, mas também um teste de determinação e resiliência política e moral. A vontade de lutar e a capacidade de sustentar esforços durante conflitos prolongados são aspetos fundamentais para a determinação do resultado da guerra. O que já tínhamos visto em Sun Tzu.

Pelo que quanto ao primeiro capítulo do seu livro, dos princípios, a existência de fatores que devem ser analisados para a condução da guerra, como o facto de ser subordinada à vontade política, e a importância da Vontade, podemos concluir que é em tudo semelhante a Sun Tzu.

No segundo capítulo, Clausewitz identifica três elementos essenciais que compõem a guerra:

1. Vontade e Determinação: Tema que recupera do primeiro capítulo.
2. Meios Militares: Aborda os recursos militares disponíveis, incluindo forças terrestres, marítimas e aéreas, bem como a logística e a capacidade de mobilização de recursos durante a guerra.
3. Paixão de Guerra: Aqui refere-se ao de novo à vontade, que motiva as tropas e os líderes militares. O que recupera igualmente do primeiro capítulo, mas do ponto de vista interno dos seus agentes.

Continua a ser um capítulo introdutório, teórico e novamente muito próximo de Sun Tzu quanto à essência do mesmo.

É, contudo, no terceiro capítulo, que apesar de manter a continuação dos anteriores, já apresenta um aprofundamento e uma análise mais detalhada sobre a própria natureza e a prática da guerra, pelo que deixamos alguns exemplos:

Desde logo começa por definir a estratégia como o uso do combate para alcançar os objetivos da guerra, diferenciando a estratégia da tática, explicando que a tática se refere ao uso das forças em batalhas e combates individuais, enquanto a estratégia envolve a coordenação e a orquestração dessas batalhas para alcançar os objetivos políticos e militares mais amplos. O que é a definição atual Ocidental, estabelecendo os vários níveis da Guerra e suas ações.

Outro dos pontos principais abordados é o objetivo final da guerra, afirmando que o objetivo da guerra é aniquilar as forças inimigas ou, pelo menos, reduzir a capacidade

do inimigo de resistir à vontade do atacante. Defendendo que a destruição das forças do inimigo é frequentemente necessária para uma paz duradoura e efetiva. Neste ponto diferindo de Sun Tzu. Por completo antagonismo.

Neste capítulo é igualmente dada importância à concentração de forças no ponto decisivo da batalha e à sua não dispersão. Este conceito é ligado a outro quando aborda a questão da economia de forças, destacando a necessidade de utilizar os recursos de maneira eficiente. Ou seja, apesar de avançar aqui para a questão do ponto decisivo, do centro vital, e de apontar os recursos para tal, o que é uma conceção original de Clausewitz, por outro lado mantem a necessidade de gestão e racionalização de recursos, que Sun Tzu já se referia.

É assim neste terceiro capítulo, definindo claramente os conceitos de estratégia, a discussão sobre concentração de forças, uso do terreno, surpresa, economia de forças, moral e inteligência, que nos proporciona uma base sólida para a compreensão da condução eficaz da guerra. São estes princípios que, com exceção do apontamento realizado, que atualmente continuam a moldar o pensamento estratégico e Geoestratégico.

Antes de partirmos para uma análise dialética entre os princípios destes dois pensadores, deixemos um reforço ao conceito fundamental em Clausewitz: O de Centro de Gravidade. É no capítulo seis que nos avança decisivamente para a sua explicação:

> *Quanto maior for a força com que este golpe for desferido, mais certo será o seu efeito. Esta sequência bastante óbvia leva-nos a uma analogia que a ilustrará mais claramente, isto é, a natureza e o efeito de um centro de gravidade. Um centro de gravidade é sempre encontrado onde a massa estiver mais densamente concentrada. Ele oferece o alvo mais efetivo para um golpe. Além disto, o golpe mais violento é o desferido pelo centro de gravidade* (Clausewitz s/d).

Este conceito é usado, e por vezes abusado, na definição do esforço de guerra. Clausewitz aponta-nos para a existência na batalha de um ponto em que o efeito do combate, e consequentemente a sua perda, pode criar maior efeito nas forças. Se o entendermos simplesmente e o procurarmos onde literalmente as forças estão mais concentradas, não o teremos compreendido, O centro vital pode ser o líder, uma estação de rádio, um centro de comando, um rei no Xadrez.

## Análise dialética

Confessa-se que antes de proceder à leitura das presentes obras, tal como já indicado na introdução, esperava-se uma diferença diametralmente oposta entre os conceitos de ambos os autores. Culpa minha.

De facto, com exceção da noção de centro de Gravidade, e da opção pela destruição do inimigo, bem como do estilo enciclopédico de esquematizar o trabalho e, consequente atualização dos movimentos de estratégicos e táticos mercê dos avanços tecnológicos e

da natureza das guerras europeias contemporâneas, observamos poucos pontos diferenciadores. Fruto de uma essência a ser descoberta na Estratégia, ou fruto do conhecimento de Clausewitz da obra de Sun Tzu? Deixemos lateralmente como ponto para outro caminho.

Temos assim que Sun Tzu evita o combate, procura a dissimulação e deceção, procura a invencibilidade dos seus exércitos e a exploração das fragilidades dos inimigos, enquanto Clausewitz, procura a destruição do centro de gravidade, batalha após batalha, do inimigo, a reunião e utilização de recursos em concentração nesse ponto, com vista à aniquilação do inimigo, num desgastar de meios.

E isso reduz a uma forma de agir completamente diferente: Sun Tzu procura na paz garantir a invencibilidade dos seus exércitos, como forma de se precaver da necessidade de combater no futuro, Clausewitz procura as melhores táticas para atacar em força os centros de gravidade quando das batalhas.

E com esta observação que sumariza o nosso caminho, vamos compreender melhor, através de uma análise dos dois grandes jogos Ocidentais e Orientais porque é que afirmamos no título que os mesmos podem consubstanciar uma manifestação diferenciada do pensamento estratégico.

## Os Jogos de Xadrez e de GO

Comecemos pelo Xadrez. Tendo origem eventualmente na India, chegou ao fim da Europa por volta do sec. X, mas a sua versão moderna, com as regras atuais, foi revelada em Londres cerca de 1850, cerca de vinte anos, curiosamente, após a publicação do "Da Guerra".

Tal como o GO é jogado num tabuleiro de pedras claras e escuras, bem como com peças claras e escuras que se opõem em combate. Conhecido que a vitória se obtém pelo xeque-mate ao Rei, apresenta algumas estratégias principais, como veremos num quadro comparativo.

As peças têm valores, movimentos e funções diferentes, representando um verdadeiro exército que se digladia. As peças são colocadas no tabuleiro de acordo com uma ordem especifica, inicialmente, e com exceção do peão que pode ser promovido em determinada fase do jogo, todas as outras poderão ser retiradas do tabuleiro, que fica cada vez mais vazio, tal como ocorre num combate. Por outro lado, o jogo de GO é igualmente um jogo tabuleiro para dois jogadores, cujo objetivo, da vitória, é cercar mais território do que o oponente, limitando a sua ação e a sua capacidade de reação.

Terá sido inventado na China há mais de 2500 anos e é considerado o jogo de tabuleiro mais antigo ainda jogado nos tempos modernos. Foi conhecido no Japão e na Coreia, tendo no sec. XIX chegado à Europa.

O tabuleiro padrão, chamado de Goban, tem 19x19 interseções, o que totaliza 361 pontos de jogo, a forma mais próxima de representar o ciclo anual, representando por isso o mundo e o tempo.

O tabuleiro começa vazio, alternando os jogadores a colocação de peças pretas e brancas, conquistando o seu território, criando estruturas invencíveis, literalmente, e impedindo, quando oportuno a criação de tais estruturas pelo adversário.

Para tal podem ser realizados ataques para a captura de peças, ou a colocação estratégica de peças em locais que obstam à criação de potenciais estruturas invencíveis por parte do adversário (lembremo-nos de Sun Tzu na criação da invencibilidade).

Vencendo quem tiver mais território no final e não quem mata ou destrói o outro.

Entre estes dois jogos verificamos semelhança no uso de tabuleiro e de peças claras e escuras, bem como a existência de apenas um único vencedor, exceto nas situações de empate, pese embora o jogo se conduza para a vitória..

Enquanto o Xadrez se inicia com o tabuleiro cheio e, com o combate, com vista a capturar o Rei, vai-se esvaziando de recursos criando maiores dificuldades aos jogadores, o GO inicia-se vazio e vai sendo ocupado, ocorrendo marginalmente a retirada de peças que são capturadas, (mas que no fim a ele retornam, lembrando Sun Tzu sobre o tratamento Humano aos prisioneiros, não os matando) apresentando no fim, um tabuleiro cheio de estruturas complexas que resultaram das ações táticas e estratégicas, sendo vencedor o que mais invencível se tornou e consequentemente tomou mais território.

Quanto a técnicas de jogo, verificamos em ambos a necessidade de controlo de terreno, a existência de táticas locais de captura, e a necessidade de alinhamento total de recursos com vista à vitória.

Pelo que são estas as diferenças e aproximações ao mesmo de uma forma resumida.

## Comparação entre Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, Xadrez e GO

A consideração de que o Xadrez e o GO são metáforas, do pensamento estratégico, não é nova:

> *Chess, always a metaphor and infinite source of examples for geopolitics and war as the impressive recently reminded us, has become itself the space of world competition. From the abstract image of space to real space*[2]*, Zbigniew Brzezinski, former National Security Advisor to U.S. President Jimmy Carter, wrote in* The Grand Chessboard *in 1997: "Eurasia is the chessboard on which the struggle for global primacy continues to be played." But is Beijing playing chess? On Eurasia and beyond, Chinese strategists are not engaged in a chess game but are probably designing a series of moves congenial with their own understanding of strategy. While Westerners might navigate a world mapped as a chessboard, the Chinese mind circulates on a* weiqi *board* (Gosset, D., 2010).

[2] Giangiuseppe Pili, Chess, the mirror of geopolitics - Chess as cultural space of world competition – Scuolafilosofica, 2020

Aqui desenvolvemos, provocamos, o desenvolvimento da necessidade de densificarmos o seu estudo em concreto. Como vimos até agora, e pela leitura já poderíamos concluir acerca das aproximações entre os mesmos.

Num trabalho sucinto como este, apenas poderemos seguir um caminho mais empírico, que permita abranger o geral, descobrindo aqui e ali o que é verdadeiramente distanciado. Obviamente que com um futuro aprofundamento, com leitura de todos os artigos de Clausewitz e todos os aforismos de Sun Tzu, poderemos descobrir nuances. Ou outros caminhos.

Mas tal não é para nós. Aqui apenas explorar se há ou não diferenças dignas de nota que possam indicar que há conceções diferentes nos propósitos da Guerra e que possam ser explorados noutros campos como na investigação política, biológica ou da psicologia.

Assim para essa análise considerou-se que a melhor forma seria a apresentação em tabela do que atrás foi referido por forma a podermos verificar em confronto as semelhanças e diferenças entres estes quatro objetos de estudo.

E assim, constata-se que temos claramente diferenciados os objetivos e finalidades da Guerra, do conflito, e que o Jogo de Xadrez se aproxima de Clausewitz e o de GO de Sun Tzu.

E aqui, teremos a chave para nos adentrarmos, na consolidação de uma verdadeira perspetiva de análise do pensamento Oriental (aqui reconduzo-me à questão da oportunidade e necessidade).

A convergência aqui constatada entre o pensamento de Sun Tzu e a dinâmica do jogo de GO que é, em súmula, focada na procura da invencibilidade e na conquista gradual de território, ambas sem confronto direto é, algo presente na atualidade, e poderemos constatar, e assim facilmente correlacionar, tecnologicamente traduzida pela doutrina chinesa de Guerra Cognitiva.

E assim o FIMI, base do recente estudo aqui trazido no início como objeto para ser aberto pela chave aqui demonstrada, ainda que em síntese ensaísta, constitui-se como aplicação e resultante do nexo causal entre a filosofia milenar de 'subjugar o inimigo sem lutar' e a busca contemporânea pela Superioridade Narrativa Estratégica. Só os meios, e os instrumentos é que mudaram.

Mais uma vez, ao contrário da lógica ocidental de aniquilação do centro de gravidade, a atual atuação chinesa, através do FIMI, replica e pode ser visualmente entendida como a colocação de 'pedras' informativas no tabuleiro global, cercando as perceções do adversário antes mesmo de qualquer hostilidade física ser declarada, procurando vencer, com a criação de estruturas (assumam elas a forma que assumem ou vierem a assumir) invencíveis.

**Figura 1.** Tabela Comparativa. Pedro Horta, com base em inquérito (Meneses, 2025)

| | Sun Tzu ("A Arte da Guerra") | Clausewitz ("Da Guerra") | Xadrez | Go | Proximidade Xadrez | Proximidade Go |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Origem** | China, século V a.C. | Prússia, século XIX | Índia, século VI (chaturanga) | China, há mais de 2.500 anos | Chegou à Europa antes de Clausewitz | Anterior a SunTzu |
| **Objetivo da Guerra** | Vencer sem lutar; alcançar vitória com o mínimo de conflito | Destruir as forças inimigas; alcançar objetivos políticos | Xeque-mate ao rei adversário | Controlar o maior território possível | Clausewitz | Go |
| **Natureza da Guerra** | Guerra como uma arte, baseada em estratégia e subterfúgio | Guerra como um ato político; "a continuação da política por outros meios" | Jogo estratégico de controle e ataque | Jogo de cerco e controle de território | SunTzu | SunTzu |
| **Importância da Estratégia** | Fundamental para vencer; enganar o inimigo, adaptabilidade | Fundamental; coordenar engajamentos para alcançar objetivos | Fundamental; planeamento de movimentos e controle do tabuleiro | Fundamental; controle de território e adaptação constante | Ambos | Ambos |
| **Uso de Engano** | Essencial; enganar o inimigo, criar confusão | Menos ênfase; mais foco na fricção e incerteza da guerra | Utilizado através de táticas como sacrifícios e armadilhas | Menos foco no engano direto; mais na influência e flexibilidade | Clausewitz | SunTzu |
| **Preparação e Informação** | Conhecer o inimigo e a si mesmo; importância da espionagem | Importância da inteligência militar, mas foco na "fricção" | Estudo das aberturas e das estratégias do adversário | Análise de padrões, equilíbrio de forças e adaptação contínua | Ambos | Ambos |
| **Economia de Forças** | Usar os recursos eficientemente; evitar batalhas desnecessárias | Importância da concentração de forças no ponto decisivo | Utilização eficiente das peças, evitando trocas desfavoráveis | Uso eficiente das pedras, evitando capturas desnecessárias | Clausewitz | SunTzu |
| **Mobilidade e Flexibilidade** | Adaptabilidade a diferentes situações; uso de terreno | Mobilidade e manobra são cruciais; adaptação às circunstâncias | Movimentos rápidos e eficientes, coordenação das peças | Mobilidade e flexibilidade essenciais para controle territorial | Ambos | Ambos |
| **Moral e Liderança** | Importância da moral e da liderança sábia | Importância da moral das tropas e da liderança | Planeamento e execução cuidadosa, controle emocional dos jogadores | Controle emocional e paciência são cruciais | Ambos | Ambos |
| **Decisões e Incerteza** | Tomar decisões rápidas e calculadas; aproveitar oportunidades | "Névoa da guerra"; fricção e incerteza são inerentes à guerra | Tomada de decisões baseada em análise e antecipação das respostas adversárias | Decisões baseadas em padrões e antecipação das respostas do adversário | Ambos | Ambos |
| **Finalidade das Ações** | Alcançar objetivos com o mínimo de custo e desgaste | Destruição das forças inimigas para alcançar uma paz duradoura | Captura e xeque-mate ao rei adversário | Controle e maximização do território | Clausewitz | SunTzu |

## Conclusões

Ao longo do presente trabalho percorremos o pensamento de Sun Tzu e de Clausewitz, encontrando nas ideias principais do mesmo, focando-nos quanto aos objetivos da Guerra, os seus princípios, as suas principais táticas. Depois avançamos para o jogo de Xadrez e de GO, exercendo igual busca empírica.

Por fim, estabelecemos uma tabela comparativa entre ambos, resultando, a demonstração, da a existência de semelhanças entre o jogo de Xadrez e o pensamento de Clausewitz, ocorrendo o mesmo em relação ao GO e ao pensamento de Sun Tzu.

Estas semelhanças, entre os jogos, cumulativamente com as distinções entre o pensamento Oriental e Ocidental leva-nos a procurar e a alicerçar a realização de uma outra investigação que contemple as perguntas subsequentes e que parte da primordial: Porquê? E mais: Como poderemos adentrar, no seu estudo, estabelecendo uma verdadeira capacidade de análise do pensamento Oriental (porque nos reconduzimos

sempre à utilidade), numa tentativa de compreender e antever a próxima jogada do outro?

Será que o podemos justificar com a cultura reinante no momento da sua conceção? Será que Sun Tzu se baseou no jogo de GO, ele próprio já profundamente impregnado do Taoismo? E aqui devemos ter outra vez o que dissemos acerca do Tao: existe um caminho, e esse caminho é para o Tudo, logo incito nos jogos, no pensamento empresarial, estratégico, político, familiar.

Da mesma forma revelou-se que Clausewitz tem muito mais semelhanças com Sun Tzu, nos primeiros dois capítulos do que esperava, o que pode constituir igualmente uma futura base de estudo.

Em conclusão, poderemos afirmar que as definições de Geopolítica e Geostratégia aqui propostas, integradas com a compreensão do fenómeno FIMI, atual, constituem-se como a chave hermenêutica para decifrar a atuação atual e futura da China no sistema internacional. Tal resulta da evidência empírica da tese aqui explorada e que reside, em proposta, na transposição dos arquétipos estratégicos do GO e de Sun Tzu, enquanto materialização do pensamento Ocidental e Oriental, para o novo paradigma do ciberespaço e para a guerra cognitiva.

Assim, com esta chave, poderemos compreender, entre outros, e aqui apenas trazido à colação para efeito de exemplo prático, mais do que uma simples técnica de desinformação, o FIMI representa a manifestação material de um pensamento coletivo que privilegia o cerco e a influência sobre a destruição, validando a premissa de que a complexidade da estratégia global pode ser antecipada pela compreensão das bases culturais e dos jogos de tabuleiro de uma civilização.

Por exemplo poderíamos abrir a porta a Carl Jung, com os seus Arquétipos e pensamento coletivo, ou à teoria dos memes que surgem do Gene Egoísta de Richard Dawkins, numa tentativa de explicação de um pensamento que se torna coletivo, e que impele determinados elementos mais próximos entre si de mimetizarem comportamentos e fins, com um objetivo homeostático, que em *ultima ratio*, é a dos Estados.

É esse trabalho, repetimo-nos, porque é essencial, que tem que ser aprofundando com recurso a equipas multidisciplinares que congreguem não apenas estrategas da Academia, mas igualmente psicólogos, linguistas, especialistas em ciberdefesa e segurança, especialistas em Teoria dos Jogos e até, como se viu, praticantes exímios de jogos de tabuleiro.

Não é para este ensaio. Apenas procurámos abrir uma porta, que há muito se encontra descoberta, mas por nós, ainda fechada.

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# CARL SCHMITT: A NEVER-FORGOTTEN THINKER AMONG ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AND POLITICAL FRAGILITIES

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## Abstract

One hundred years after Carl Schmitt published Römischer Katholizismus und politische Form, we find ourselves in a period in which the tensions between the sense of the State, economic development, and the support of democracy are still under debate. In this work, we analyze how Schmitt contributed to this debate at the time, but how, despite his political choices, his thought has been revisited and even gained special attention. Schmitt's controversial personality, the consistency of his arguments but also the fragility of his choices contributed to Schmitt's thinking being able to bring many arguments to the current debates around the strength of the State and the challenges of democratic designs.

## Keywords

Carl Schmitt, Democracy, Economic Development, Dictatorship.

## Resumo

Cem anos após Carl Schmitt ter publicado *Römischer Katholizismus und politische Form*, encontramo-nos num período em que as tensões entre o sentido do Estado, o desenvolvimento económico e o apoio à democracia continuam a ser objeto de debate. Neste trabalho, analisamos como Schmitt contribuiu para esse debate na época, mas também como, apesar das suas escolhas políticas, o seu pensamento tem sido revisitado e até ganhado especial atenção. A personalidade controversa de Schmitt, a consistência dos seus argumentos, mas também a fragilidade das suas escolhas, contribuíram para que o pensamento de Schmitt pudesse trazer muitos argumentos para os debates atuais em torno da força do Estado e dos desafios dos projetos democráticos.

## Palavras-chave

Carl Schmitt, Democracia, Desenvolvimento Económico, Ditadura.

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# CARL SCHMITT: A NEVER-FORGOTTEN THINKER AMONG ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AND POLITICAL FRAGILITIES

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## Introduction, Research Question, Objectives and Methods

To revisit the work of Carl Schmitt today is to confront a set of tensions that remain central to contemporary political life: the fragility of democratic institutions, the pressure for effective state action, and the enduring appeal of strong sovereign authority. One hundred years after *Roman Catholicism and Political Form* and nearly a century after *The Concept of the Political*, Schmitt's ideas continue to provoke debate—both because of their analytical sharpness and because of their association with one of the darkest chapters of the twentieth century. Yet the persistence of crises in the political, economic, and social spheres has generated a renewed interest in his conceptual vocabulary, particularly in moments where liberal democracies appear unable to respond rapidly or coherently to emerging challenges. Therefore, our Research Question now is "Why has Carl Schmitt's political thought gained renewed relevance in the 21st century, and how do his concepts help interpret the contemporary challenges faced by liberal democracies?"

This renewed attention is not merely anecdotal. Bibliometric evidence reveals a consistent and growing presence of Schmitt's work across languages and academic fields, confirming that his thought remains a reference point for scholars seeking to understand the tensions between sovereignty, democracy, and political identity. Such continuity of interest suggests that Schmitt's categories—decisionism, political theology, the friend/enemy distinction, and critiques of parliamentarism—retain explanatory power in a world characterized by polarization, economic dislocation, populist mobilizations, and crises of global governance.

The present study seeks to understand why Schmitt's thought has gained new relevance in the 21st century and how his conceptual framework can illuminate contemporary political dynamics. To do so, it is essential to situate his work within the historical circumstances that shaped it—most notably the economic collapse and political fragmentation of the Weimar Republic—and to trace the ways these ideas re-emerge today in debates about national sovereignty, constitutional resilience, and executive

power. Recent developments across Europe, the Americas, and Eurasia—ranging from Brexit to populist movements, from renewed geopolitical antagonisms to the governance dilemmas exposed by the Covid-19 pandemic—demonstrate striking parallels with Schmittian themes.

This article therefore pursues a dual ambition. First, it provides an empirical and historical account of the sustained interest in Schmitt's work through a bibliometric analysis of books, online search behavior, and academic publications. Second, it offers a critical examination of the philosophical and political foundations of his thought in light of contemporary democratic challenges. By combining these lenses, we aim to clarify both the analytical utility and the normative dangers of Schmitt's legacy, distinguishing the aspects that can help diagnose current political dilemmas from those that have historically been misused to justify authoritarian projects.

In sum, this article asks: Why has Carl Schmitt's political thought gained renewed relevance in the 21st century, and how do his concepts help interpret the contemporary challenges faced by liberal democracies? Addressing this question requires a re-engagement with Schmitt not as a prescriptive model for political action, but as a demanding and provocative interlocutor whose work continues to illuminate the fault lines of modern politics.

The general objective of this paper is to investigate the philosophical, historical, economic, and political reasons that explain the contemporary revival of interest in Carl Schmitt, and to assess the usefulness and risks of applying his concepts to current political dynamics.

This general objective is structured by five specific objectives: i) To perform a bibliometric analysis of the academic and public interest in Carl Schmitt using tools such as Google NGram Viewer, Google Trends, and the Scopus database; ii) To identify and systematize the main philosophical-political pillars of Schmitt's thought, including sovereignty, decisionism, the friend/enemy distinction, political theology, and critiques of parliamentarism; iii) To contextualize Schmitt's ideas within the economic and political crises of the Weimar Republic, evaluating how hyperinflation, unemployment, and instability shaped his theoretical formulations; iv) To examine parallels between Schmittian concepts and contemporary political phenomena, such as: the rise of populist movements in Europe and the Americas, Brexit, Russia's geopolitical posture, democratic erosion in Hungary and Poland, state responses to the Covid-19 pandemic; and v) To assess critically the analytical value and the normative dangers of Schmitt's ideas for contemporary democracies, distinguishing between their explanatory power and the risks of authoritarian appropriation.

This study employs a mixed qualitative–quantitative methodological approach designed to understand both the historical foundations of Carl Schmitt's thought and the reasons for its renewed relevance in contemporary political analysis. The methodological strategy is structured around three complementary components: a bibliometric analysis, a contextual–genealogical examination of Schmitt's work, and an interpretive comparison between Schmittian concepts and current political phenomena.

To assess the historical evolution of academic and public interest in Carl Schmitt, we conducted a descriptive bibliometric analysis drawing on three major data sources also incorporated in the empirical section of this paper: i) Google NGram Viewer, used to trace

the relative frequency of the bigram "Carl Schmitt" in book corpora across five languages (English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish) over the last century. This allowed us to observe long-term trends in Schmitt's presence in published literature; ii) Google Trends, used to measure global search interest in "Carl Schmitt" from 2004 to 2022, enabling an assessment of public curiosity and its temporal variations; iii) Scopus, used to identify the volume, type, and disciplinary distribution of peer-reviewed academic publications dedicated to Schmitt from 1998 to 2022. This provided an overview of the fields most engaged with Schmitt's work and the trajectory of scholarly attention over time.

To understand the intellectual foundations of Schmitt's political theory, we conducted a genealogical analysis grounded in the historical conditions of early-20th-century Europe and, more specifically, the political and economic crises of the Weimar Republic. This involved three stages: i) Examining primary works by Carl Schmitt (e.g., The Concept of the Political, Roman Catholicism and Political Form, The Dictatorship) in order to reconstruct the central pillars of his thought.; ii) Contextualising these works within contemporaneous events such as hyperinflation, deflationary policies, mass unemployment, and the political instability that culminated in the collapse of Weimar democracy; and iii) Interpreting how Schmitt's concepts—sovereignty, decisionism, political theology, and the friend/enemy distinction—emerged as responses to perceived failures of liberal parliamentarism and constitutional normativism. The goal of this component is not to offer a strictly historical reconstruction, but rather to elucidate the conceptual architecture of Schmitt's thought as it relates to moments of crisis.

In the third methodological step, we apply Schmitt's concepts to selected contemporary political developments in order to identify possible parallels between his theoretical framework and current democratic tensions. This interpretive analysis focuses on: The rise of populist and nationalist movements in Europe and the Americas, Brexit and debates over sovereignty, Russia's geopolitical posture and the re-emergence of antagonistic friend/enemy narratives, Constitutional tensions in Hungary and Poland, and the role of the "state of exception" during the Covid-19 pandemic. These examples were chosen based on their visibility in current scholarly debates and their relevance to themes explicitly addressed by Schmitt. This approach does not claim that contemporary actors intentionally adopt Schmittian ideas; rather, it examines how his concepts offer analytical tools for understanding present political dynamics.

The structure of this article is as follows. In Section 2, we show that Schmitt's thought has always resonated within Western democracies, even during periods of lesser attention such as the 1980s. In Section 3, we show how his ideas reflected many of the dynamics of the economic and social crises he experienced, particularly during the two world wars. We conclude the paper in Section 4 by revealing how, in Schmitt's interpretation, the refuge in a strong sovereign helps us understand many contemporary societies that, while not applauding the actions of governments and presidents, still end up voting for them.

## Review of Literature

## Carl Schmitt and the genealogical foundation of his thought: The five philosophical-political pillars

To the broader concept of international relations, the establishment of the "Westphalian Peace" brought the most robust meaning of what we now call the "modern state" (Moreira, p. 84-87, 2010). With Westphalia came the setback of the mediating vein played by the Catholic Church, which had already denoted the weaknesses expressed in the resolutions of the 100 Years' and Thirty Years' Wars; on the other hand, this new interstate contractualism also extended the affirmation of Locke's liberal ideas to religious dissident accommodation within Christianity (Locke, 2018). The emergence of Benthamian concerns of the "man is wolf to man", advocated in Hobbes's *Leviathan*, introduced the public road to a new model of state, based on the order and security necessary for the state of law to supplant the "State of Nature" (Hobbes, 2010).

These two axes—law and nature—would influence Schmitt's thinking: the first, resulting from a progressive secularization of a power conceptualized by the Catholic Church, by this time threaded into the web of international relations; the second, because the idea of establishing order through the monopoly of force was exclusively addressed to the sovereign of the modern state.

Rasch (2019) also interprets Carl Schmitt through a historically expansive lens, arguing that Schmitt's political theology and critique of liberalism must be understood in relation to long-standing intellectual traditions reaching back to medieval theology and nineteenth-century social theory. In "Carl Schmitt: State and Society", Rasch (2019) neither defends nor condemns Schmitt; instead, he highlights the enduring tension Schmitt identifies between "society," defined by private rights and individual pursuits, and the "state," conceived as a guardian of the common good. Rasch sees Schmitt's work as raising persistent questions about sovereignty, the structure of political authority, and the limits of liberal dogma—issues that remain as relevant today as they were in the Weimar era.

Let us note specifically what Schmitt writes regarding the ordering of church power and the transposition of the formula to the secularized model of the state. He writes that democracy must revoke all differentiations and dispositions typical of the 19th century, namely the religious (confessional) as being opposed to political (Schmitt, p. 47, 2020). Schmitt also calls for a strong sovereign in this model of the state. Alternatively, the "total State of parties" would not be a total state, due to its weakness and its inability to defend itself against the assault of parties, whereby it would fail to cover all areas of social life (Schmitt, p. 18, 2020).

In short, the Westphalian Peace led to a concept of *Silte theologi in munere alieno*—that theologians remain silent on matters that do not concern them. There also arose a factual concentration of power in the state, which constituted itself as supremely sovereign.

Fundamentally, the first two ideas of Schmittian thought are:

1- The modern state concentrated the organizational and managerial sovereignty of political action elevated to the maximum power: war (Schmitt, p. 10, 2020).

2- The modern state—purging religious power from the scene—adopted religious "governance", in a theological secularization of politics (Schmitt, p. 16, 2020).

Certainly, these two initial ideas—which led Schmitt to conclude that through the modern state, putative religious conflicts were curbed—were not enough to end the competitiveness of countries, nor the eagerness to impose oneself on the others that would transform the much-desired and Kantian Perpetual Peace (Kant, 2022). Maritain later discusses how the purge of religious power from the scene enabled the appearance of populist dictatorships in Europe (Mourao and Miranda, 2020).

As a consequence, the "Diktat" notarized in Paris (Treaty of Versailles, 1919) appeared to be leonine for the newly-named Republic of Weimar, formed after the Armistice of the First World War. Let us look at the latent socio-economic consequences in some detail.

## Schmitt in Weimar: A critical reading of economics

The period of 1919–1932 was in economic terms a period of complex analysis, and there is no vision in current economic history that can be identified as a dominant vision for this period in Germany, in Europe, or globally. As Niveau (1966) claims, one of Germany's main partner countries before 1914 was the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which was dissolved in 1918, leading to the emergence of countries such as Austria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia that shared the characteristic of coming from a war that deeply affected their demographic and economic structures. These countries created an incipient free trade zone and, in the early 1920s, the economic results revealed the worst-case scenario: significant public and external deficits in Austria, a significant devaluation of currencies in the foreign exchange markets, and a rush to appeal for foreign aid (notably from the League of Nations).

At the same time, whether as a factor or as a consequence in the crisis in these countries, inflation raised prices to levels very different from those reported in 1914: on average, the same good cost 14,000 times more in Austria, 23,000 times more in Hungary, and 2.5 million times more in Poland in 1920. Germany, however, is the record-holder of this period: between 1914 and 1923, the price of goods in Germany rose 1000 million times—a classic case of hyperinflation. The German mark was removed from most international transactions and was seen as only an internal currency. Thus, it is no wonder that the Versailles Peace Treaty was unpopular with the Germans (and even many voices on the winning side were uncomfortable with it).

This controversy stemmed from four fundamental articles:

a) Article 45. Exploitation of Coal Mines by France, in a clear concession by Germany.

b) Article 119. Renunciation of the overseas colonies in favor of the Allies; with this, they lost the raw materials that would feed the industrial development.

c) Article 171. The end of war industry, with the widespread idea in Germany that its defense would be impossible.

d) Article 232. Total reparation for the damages inflicted on the Allied powers, in a clear sense of "non-forgiveness".



To counteract the course of events, from 1923 onward, Schacht outlined a set of measures that included the creation of a banking stabilization mechanism (the 'Rentenbank') and the appearance of a monetary revaluation unit (the 'Rentenmark' ). With the first signs of monetary stabilization, foreign capital inflows arrived between 1924 and 1925, mainly from English and North American investors. However, devastated France (supported by other economies) claimed from the Commission of Reparations the effective amounts for its own reconstruction, reaching an agreement (the Dawes Loan) that would oblige Germany to pay every year and without term, amounting to around GBP 100 million. Therefore, although Schacht tried to stabilize the German economy, the reparation agreements cancelled out the efforts he undertook.

These developments were aggravated by the internationalization of an economic crisis that began in the United States of America in October 1929. North American investments and then British investments significantly retracted in Germany; consequently, German industrial production halved between 1929 and 1932. Several authors argue that the all-consuming fight against hyperinflation in the early 1920s led to an obsession with deflation, which accelerated the economic depression in Germany. Protectionist policies were then adopted all over the world, which led to the London Economic Conference in 1933. Faced with the devaluation of the sterling pound, which generated some positive impact on British external accounts, Germany adopted clearly protectionist policies: quotas of imports, control of the flow of capital, and revision of bilateral agreements.

In the year 1933, the Nazi government clearly took on the fight against unemployment as an economic ideal. In the 24 months between January 1933 and December 1934, Germany reduced the number of unemployed workers from 6 million to 2.6 million—a number that declined more sharply after 1935, with state subsidies to private companies as well as with the dynamics of the armament industry. Wages were fixed, unions were suppressed, and basic goods were rationed.

Carl Schmitt reflected on this economic environment with a detailed discussion. It was a dark period holding enormous difficulties for the population, which was capitalized on by the German government. As Niveau (1966) summarizes: "*L'hyperinflation de 1923 a été l'une des causes de la politique déflationniste de 1931-1932. Les consequences sociales de cette déflation ont créé des conditions favorable à l'avènement du nazisme. Jamais une mauvaise politique économique n'aura couté si cher au monde entier*" (p.244).

The "Pax Romana", under the management aegis of the League of Nations, could be seen as part of the latter's failure in the context of future international relations. It is this imposing "yoke" resulting from the amalgamation agreed between the winners (which Schmitt calls "*jus publicum Europaeum*") that would structure another of his thoughts: the inability of mutual recognition between winners and losers, generating in the latter such a sanctioned culpability and inferiority that it unbalances the understanding of hitherto-consensual concepts such as peace, law, justice, and humanity itself. This was sufficiently detailed in his writings *The Status Quo and Peace* and *The Central Question of League of Nations*.

This supreme appropriation of concepts in favor of the moral superiority of the winners is what makes obvious in his work *The Concept of the Political* the formulation of the "friend/enemy" archetype—although with a different orientation between its writing in

1927 and its final draft in 1932, namely in the matrix pillar of this conjecture. Concretely, we are talking about his definition of the state.

Nowadays, the state may appear consensual and as José Fontes describes it, "a territory, a people and a political power" (Fontes, p.22, 2009); for Schmitt, in 1927, it was based predominantly on the people, as a unit, defining policies of paradigmatic principles and values consistent with the almost Aquinian precept of "civil friendship" (Schmitt, pp. 41-42, 2020). His evolution to 1932 allocates to political power the interpretative discretion of the "mystical" foundations associated with the unity and political protection of the state's identity (Schmitt, pp. 161-162, 2020). This decision-making infallibility that Schmitt conditions to the sovereign only parallels with the dogmatism of the Roman Catholic infallibility of His Holiness the Pope, whomever he may be (Schmitt, 2013).

This absolutist idea is reinforced by the democratic inaction of the Weimar Republic in the face of what Schmitt and some German elites considered the denigration resulting from Versailles. In fact, the representative and federal semi-presidentialism of the Weimar Republic always contained moderating rituals of a certain vindictive popular drive—a counterweight, if you like, that still exists in the constitutional spectrum of Western democracies.

Weimar, like the modern state, weakened in the polarization of "common things", neglecting the essential—or, better said, the existential—and bringing it closer to what Schmitt calls the "Total State", colonized by current party interests and without regard for the metapolitical. Now, his anti-parliamentarism became more manifest, since circumstances were considered exceptional and relevant. It required an effective discernment that the ubiquity of treatment given by the parties to all issues did not place the prominent ones at the top of the agenda (Schmitt, p.18, 2020).

This is the motto that Agamben (2018) later classifies as a "State of Exception", clarifying a concept addressed by interpretations of the jurist Schmitt, who in *The Guardian of the Constitution* argues that legal-constitutional normativism is insufficient to construe the best interests of the state in circumstances of absolute tension; instead, this domain should be attached to political power. This line of reasoning was based on the recovery of the prestige of the state and would be verified in Weimar with Hitler's to power.

We have, then, two more ideas of Schmittian thought to add to the two previously stated:

3- The "friend/enemy" concept, as a passive identity reserved for the defeated people of the First World War, as a reaction to the moral superiority imposed by the winners that limited the mutual and balanced recognition of nations (Schmitt, p. 14, 2020).

4- The state, genealogically based on the idea of a people, can only defend its interests through reinforced political powers of an anti-parliamentary nature, due to the ubiquitous weaknesses of the "total party state"—in other words, a concentrationist state of power must emerge (Schmitt, p. 17, 2020).

Here, as a product of what has already been described in German history and the subsequent rise to power of the Nazi Party (which Schmitt joins), comes his last argument: Decisionism.

This formulation results from the idea that, for the state to establish public order, legal normativism is insufficient when we are faced with abnormal situations. In other words,

there is a pre-constitutional metapolitics that, in order to establish normality, paradoxically suspends the current normativism. This attributes to the sovereign (the highest decision-maker) total discretion over the political-managerial options to be taken. This is a clear contrast to the republican maxim that suggests that what concerns everyone should be decided by everyone.

In an eminently political analysis, when that normality has been broken (a circumstance invoked in Weimar, in which the Reichstag fire of 1933 was only the final motive), mechanisms must be created that allow the sovereign to decide without the usual procedures of the modern state—that is, undemocratically (Schmitt, pp.166-167, 2020).

In practice, there is a suspension of representative civil rights and the decision passes to the interpretation of the incumbent sovereign, who defends the restoration of the civil rights that are being adulterated by the abnormality of the current circumstances.

Despite the original Schmittian formulation, it is in practice an establishment of a centralist, authoritarian, and personalized governance embodied in a strong leadership. It is here where we can trace a genealogical path of his thought, based on his educational roots that were also perceptible in his work.

## Schmitt's decisionism

Let us first consolidate the concept of decisionism through the decomposition of the "puzzle" into three pieces that, set against one another, fit together in a logical way.

The first piece is a theological invocation for a secularized society. The second piece is centralism in the decision—in a direct interpretation of absolute natural law—as Jean Bodin had developed. The third piece is the exclusivist interpretation of the will of the people by the sovereign, or as it is antithetically referred to in current times, an "illiberal democracy"—i.e., the execution of the popular will via the ritualistic suspension of the representative modern state.

As "decisionism" is one of the central ideas of Schmittian thought, which offers highly relevant historical reflections and spans various historical periods, we must examine it in some additional detail. Let us start with the element that connects the theological to the secular.

When Schmitt evokes the "Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations", he critically examines what he considers a spiritual evolution in European society that created a certain space for liberal thought (Schmitt, pp. 141-2, 2020). He details these transformations in four steps that we must discuss. The first step occurred in the 16th century, when the theological component was more marked. Subsequently, the 17th century saw a certain metaphysical maturation to a more "moralistic-Kantian" nature in the 18th century. After the 18$^{th}$ century, European western societies entered the economism and the glorification of technique (Schmitt, pp.143-149, 2020).

The glorification of reason from Kantian rigorism gave way to the "political romanticism" brought by liberalism. As Schmitt saw it, this liberalism sought to make technique an axial value to neutralize and depoliticize the symbolic elements that justify a state's political culture. The exemplary invocation of the positivist Comte to deny the historical-evolutionary character of the theological to the metaphysical (and finally to positivism)



was made exclusively to stress that technique is an instrumental means and not an end in itself (Schmitt, pp.150-153, 2020): it could serve both liberal and more conservative ideas, depending on who treated them. The point here is that, according to Schmitt, the secularization intended by liberal ideas only tended to take away the cultural and spiritual nerve of different communities, dissolving the political-identity role for economic glorification—and of course, with obvious prejudice against the exploited or defeated peoples in the world order that came from Versailles (Schmitt, pp.154-157, 2020).

In terms of the second element, from Schmitt's 1927 writing to his 1932 version, there is an evolution that we deductively reason is due to the Bodian concentrationist element of decisionism. The sovereign, as Bodin wrote, directly adjusts "accounts" with the divine, since he has factual power to do what he understands has to be done (Freitas do Amaral, pp.159-166, 2012). Schmitt's secularization, without the religious element, leads to the same idea: the sovereign holds decision-making primacy. By complementary automatism, this is based on the third element: a strong sovereign making the decisions of state affairs as a collective organization of the people.

Thus, finally, we have the fifth idea of Schmittian thought:

5- "Decisionism" as a form of governance, which, incidentally, was "perfectly" applied in the Third Reich (Matos & Milan, 2013).

## Analysis of Schmitt's relevance through a bibliometric exercise of Carl Schmitt's work and reasons for current attention to it

### The proof of Schmitt's presence in western debates by a bibliometric analysis

Although Schmitt's thinking has gained recent increasing attention, we will prove that Schmitt's work has been read and discussed over the decades since the 1940s. To prove this, we engage in a descriptive bibliometric analysis, which will follow the steps proposed by Mourao and Popescu (2022). Thus, we will observe the values indicated in the Google Ngram Viewer, the values reported by Google Trends, and, subsequently, the information provided by the Scopus database.

The algorithm underlying the NGram Viewer application enables the identification of "phrases [which] have occurred in a corpus of books (e.g., "British English", "English Fiction", "French") over the selected years." In our case, it highlights the relative frequency with which the name "Carl Schmitt" appears in the bibliographic collection catalogued in the database. The algorithm considers a set of two words—such as "Carl Schmitt"—a 'bigram'. It is possible to verify the percentage occupied by this particular bigram considering all the bigrams identified in the catalogued books. Finally, more important than the value of relative frequency—which is found on the vertical axis—is the trend observed over time, demonstrating a growing importance if there is a trend of growing values seen on the vertical axis or a descending importance if a reverse trend is seen. Additional details are provided on the algorithm's official website (https://books.google.com/ngrams/info#).

We also note that we considered it relevant to differentiate the values by language of publication (English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish). As will be seen, different

lines of observation were found. Let us start with books in English (Figure 1): there is a small moment of attention around 1940, then stabilizing at insignificant values until 1980, after which the trend has been clearly increasing to the present day.

**Figure 1.** NGram Viewer for "Carl Schmitt" in English-language books

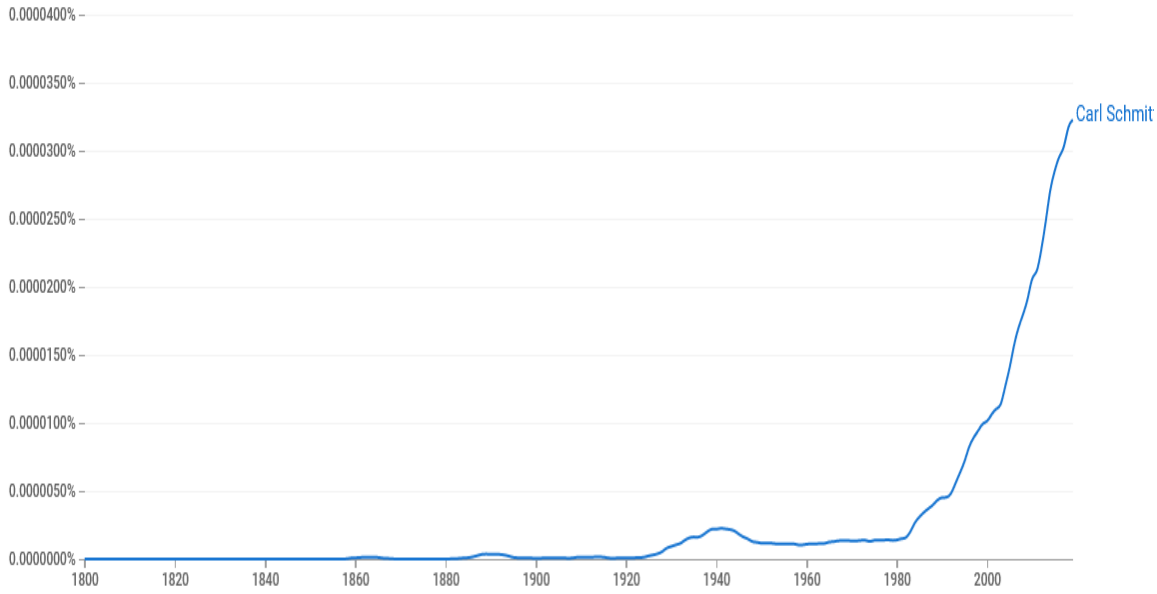
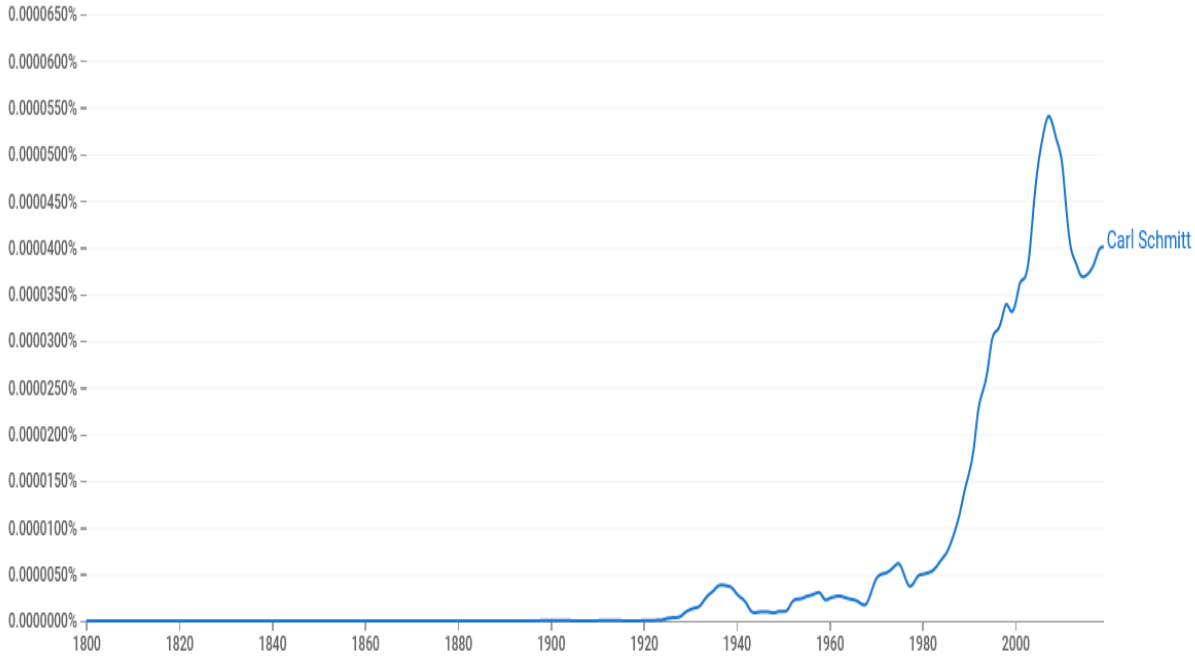



**Figure 2.** NGram Viewer for "Carl Schmitt" in French-language books



Looking now at the editions in French, we see that there was also an initial interest in "Carl Schmitt" around 1940, followed by a sharp increase between 1960 and 2010, and then a slight decrease after 2010.

**Figure 3.** NGram Viewer for "Carl Schmitt" in German-language books




As an author originally published in German, Carl Schmitt presents an interesting reading in Figure 3, where we see that attention is paid to Carl Schmitt in German books as early as 1920, which grows until the beginning of World War II, then decreases significantly until 1945. From then on, the graph in Figure 3 indicates an increasing trend in the relative frequency of the bigram "Carl Schmitt", which reaches a peak around the year 2000. Interestingly, in the identified German-language books, the bigram in question decreases in the most recent two decades.

Figure 4 shows the evolution of the relative frequency of this bigram in Italian-language books. Once again, the figure presents a small peak around 1940, with a significant growth from 1970 until the year 2000, when it gained a new growth stimulus.

Finally, Figure 5 shows the evolution of the relative frequency of the bigram in Spanish. This also depicts interesting behavior. The bigram's frequency in Spanish-language books became prominent around 1925 and grew until 1965, after which it decreased slightly until 1980. From then on, the popularity of Carl Schmitt has grown to the present day.

We now turn from our bibliometric analysis to the analysis of the results returned by the Google Trends algorithm. Unlike NGram Viewer, which is focused on books, this algorithm is focused on searches made on Google's website. Thus, in line with the interpretations of Mourao and Popescu (2022), Google Trends shows a global curiosity about a given name, phenomenon, or set of words, since the beginning of the company's file in 2004.

**Figure 4.** NGram Viewer for "Carl Schmitt" in Italian-language books

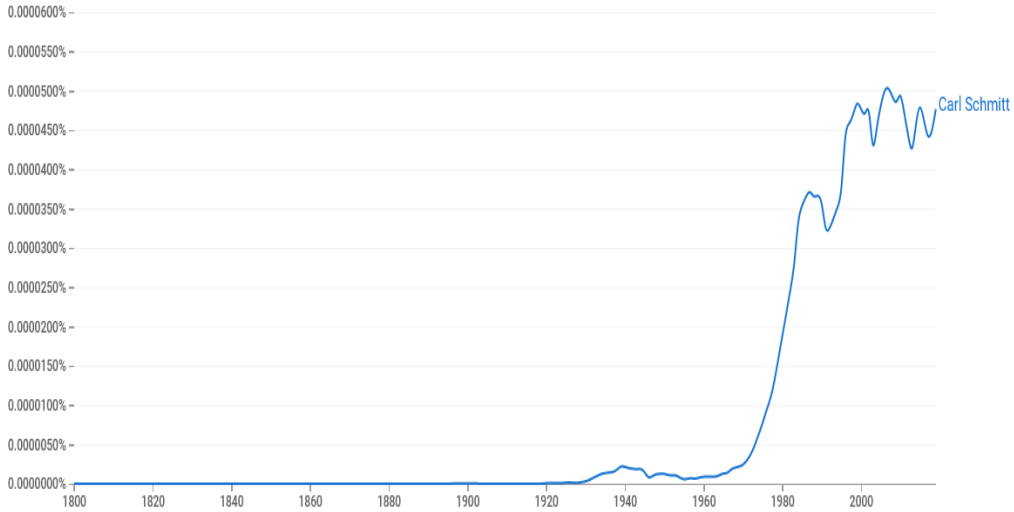


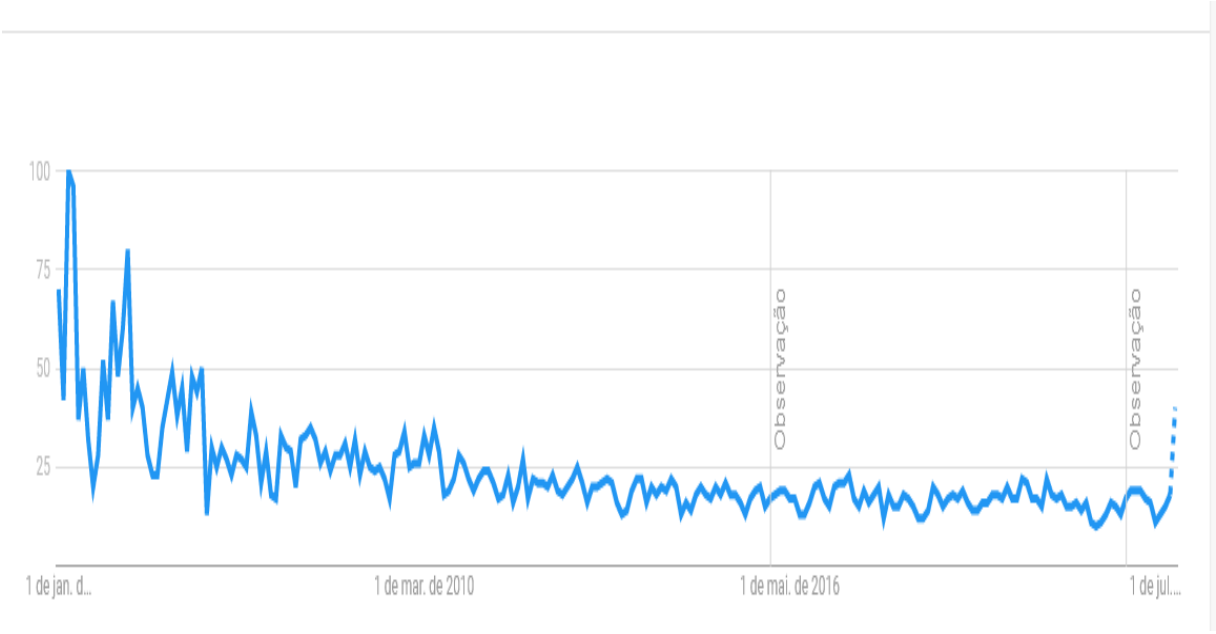

**Figure 5.** NGram Viewer for "Carl Schmitt" in Spanish-language books




It should be noted that the vertical axis, associated with interest in the searched lexical set, varies across an interval of 0–100, with 100 being the value associated with the maximal popularity in the period in question. According to the algorithm's official information (Google Trends, 2022), "A line trending downward means that a search term's relative popularity is decreasing—not necessarily that the total number of searches for that term is decreasing, but that its popularity compared to other searches is shrinking".

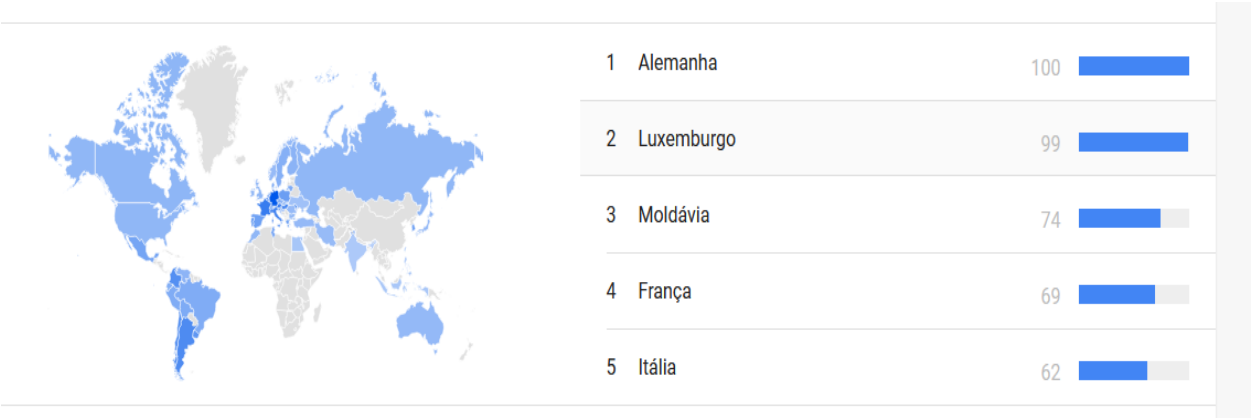
When we searched for "Carl Schmitt", we obtained the results seen in Figure 6. In searches on Google's site, the term's maximal popularity occurred in March 2005, with a continuous decrease until the middle of 2007, stabilizing thereafter at a level of popularity equivalent to 25% of the indicated peak.

**Figure 6.** Google Trends of the lexical set "Carl Schmitt"




The same Google Trends app enables more detailed analysis, such as the country from which the majority of searches for the term came. Figure 7 reveals that the 5 countries that searched most for "Carl Schmitt" were, in order of decreasing rank, Germany, Luxembourg, Moldova, France, and Italy. The 10 countries that searched the most for the term included the 5 already listed plus Chile, Austria, Spain, Hungary, and Argentina.

**Figure 7.** Countries with the most searches for Carl Schmitt on Google Trends (2004–2022)

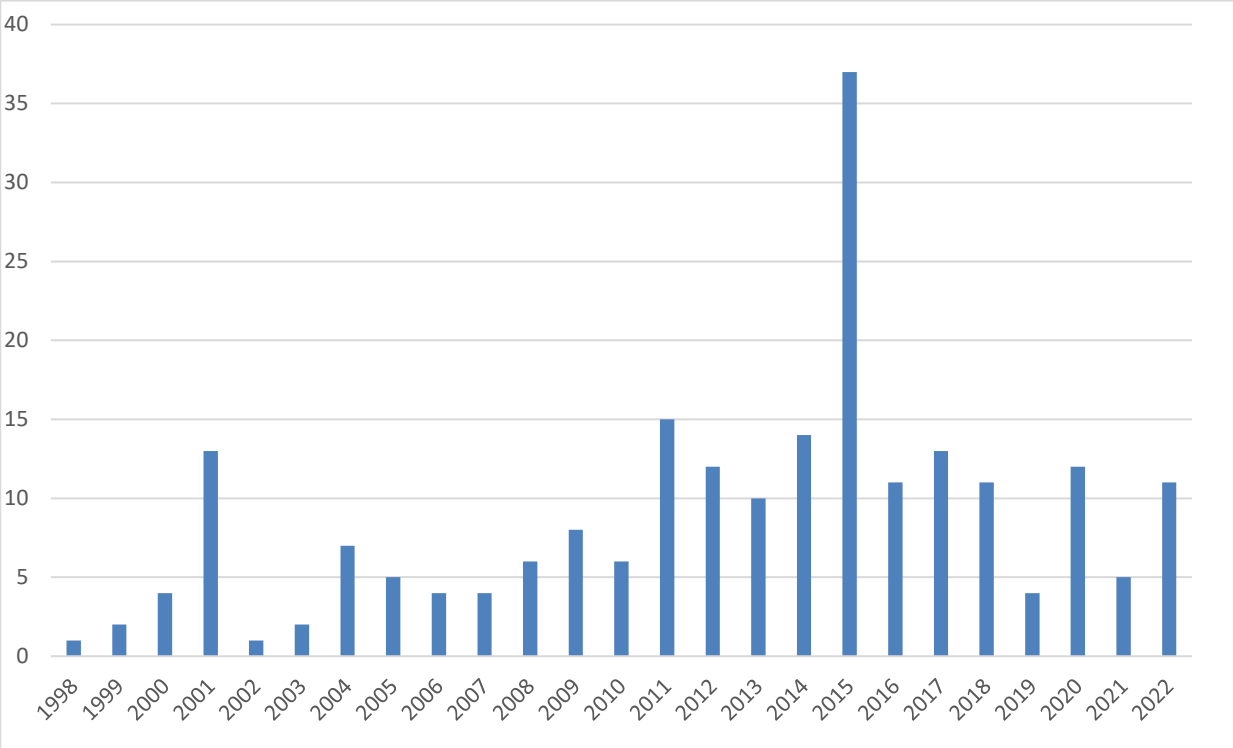



Legend: Alemanha=Germany; Luxemburgo=Luxembourg; Moldávia=Moldova; França=France; Itália=Italy.

We close this descriptive and bibliometric contribution with a search conducted in one of the most extensive databases in the academic world: the Scopus database. This database allows us to complement the previous analysis, which is dependent on other algorithms.

We find that Scopus identified 261 works focused on the thinking of Carl Schmitt, as of November 7, 2022. Its evolution from 1998 onward is described in Figure 8.

**Figure 8.** Works about "Carl Schmitt" (Scopus database)




In Figure 8, it can be seen that, since 1998—i.e., in the last 24 years—there has been an average of 18 works published on Schmitt in the various journals indexed by Scopus, with a sharp growth starting in 2011; this is yet more proof of a "rediscovery" of Schmitt's thought, even in academic analysis.

Most of these works are identified as 'research articles' (158), although there are also 35 entries in academic encyclopedias and 34 'book reviews'. The journals that published the most on Carl Schmitt in this period were, in descending order: *History of European Ideas* (62 research publications), *Political Geography* (43), *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (25), *Journal of Historical Geography* (16), *Geoforum* (11), *Cuestiones Constitucionales* (7), *Estudios Politicos* (6), *Acta Sociologica* (4), and *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Politicas y Sociales* (4). Most of the identified works are related to 3 major fields: Social Sciences (164), Arts & Humanities (137), and Economics, Econometrics & Finance (26).

## Some reasons for the growing attention on Carl Schmitt

Weber took the "nerve" out of the so-called "civil society" by pushing it toward a certain anomie (Durkheim, 2001), the vanishing point of which there was a latent nihilism. Consequently, this type of society, with diverse sociopolitical contexts but surrounded by

a feeling of impotence, is more sensitive to polarization and factional appeals (Mouffe, 2019). Taken together, these are the right ingredients for receptivity to authoritarian proposals (Riemen, 2012). These ingredients herald the reestablishment of an ancestral, almost anthropological order, which restores key elements for freedom.

Recent, more 'directist' examples that we observe in the global order can verify this, considering the return of British sovereignty with Brexit, the excitement around Trump with his "Make America Great Again" movement, and Bolsonaro's "Green and Yellow" movement in Brazil.

It is therefore of superlative interest to verify the genealogical thread of Schmittian thought that investigates the motivations embedded around a decision-making centralism that he sought to structure as a metapolitical dimension. In this way, we can be in a position to reach the heart of his most emblematic ideas, verify their comparability with today's reality, realize what the concentrationist ideas of power are based on, and—more ambitiously—make a precautionary call to the "dawn" of civil society. This follows Müller (2003) who approaches Carl Schmitt as a troubling yet intellectually enduring figure whose anti-liberal critiques continued to influence European political and legal thought after 1945. In "A Dangerous Mind: Carl Schmitt in Post-War European Thought", Müller (2003) examines how Schmitt's conceptual legacy—spanning political theology, constitutional theory, and critiques of liberal universalism—was re-appropriated by diverse intellectual movements across the political spectrum. Müller (2003) argues that Schmitt's work persists because it exposes vulnerabilities in liberalism, particularly in moments of crisis, and because post-war European debates on globalization, technocracy, sovereignty, and constitutional jurisprudence repeatedly return to Schmitt's frameworks to articulate the limits of liberal governance.

Tracy B. Strong, another major interpreter of modern political thought, engages Carl Schmitt within a broader twentieth-century constellation of thinkers confronting the erosion of overarching political "visions." As an authority on Schmitt and editor of influential editions such as *Political Theology* and *The Concept of the Political*, Strong (2007) emphasizes Schmitt's central claims about sovereignty, political theology, and the friend–enemy distinction as responses to the crisis of liberal rationalism. His work situates Schmitt among figures like Nietzsche, Weber, Kant, and Arendt, stressing that what unites these thinkers is their recognition that political life cannot rely solely on rational, depoliticized frameworks. In Strong's reading, Schmitt becomes a pivotal figure for understanding how modern politics grapples with legitimacy, authority, and the limits of liberalism in an age skeptical of stable normative foundations

## Discussing Schmittian thought and modern parallelisms

Thus we come to the point in which to reflect on how the thought of this philosopher of the twentieth century can have relevant reflections for everyday reality.

The last few years have been full of various events on the international political scene that seem to indicate the presence of Schmitt's philosophical background in a set of decisions; these events should be reviewed.

From the outset, this conceptualization took hold in British society, where national institutions were dissolving in the face of the power from Brussels. This idea of

participatory tax evasion arose in one of the longest, most consistent, and most dynamic democracies on the "old continent"—which also has a strong identity component that is not alien to its geographical circumstances and that is woven into the different communities that make up Great Britain under the mainstay of the monarchy. This idea seemed to indicate a power corset, a diffusion of decision-making beacons, and a dilution of the national spirit that, deep down, could—in the long run—mean a secondary role for the British political-institutional entity, so proud of its autonomy to the point of showing it within the framework of religious organization. This pattern first became established with the MEP Nigel Farage, and then with Boris Johnson in the role of Prime Minister—who recovered the "old transatlantic alliance" with the United States and Donald Trump.

Another international occurrence—more slippery in time, yet nonetheless pressing—was Vladimir Putin's reinterpretation of the "friend/enemy" concept. With the breakup of the Soviet Union and the consolidation of the liberal-globalist model in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the international order after the Second World War, despite maintaining the legal-international spectrum based on the UN, diluted the historical bipolar consensus. In addition to the ideological diversity that seemed to have an interregnum there, it supplanted Russian aspirations to participate in the "balance of nations" in an important way. Two no-less-relevant factors were added to the mix. The first factor was a reading of universal history that diluted the role of the USSR in the defeat of Nazism, since the USA ended up materializing its leadership in the military-political context in European territory; this occurred together with the enlargement of NATO to borders close to Russia, which was seen as an international threat. In addition to not being recognized for its past merits in overcoming the Nazi danger, Russia was now almost surrounded by the "companions" of Yalta. The second factor was the Soviet implementation of perestroika. Despite the epiphenomenon of the so-called BRIC (emerging economies characterized by impressive growth rates), the effective consolidation of this group of countries occurred with China, which maintained state communism yet knew how to carry out strategic international expansion in the chain of raw materials and to absorb a good part of the development and industrial production.

Without extensive interpretations, there may be a Schmittian explanation for the occurrence of the war in Ukraine: a political-institutional mischaracterization with repercussions on the official historical interpretation, and a feeling of military siege and a marginalization in the global economy that deserved (in the Kremlin's assessment) the opposition by military means to recover the status of great world power. In other words, the Schmittian "friend/enemy" concept is clearly evident here.

Another political manifestation that deserved to be copied by the international community, namely within the European Union, was the set of changes of a legal/constitutional nature that overestimated the importance of politics in the public sphere, with a decrease in the effective independence of the judicial system. This practice, contrary to the core founding values of the European Community, may well be impressive as a Schmittian thought that evolved into the sense that the "people" element is centralized in the figure of political leadership rather than prescribed in the legal-constitutional order. In this order, there is a dichotomous political–judicial complementarity (Varzim and Silvares, 2021). Given this, the same effect is extended, if in a more mediatic way and vitalized by the defense of national identity "threatened by the other" (e.g., the foreigner, the migrant), which calls into question the cultural

elements considered as fundamental in Viktor Orban's mirrored view of Hungary (Lusa, 2022).

The foundation of all this—due to its strategic, dimensional, economic, and (naturally) political importance—was Donald Trump. Realizing China's economic rise and the unifying effects of this on the global supply chain, Trump devised the epitome "Make America Great Again" as a way of recovering the leading honor that the US held in much of the "first round" of globalization as we understand it today. This movement encompassed protectionist ideas, the centralization of political power, the strong and authoritarian decisionism locating the Other and in the Different as the reason for "turning to oneself". This set of ideas has gained several followers, not only in Europe but in the Americas: these ideas were also decisive in the election in Brazil of Jair Bolsonaro, who devised an intra-territorial "friend/enemy" narrative, composed an ethics of national good, appropriated the colors of the national flag, and made his failed attempt at re-election in a composite of "who is with me is the true Brazilian" (Gomes, 2022). This cliché was, incidentally, also taken on by the leaders of the emerging radical right-wing parties—particularly the Portuguese Far right party—when he assumed himself as a defender of the "good Portuguese" (Carvalho, 2021).

This whole climate of political competitiveness between more dialoguing ideas and more nationalist ones has occurred on a global scale with the Covid-19 pandemic as an "intermezzo". This onset brought a set of transformations to the political sphere (Coutinho, pp.141-145, 2020). It contained one of the links that Schmitt considered fundamental for the assertion of power in the sovereign: the "state of exception". Agamben (2018) masterfully discussed this assertion, detailing the dangers of "concentrated power" and—in contrast to Schmittian ideas—the loss of autonomy and popular will when, on this pretext, democratic institutions and practices are decreased. Henry Lévy was even more incisive in pointing to the upheaval brought about by the virus in terms of the normal functioning of institutions and the world as we are used to seeing it (Lévy, 2020). In reality, and with enough distance to conduct a preliminary analysis, we are able to verify that the set of countries that most assumed the idea of central power—specifically, dictatorships—imposed draconian measures to confine populations more effectively or more quickly (Simone and Mourao, 2021). However, the attempt to dissolve the individual through its minimization and technological control (such as the *stay away covid* app), in addition to its adulterated ethical dimension from a democratic point of view, ended up bringing less benefit to those who adopted it (Han, 2014). WHO figures on the status of the virus (Lusa, 2023) show us also that Western democracies arrived at the vaccine more quickly than dictatorships.

China, which refused foreign aid in order to control the remaining Covid cases (Tiago, 2023), demonstrates that excessive sovereignty in this pandemic episode can degenerate into isolationism and that the centralization of political power does not always provide medium-term responses that lead to the two fundamental links that Schmitt proposes: the interests of the "people" or the interests of the state itself.

## Conclusion and Emerging Challenges

At the end of the previous section, we pointed out a certain "median goodness" of measurable results corresponding to the actions of Western democracies for the

resolution of cases in moments of "exception". However, the truth is that the decision-making ritualism contemplated in democracies appears, at times, as a less-expedient formula for action.

Today, a certain permeability of the concentrationist ideas of power suggested by Carl Schmitt is facilitated by a set of realities:

- the delay of Western democracies in responding to certain demands of an increasingly informed civil society, which require fluidity in the processes carried out by the public sphere;
- the slowness of justice in processes, mediated by the symbolic importance that is withdrawn for the functioning of the community;
- corruption, especially among public decision-makers who should be committed to civic service to the community;
- the insecurity arising from the "ghettoization" that results from less successful models of wealth redistribution, or simply through exogenous segregation;
- large sovereign debts that charge citizens with (heavy) taxes on work and do not allow significant investment that promotes the creation of wealth;
- the degradation of public services provided in sensitive areas such as health, civil protection, and education;
- an unstable inflation, and with it the devaluation of wages and savings;

among many other examples that could be expounded.

In conclusion, in this work, we validated the current importance of Schmittian thought. This is due to the philosophical construction that, as we have seen, exists in the subconscious of those who search for a better functioning of society.

Carl Schmitt, who *sanctified* politics, particularly reflected on what the supporters of democracy consider a vice: the interpretation of the popular will by the sovereign. This is because the examples of personalized sovereignty embodied in a single individual have degenerated into dictatorships that restrict individual freedom. Worse occurs—as in the extreme case of Nazism—when Schmitt's ideas undergo a literalist interpretation that does not take advantage of their density.

Finally, we have the stimulating reading and argumentative rigor that Carl Schmitt brings to the current philosophical–political context, one that is always in need of being revisited. A consequential purification of his thought is emerging, among the most informed democracies, in a moderation of his ideas through the action of a prompt, fair, effective state that defends the general interest—which leads to a general perception of satisfaction and community pride.

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# O CIBERESPAÇO COMO OBJETO DE ESTUDO NAS RELAÇÕES INTERNACIONAIS: BREVE ANÁLISE À LUZ DAS TEORIAS DO REALISMO E CONSTRUTIVISMO

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## Resumo

Desde o último terço do século passado, com a revolução ocorrida a nível das tecnologias de informação e de comunicação e o advento da Internet, o ciberespaço tem assumido uma importância crescente para as sociedades contemporâneas, tanto do ponto de vista geopolítico como geoeconómico, enquanto palco de interação global e de disputa pelo poder por parte dos diferentes atores que nele operam. Assim, atendendo ao impacto do ciberespaço nas sociedades coetâneas e, mais concretamente, no seio das Relações Internacionais (RI), neste artigo procuramos analisar e compreender como é que o Realismo e o Construtivismo, enquanto correntes teóricas das RI, interpretam as dinâmicas de poder e interação no ciberespaço, considerando que se trata de um não-lugar antropológico e de uma estrutura não-física, socialmente e discursivamente construída. Para a concretização deste objetivo, centramos a nossa atenção no Estado, enquanto ator/denominador comum das mencionadas correntes teóricas, procurando, por um lado, identificar os pontos de convergência e de divergência entre as referidas correntes teóricas no que ao ciberespaço respeita e, por outro, compreender as fundações ontológicas e epistemológicas em que assenta a construção do ciberespaço enquanto objeto de estudo daquelas. Por fim, apresentamos ainda aqueles, que, na nossa perspetiva, são os principais desafios futuros que o ciberespaço e as tendências que nele emergem colocam às RI do ponto de vista teórico, designadamente, para o seu desiderato central de explicar e proporcionar o conhecimento da realidade internacional envolvente.

## Palavras-chave

Ciberespaço, Realismo, Construtivismo, Ontologia, Epistemologia.

## Abstract

Since the last third of the twentieth century, following the revolution in information and communication technologies and the advent of the Internet, cyberspace has assumed increasing importance for contemporary societies — both geopolitically and geoeconomically, as a global arena of interaction and power contestation among diverse actors. Taking into account the profound impact of cyberspace on modern societies and, more specifically, within the field of International Relations (IR), this article seeks to analyze and understand how Realism and Constructivism, as key theoretical schools of IR, interpret the dynamics of power and interaction in cyberspace, which is conceptualized here as an anthropological non-place and a non-physical structure that is socially and discursively constructed. To achieve this aim,

the focus is placed on the State as the common actor within both theoretical frameworks, with the goal of identifying points of convergence and divergence regarding cyberspace, and of understanding the ontological and epistemological foundations that sustain its construction as an object of study. Finally, the article presents, from our perspective, the main future challenges that cyberspace and its emerging trends pose to IR theory, particularly in relation to its central goal of explaining and promoting knowledge of the surrounding international reality.

**Keywords**

Cyberspace, Realism, Constructivism, Ontology, Epistemology.

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# O CIBERESPAÇO COMO OBJETO DE ESTUDO NAS RELAÇÕES INTERNACIONAIS: BREVE ANÁLISE À LUZ DAS TEORIAS DO REALISMO E CONSTRUTIVISMO

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## Introdução

Se o ato de questionar a realidade é uma atividade específica do homem, desenvolvida com o intuito de conhecer o mundo que o rodeia, a investigação científica e a Ciência são, por sua vez, o resultado dessa atitude incessante de querer conhecer e dominar a realidade envolvente (Coutinho, 2015).

Logo, as Relações Internacionais (RI), enquanto campo de estudo autónomo no seio das Ciências Sociais (CS), cujo objetivo central é proporcionar o conhecimento da realidade internacional, designadamente, através do corpo de teorias produzido no seu seio (Mendes, 2019a), procuram explicar as relações e os fluxos políticos, económicos e sociais, independentemente da sua natureza, que atravessam fronteiras (Rigueira, 2012), abrangendo não só as relações entre os Estados, mas também entre indivíduos ou grupos, sejam elas de natureza comercial, cultural, científica ou social, e quer respeitem a trocas de bens ou à circulação de ideias ou informações (Sousa & Rocha, 2022).

Neste âmbito, para um breve enquadramento histórico das RI, importa referir que, pese embora o termo "*internacional*" tenha surgido somente em finais do século XVIII, com o filósofo inglês John Bentham (Sousa & Rocha, 2022), o estudo das relações internacionais, entendidas enquanto relações entre os Estados e/ou nações, remonta à Antiguidade Clássica, mais concretamente ao século V a.C., com o historiador grego Tucídides, e o seu relato da Guerra do Peloponeso, e os filósofos Platão e Aristóteles, aos quais se seguiram, entre muitos outros, Nicolau Maquiavel, Immanuel Kant e Karl Marx (Erskine, 2013; Lebow, 2013).

Desde o final do século XIX e, sobretudo, a partir do começo do século XX, como resposta à fragilidade do sistema internacional evidenciada pela Primeira Guerra Mundial (1914/1918) e as suas consequências devastadoras (Bueno, 2024), este campo de estudo conheceu um acelerado desenvolvimento, culminando na produção de novos métodos e técnicas de análise, e na elaboração de múltiplos modelos explicativos e teóricos da envolvente internacional, que permitiram às RI autonomizar-se, enquanto disciplina, no seio das CS (Sousa, 2005).

Assim, considerando a crescente importância que o ciberespaço assume para as sociedades contemporâneas, tanto do ponto de vista geopolítico como geoeconómico (Castells, 2007; Giddens, 2010) e em particular no seio das RI (Finnemore & Hollis, 2016; Isnarti, 2016; Leonard, 2022), enquanto palco de interação global e de disputa pelo poder por parte dos diferentes atores que nele operam (*e.g.* Estados, organizações internacionais, organizações transnacionais, empresas, organizações ligadas à criminalidade transnacional, organizações não governamentais, entre outros), no presente artigo procuramos analisar e compreender a abordagem ao ciberespaço através das lentes teóricas do Realismo e do Construtivismo nas RI, considerando que se trata de um não-lugar antropológico (Augé, 2012) e de uma estrutura não-física, socialmente e discursivamente construída (Santos, 2018).

Para a concretização deste objetivo, centramos a nossa atenção no Estado, enquanto ator/denominador comum das mencionadas correntes teóricas, procurando, por um lado, identificar os pontos de convergência e de divergência entre as referidas correntes teóricas no que ao ciberespaço respeita e, por outro, compreender as fundações ontológicas e epistemológicas em que assenta a construção do ciberespaço enquanto objeto de estudo daquelas.

Assim, começamos pela apresentação do ciberespaço e da sua evolução, analisando a importância crescente daquele nas sociedades coetâneas, bem como a sua afirmação enquanto objeto de estudo nas RI.

Seguidamente, avançamos com a apresentação das correntes teóricas do Realismo e do Construtivismo nas RI, analisando, por um lado, as suas principais premissas, fundamentos e conceitos, e, por outro, a forma como o ciberespaço é visto por cada uma daquelas correntes teóricas.

Nesta senda, apresentamos, ainda, uma análise ontológica e epistemológica do modo como as correntes teóricas do Realismo e do Construtivismo nas RI, por um lado, entendem a natureza do ciberespaço e, por outro, abordam o conhecimento sobre aquele.

Considerando o trabalho desenvolvido nas etapas analíticas anteriores, apresentamos também aqueles, que, na nossa perspetiva, são os principais desafios futuros que o ciberespaço e as tendências que nele emergem colocam às RI do ponto de vista teórico, particularmente, para a concretização do seu desiderato central de explicar e proporcionar o conhecimento da realidade internacional envolvente.

Por último, no que à abordagem metodológica escolhida respeita e porque tal definição se afirma como essencial em qualquer trabalho de natureza científica (Coutinho, 2015), refere-se que o estudo aqui desenvolvido é de caráter eminentemente expositivo, inserindo-se num modelo qualitativo de investigação assente na análise das fontes e da literatura recolhida (Santos, 2018), tendo em vista responder à problemática apresentada neste artigo.

## Ciberespaço, Sociedade e Relações Internacionais

Como é consabido, as sociedades organizam-se e estabilizam-se em torno de sistemas partilhados de crenças, assim como de gestão e afetação de recursos, que são,

concomitantemente, construções sociais e representações da sua relação com a envolvente exterior, das quais se tornam indissociáveis (Santos, 2018).

Neste sentido, a crescente importância do ciberespaço nas sociedades contemporâneas resulta não somente dos desenvolvimentos tecnológicos ocorridos desde o último terço do século passado e em curso, que estão na origem, entre outros, do advento da *Internet*, mas também da forma como a sociedade se apropriou da tecnologia resultante daqueles progressos (Cardoso et al., 2015). Logo, atualmente, não é possível pensar as sociedades coetâneas sem considerar a sua vertente tecnológica, uma vez que esta é um reflexo indissociável da componente material da sua atividade (Simões, 2005).

Assim, num mundo caraterizado por transformações constantes que afetam praticamente todas as vertentes da vida nas sociedades hodiernas, assente numa ordem global/sistema mundo, cuja principal caraterística é a globalização (Giddens, 2010), que se desenvolve e alicerça em tecnologias de grande velocidade de comunicação e em sistemas de informação, assiste-se a um aceleramento do processo de digitalização e de interconectividade em todas as áreas da atividade humana, com reflexos profundos em termos económicos, sociais e políticos (Castells, 2007), impactando em larga escala a realidade envolvente e promovendo a criação e a emergência de novos espaços de interação e disputa, como é o caso do ciberespaço (Leonard, 2022; Nunes, 2015; Santos, 2014), que se carateriza não só pela sua qualidade de não-lugar antropológico (Augé, 2012), mas também por ser uma estrutura não-física, socialmente e discursivamente construída (Santos, 2018).

O ciberespaço, ou, na sua evolução terminológica mais recente, metaverso (Fevereiro, 2022; L. B. Martins & Wolfe, 2023), conceito criado por William Gibson, em 1984, no romance *Neuromance*r, como metáfora para descrever um espaço não-físico concebido por redes de computadores, resulta, assim, das referidas revoluções tecnológicas que estão na génese do advento da *Internet*, que, como é conhecido, potenciou, de forma exponencial, as capacidades de comunicação através da *World Wide Web* (WWW), e que está na origem de uma fusão cada vez maior entre o mundo físico e a realidade virtual/digital (L. B. Martins & Wolfe, 2023).

Esta crescente fusão entre os espaços físico e digital (L. B. Martins & Wolfe, 2023), como consequência dos já mencionados avanços tecnológicos registados na área das comunicações e a nível dos sistemas de informação, que favorecem não só a integração dos mercados à escala global, mas também a circulação de fluxos de capitais, de ideias, de pessoas e de bens, diluindo, progressivamente, as fronteiras entre o real e o digital, e criando novas geografias (Dodds, 2019), tem conduzido a uma maior preponderância do mundo virtual, tanto do ponto de vista geopolítico como geoeconómico, na vida das sociedades contemporâneas, designadamente, enquanto palco privilegiado de interação e de disputa pelo poder por parte dos diferentes atores que nele operam (*e.g.* Estados, organizações internacionais, organizações transnacionais, empresas, organizações ligadas à criminalidade transnacional, organizações não governamentais, entre outros) (Jøsang, 2024; Leonard, 2022; Schwab, 2017).

A título de exemplo desta crescente importância do ciberespaço nas sociedades coetâneas, vejam-se os documentos estratégicos de ciberdefesa e cibersegurança produzidos por diversos Estados (*e.g.* Portugal, Estados Unidos da América (EUA) e

República Popular da China) (Cyberspace Administration of China, 2016; Presidência do Conselho de Ministros, 2022; U.S. Department of State, 2024) e Organizações Internacionais Intergovernamentais (*e.g.* União Europeia (UE) e Organização do Tratado do Atlântico Norte (OTAN)) (European Commission, 2024; North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2024), que, cada vez mais, reconhecem no ciberespaço um domínio estratégico importante de operações semelhante ao dos espaços físicos (*e.g.* terra, mar, ar e espaço), sendo, portanto, tratado como um elemento integrante do processo de planeamento estratégico e operacional de atuação daqueles atores, numa perspetiva de multidomínio e de defesa da soberania (Madubuko & Chitsungo, 2024; Nunes, 2016; Santos, 2014).

Esta preocupação dos Estados e Organizações Internacionais Intergovernamentais deriva, em grande medida, do facto de não existir, ainda, um domínio/controle sobre o ciberespaço por parte de qualquer ator que nele opera, seja ele estatal, internacional intergovernamental ou outro, pelo que quem detém o conhecimento para operar a tecnologia é também o detentor do poder, situação que, ao contrário do que sucede no espaço físico, funciona como uma espécie de balanceador do equilíbrio de poderes entre os atores no ciberespaço, reduzindo as assimetrias militares ou outras que existem no mundo real, uma vez que a atuação daqueles no ciberespaço, por depender, em larga escala, do conhecimento tecnológico para atuar, é, no fim do dia, muito menos onerosa do que seria em caso de atuação no mundo real (Gartzke, 2013; Rocha & Farias da Fonseca, 2019; Schwab, 2017).

Portanto, é neste contexto que as RI, enquanto disciplina autónoma no âmbito das CS, com o objetivo de proporcionar o conhecimento e compreensão da realidade internacional envolvente, nomeadamente, através do corpo de teorias produzido no seu seio (Mendes, 2019a), têm vindo a centrar uma crescente atenção no ciberespaço enquanto objeto de estudo, procurando compreender e explicar as interações e disputas de poder que nele ocorrem entre os diferentes atores que ali operam, assim como o seu papel estratégico na geopolítica e geoeconomia global.

## A Teoria Realista das Relações Internacionais

De acordo com Smith (2013, p. 9), todas as teorias produzidas no seio das RI são localizadas no espaço, no tempo, na cultura e na história, pelo que as suas leituras e assunções da realidade envolvente nunca são feitas a partir de nenhures, estando, antes pelo contrário, profundamente enraizadas nos contextos socioculturais que moldam as perceções dos atores que as produzem. Ou seja, a interpretação das dinâmicas internacionais é influenciada não só pelas circunstâncias geopolíticas, mas também por narrativas históricas, tradições culturais e experiências coletivas, que, por sua vez, enformam as identidades e interesses das geografias a partir das quais são produzidas as referidas teorias, das quais são indissociáveis (Nisbett, 2019; Smith, 2013).

Feito este pequeno enquadramento inicial, partimos agora para a análise do Realismo, enquanto corrente teórica das RI. Assim, e para marcar desde já o racional que iremos seguir neste capítulo, começamos por referir que o Realismo, para os efeitos que se pretende prosseguir neste artigo, será analisado como um todo, querendo isto dizer que as visões que iremos desenvolver abrangem o conjunto de correntes teóricas realistas

das RI, que vão desde o Neorrealismo, passando pelo Realismo Neoclássico, até chegarmos aos chamados Realismo Ofensivo e Realismo Defensivo – no fundo estas teorias nada mais são, na nossa perspetiva, do que movimentos teóricos de continuidade e adaptação do Realismo às transformações da realidade internacional envolvente, que, numa perspetiva *darwinista*, obrigam esta grande corrente teórica a uma adaptação constante para, por um lado, compreender e explicar o real e, por outro, responder às críticas oriundas de outras correntes teóricas nos seio das RI.

O Realismo, ou melhor, a chamada Escola Realista das RI, de origem anglo-americana, surge na década de 1920, no contexto pós-guerra da Primeira Guerra Mundial (1914/1918) e das suas consequências devastadoras, como um modo sistematizado de estudo e análise científica das RI, que se afirmou e consolidou, sobretudo, no contexto da Guerra Fria (Mendes, 2019b; Rocha & Farias da Fonseca, 2019).

Esta abordagem teórica científica das RI, cujas origens remontam ao historiador grego do século V a.C., Tucídides, e, mais concretamente, à sua narrativa sobre a Guerra do Peloponeso, reconhece não só o papel central do poder em todas as formas de política, mas também as limitações desse mesmo poder e as formas pelas quais ele se pode transformar numa fraqueza (Lebow, 2013).

Na perspetiva do Realismo, as RI definem-se, essencialmente, pela condição anárquica da política internacional e pela distribuição desigual de poder na estrutura do sistema internacional (Lebow, 2013; Mearsheimer, 2013; Mendes, 2019a), assentando nas seguintes três premissas (Rocha & Farias da Fonseca, 2019):

1. Os Estados têm um papel central na envolvente internacional, sendo os principais atores daquela e os únicos com o nível de recursos e capacidades, sobretudo militares, para projetar o seu ascendente sobre os demais e impor a sua vontade àqueles;
2. Os Estados procuram satisfazer e priorizar os seus próprios interesses, para, assim atingirem os fins que preconizam;
3. Devido à ausência de uma governança internacional, ou de um poder equivalente, a envolvente internacional assume um caráter anárquico, fazendo com que os Estados vivam numa constante disputa pelo poder e, consequentemente, a segurança e a independência territorial estejam sob ameaça constante, uma vez que não existe qualquer tipo de controle sob as suas ações.

Neste contexto, as possibilidades de se estabelecerem relações estáveis de cooperação entre os atores do sistema internacional, aqui entendidos como Estados, é, logo à partida, uma improbabilidade (Lebow, 2013), o que não só evidencia um claro pessimismo antropológico, mas também, em nosso entendimento, uma descrença enorme na Humanidade e na capacidade de esta construir um sistema internacional assente na cooperação e entreajuda entre os atores que nele operam, embora, para esta corrente teórica, estes se restrinjam aos Estados – no fundo, para o Realismo, o funcionamento das RI está condenado a ideais como o grupismo, o egoísmo, a anarquia e, não menos importante, a política de poder (Mendes, 2022a).

Em termos práticos, podemos definir o Realismo como uma teoria estrutural no seio das RI que evidencia as dinâmicas de distribuição material do poder dentro de um sistema

internacional anárquico, onde os Estados atuam e reagem numa lógica contínua de concentração e balanceamento de poder, tendo em vista preservar ou tentar alterar a ordem internacional, que, por sua vez, pode ser unipolar, bipolar ou multipolar (Mendes, 2022a).

Pese embora se reconheça o potencial do Realismo para captar a lógica abstrata de constante procura e manutenção do poder por parte dos Estados coetâneos, assim como dos dilemas de segurança que aqueles enfrentam, não podemos, contudo, deixar de referir aquele que, em nosso entendimento, é o seu maior ponto fraco na compreensão e explicação do sistema internacional contemporâneo, caraterizado pela criação e emergência de novos espaços de interação e disputa de poder no sistema internacional: fruto da sua matriz filosófica científica positivista, o Realismo tende a naturalizar ontologicamente o sistema Vestefaliano vigente, intrinsecamente ligado ao mundo material-natural, e a olhar para os fatores de poder material como fenómenos naturais, o que acaba por levar a que, como procuraremos demonstrar mais à frente, a sua aplicação, por exemplo, no ciberespaço, enquanto não-lugar antropológico e estrutura não-física, só seja possível por via daquilo que definimos como um salto ontológico e epistemológico cínico, assente na construção social e discursiva de uma estrutura não física, especialmente impactante na vida das sociedades hodiernas.

Ora, chegados aqui, centramos agora o olhar na forma como o ciberespaço é visto pelo Realismo. Assim, apesar da sua natureza virtual e socialmente/discursivamente construída, esta corrente teórica das RI chega ao ciberespaço, enquanto objeto de estudo, por via da afirmação crescente daquele como um instrumento de poder e um espaço/geografia eminentemente anárquico, onde os Estados, entre outros atores, atuam e desenvolvem ações com o objetivo final de satisfazer e priorizar os seus próprios interesses, para, assim, atingirem os fins que preconizam (Leonard, 2022; Rocha & Farias da Fonseca, 2019).

Um exemplo desta realidade é o ciberataque supostamente lançado pelos EUA, possivelmente em parceria com Israel, contra o Irão, em 2010, levado a cabo para prejudicar o programa nuclear iraniano, designadamente, por via, de um *software* malicioso (*Stuxnet*), desenhado para sabotar as centrífugas de enriquecimento de urânio, levando à deterioração dos equipamentos e atrasando o progresso nuclear iraniano (BBC News, 2012). Este ataque não só exemplifica a capacidade dos EUA em utilizar ferramentas cibernéticas para influenciar a geopolítica de maneira furtiva e eficaz, mas também suscitou questões éticas e legais sobre a utilização desta tipologia de "*ciberarmas*", reflexo do crescente poder das tecnologias digitais nas sociedades coetâneas e, mais concretamente, no teatro de operações militares contemporâneo (Vilar Lopes & Oliveira, 2014).

Outro exemplo de operações deste género perpetradas pelos Estados, ou grupos associados a estes, no ciberespaço foi, em 2017, o ataque realizado pelo grupo de *hackers Lazarus*, associado à Coreia do Norte, levado a cabo através de um *software* malicioso (*WannaCry*) (Euronews, 2017; Woollaston-Webber, 2017), que se espalhou rapidamente, explorando uma vulnerabilidade no sistema operativo *Microsoft Windows*® e impactando centenas de milhares de computadores em mais de 150 países. Este ataque causou graves interrupções de serviços essenciais em diversas instituições públicas dos Estados afetados, como aconteceu, por exemplo, no Serviço Nacional de Saúde da Grã-

Bretanha, resultando no cancelamento de mais de 20.000 consultas médicas, 600 cirurgias e no encerramento dos serviços de urgência médica em diversas unidades de saúde (Leonard, 2022).

Para rematar e porque as implicações práticas das teorias são sempre importantes, não podemos deixar de referir que, do ponto de vista do Realismo, estes dois exemplos são paradigmáticos em relação à aplicação, neste caso, no ciberespaço, das premissas em que assenta esta corrente teórica no seio das RI, com vista a compreender e explicar a realidade internacional envolvente. Ou seja, os EUA e a Coreia do Norte, na defesa dos seus interesses e para atingirem os fins que preconizavam, perante Estados concorrentes no sistema internacional (i.e., Irão e Grã-Bretanha), procuraram, através dos recursos e meios tecnologicamente avançados que detinham, impor a sua vontade numa geografia virtual, como é o ciberespaço, com um caráter marcadamente anárquico, projetando, a sua vontade sobre os demais, para, assim, alterarem a ordem internacional, diminuindo, no caso do EUA, a capacidade nuclear do Irão e, no caso da Coreia do Norte, prejudicar o normal funcionamento das instituições dos Estados concorrentes no sistema internacional, como aconteceu, por exemplo, com os constrangimentos sentidos no sistema nacional de saúde da Grã-Bretanha, que por força do ataque perpetrado por via do *software* malicioso *WannaCry*, acabou por paralisar, ainda que temporariamente.

## A Teoria Construtivista das Relações Internacionais

Como referimos no capítulo anterior, as teorias produzidas no seio das RI estão localizadas no espaço, no tempo, na cultura e na história, sendo as suas leituras e assunções da realidade envolvente profundamente enraizadas nos contextos socioculturais que moldam as perceções dos atores que as produzem (Smith, 2013).

O Construtivismo, enquanto corrente teórica nas RI, emergiu e ganhou força a partir do final dos anos 1980 e começo dos anos 1990, como uma resposta às limitações das teorias predominantes, como o Realismo e o Liberalismo, especialmente à luz das transformações resultantes do fim da Guerra Fria (Fierke, 2013; Mendes, 2012).

Esta abordagem teórica, embora tenha raízes filosóficas mais diversificadas do que as do Realismo, continua a ter uma matriz predominantemente ocidental (Mendes, 2012), sendo, na sua essência, uma teoria social que evidencia a importância determinante das relações constitutivas que se estabelecem entre as ideias, o conhecimento e os factos (Fierke, 2013; Mendes, 2022b). Ou seja, os aspetos que realmente importam para as RI não são exclusivamente materiais, são também sociais e ideacionais, motivo pelo qual todas as variáveis relevantes para as teorias das RI (*e.g.* poder militar, transações económicas, instituições internacionais ou preferências domésticas) não são importantes só pela sua qualidade material objetiva, mas, fundamentalmente, por terem determinados significados sociais e por serem objeto de interpretações ideacionais intersubjetivas, fazendo com que, por exemplo, a anarquia do sistema internacional seja vista, em grande medida, como o resultado de uma construção social, cujo significado não advém somente da sua objetividade material, como acontece no Realismo, mas também do entendimento intersubjetivo dos Estados (Isnarti, 2016; Mendes, 2019a; Wendt, 1995).

Neste sentido, e como refere Mendes (2022), o Construtivismo pode, assim, ser definido como uma teoria das RI que atribui especial importância à inter-relação entre ideias, crenças, identidades e ideologias dos atores internacionais, sendo, por essa razão, particularmente sensível ao estudo da mudança e da historicidade das RI, uma vez que, ao contrário do que sucede com o Realismo, a mudança é vista como o resultado, sobretudo, de fatores ideacionais, sociais e normativos, e não apenas da mera alteração dos fatores materiais.

Ao contrário do Realismo, o Construtivismo não restringe o seu interesse ao ator Estado no sistema internacional, alargando o escopo, entre outros, a atores transnacionais ligados às Organizações Não Governamentais (ONG) ou às redes de advogados transnacionais, muito por força da sua capacidade de influência sobre os interesses dos Estados (Mendes, 2022b). Não obstante e, como já referido, para os fins do presente artigo, centraremos a nossa atenção no ator Estado, uma vez que é este o ator/denominador comum entre as teorias em análise.

Neste âmbito, não podemos deixar de referir, no que toca às áreas de pesquisa, que também o foco do Construtivismo é mais alargado do que o do Realismo, que se centra apenas no ator Estado e na relação deste com os seus pares no sistema internacional (Mendes, 2022a). Assim, o Construtivismo alarga também a sua área de pesquisa ao estudo do papel das normas, designadamente, das suas funções regulatórias e constitutivas, bem como da sua influência na construção dos interesses do Estado, das organizações e outros atores no sistema internacional (Fierke, 2013; Finnemore & Hollis, 2016; Mendes, 2022b).

Esta viragem teórica do Construtivismo, para além de importante e inovadora, entre outros aspetos, pela rutura com o paradigma vigente no seio das RI preconizado pelas correntes teóricas tradicionais (*i.e.* Realismo e Liberalismo), significou uma alteração na forma como a disciplina das RI se vinha estruturando, facilitando uma importante evolução disciplinar, nomeadamente, pela adoção de um novo estilo de debate multilateral altamente comunicativo, em detrimento de debates bilaterais pouco comunicativos promovidos pelas correntes teóricas tradicionais das RI, que, até então, eram hegemónicas (Mendes, 2012).

Centrando agora o nosso olhar na forma como o ciberespaço é abordado pelo Construtivismo, começamos por sublinhar, como já aqui referido, que esta corrente teórica das RI destaca a importância das construções sociais e das perceções que moldam a interação entre os atores no espaço. Assim, do ponto de vista do Construtivismo, embora o ciberespaço tenha uma dimensão técnica e material, a sua verdadeira natureza é socialmente e discursivamente construída, refletindo as identidades, normas e valores dos atores que nele operam (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Wendt, 1995).

Um exemplo emblemático do Construtivismo aplicado ao ciberespaço é a forma como os Estados e outros atores moldam narrativas e identidades através das plataformas digitais. Um caso relevante é o papel das redes sociais durante a chamada Primavera Árabe, onde diversos movimentos sociais usaram a tecnologia para mobilizar apoio, disseminar mensagens e desafiar os regimes estabelecidos, destacando como as estruturas sociais e as interações que nelas ocorrem influenciam as dinâmicas de poder (Howard & Hussain, 2011). Este exemplo ilustra bem não só a influência do ciberespaço

na política, mas também a forma como a construção social de identidades e interesses se manifesta em ambientes virtuais.

Para concluir, e tendo como contraponto o capítulo anterior, se para o Realismo o ciberespaço é visto como um campo de batalha para disputa e confrontos de poder por parte dos atores que nele operam, no caso do Construtivismo este espaço geográfico virtual não se reduz a essa definição, sendo, antes de mais, um campo de construção de significados e normas que definem as interações entre os atores que nele interagem. Neste sentido, à medida que os países se envolvem em atividades cibernéticas, a forma como eles percebem e interpretam essas ações é moldada por contextos sociais, históricos e culturais, promovendo uma nova forma de entender as RI e a mudança nas dinâmicas de poder que se estabelecem no ciberespaço.

## Análise Ontológica e Epistemológica do Ciberespaço à luz das correntes teóricas do Realismo e Construtivismo no seio das Relações Internacionais

Em capítulo anterior deste artigo analisamos o Realismo, enquanto corrente teórica das RI, destacando a sua capacidade para explicar a constante procura de poder pelos Estados e os dilemas de segurança destes, reconhecendo a especial vocação desta teoria para a concretização desse objetivo. Contudo, apontámos também aquelas que, em nosso entendimento, são as suas limitações na compreensão do sistema internacional contemporâneo, especialmente, no tocante à sua dificuldade em lidar com a emergência de novos espaços de interação, neste caso, virtuais, como é o caso do ciberespaço.

Devido à sua matriz filosófica científica positivista, o Realismo tende a naturalizar ontologicamente o sistema Vestefaliano, intrinsecamente ligado ao mundo material-natural (Mearsheimer, 2010), considerando os fatores de poder material como fenómenos naturais. Esta visão apresenta uma ontologia limitada na compreensão do ciberespaço, que se carateriza por ser uma estrutura não-física socialmente e discursivamente construída (Santos, 2018), exigindo, por isso, o que denominamos anteriormente como um "*salto ontológico e epistemológico cínico*" para a sua abordagem enquanto objeto de estudo por parte desta corrente teórica.

Assim, apesar da natureza virtual e discursivamente construída do ciberespaço, o Realismo, como que num verdadeiro salto quântico do ponto de vista ontológico, olha para o ciberespaço numa lógica material-natural, concentrando-se, sobretudo, no seu caráter anárquico, enquanto lugar de disputa de poder onde os Estados procuram satisfazer os seus próprios interesses (Leonard, 2022; Rocha & Farias da Fonseca, 2019), ignorando, no entanto, a natureza virtual daquele e concentrando-se, do ponto de vista epistemológico, nos aspetos mensuráveis de disputa de poder entre os Estados, como, por exemplo, as capacidades cibernéticas e os ciberataques direcionados.

Já o Construtivismo oferece, por sua vez, uma abordagem ontológica e epistemológica alternativa, na medida em que na análise ao ciberespaço destaca a sua natureza socialmente construída, vendo-o para além de uma mera extensão direta da anarquia Vestefaliana, como uma arena onde identidades, normas e valores são negociados e redefinidos pelos diferentes atores que nele interagem. Conforme refere Wendt (1995),

a própria anarquia é uma construção social, moldada pelas interações e perceções dos atores, cujo comportamento é influenciado pelas normas sociais vigentes (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998).

A ontologia construtivista considera, assim, o ciberespaço como um espaço fluido e em constante transformação, moldado pelas interações sociais, sendo que, do ponto de vista epistemológico, o Construtivismo concentra a sua atenção na interpretação e no significado atribuídos pelos atores às interações no ciberespaço, reconhecendo que a construção social de interesses e identidades é fundamental para a compreensão das dinâmicas de poder naquele espaço operacional.

Para finalizar este capítulo, importa referir que, na nossa perspetiva, a combinação do Realismo e do Construtivismo, numa lógica teórica de complementaridade nas RI, oferece uma análise mais completa do ciberespaço. Assim, se o Realismo destaca as implicações de poder e segurança, o Construtivismo adiciona a dimensão da construção social, normas e identidades na formação das interações no ciberespaço – esta perspetiva dual é, em nosso entendimento, crucial para melhor conhecer e compreender os desafios que o ciberespaço coloca às RI, especialmente, por oferecer a possibilidade de uma análise equilibrada que contemple não só as necessidades de segurança dos atores, mas também as complexas realidades sociais que moldam as ações daqueles no ciberespaço.

## O Ciberespaço e os Desafios Futuros para a Teoria das Relações Internacionais

A análise do ciberespaço através das lentes teóricas do Realismo e do Construtivismo, apresentada nos capítulos anteriores, revelou a complexidade das interações internacionais neste novo domínio virtual e imaterial. Assim, pese embora estas teorias ofereçam perspetivas relevantes para compreender a realidade do sistema internacional coetâneo, a verdade é que aquelas também enfrentam desafios quando aplicadas ao ciberespaço e às dinâmicas que dele emergem.

O Realismo, por exemplo, com sua ênfase na competição pelo poder material entre os Estados, tem dificuldade em explicar por completo as interações colaborativas e a construção e o papel constitutivo de normas no mundo digital. Por sua vez, o Construtivismo, ao focar-se na construção social da realidade, enfrenta desafios para antecipar e compreender os aspetos tecnológicos e os potenciais impactos de inovações tecnológicas futuras, que todos os dias emergem no ciberespaço e, certamente, terão um impacto importante no sistema internacional contemporâneo. Estas limitações sugerem, por isso, a necessidade de evolução do corpo teórico das RI para, assim, enfrentar os desafios que o ciberespaço e as tendências que nele emergem colocam às RI do ponto de vista teórico, particularmente, no que respeita à explicação e compreensão da realidade internacional envolvente.

Na nossa perspetiva, um dos principais desafios futuros que se coloca à teoria das RI é precisamente o da governança do ciberespaço, uma vez que a ausência de um órgão regulatório global com autoridade sobre as ações ali desenvolvidas, sejam elas por parte de Estados ou de atores não estatais, exponencia o caráter anárquico do ciberespaço, gerando elevados níveis de incerteza e aumentando a possibilidade de conflitos entre os

atores que nele atuam (Libicki, 2009; Martins, 2015), sendo esta a razão pela qual as abordagens tradicionais das RI parecem ser inadequadas para lidar com a natureza transnacional do ciberespaço, particularmente, em relação à criação e aplicação de normas destinadas a regular as atividades desenvolvidas neste espaço operacional (Nye, 2011).

A ascensão de atores não estatais e de tecnologias emergentes, como a inteligência artificial e a *Internet* das Coisas, não descomplexifica esta realidade, tornando, antes pelo contrário, o ambiente ainda mais complexo e fazendo crescer, ainda mais, os dilemas de segurança, na medida em que os ciberataques podem ter consequências de grande alcance, afetando todas as áreas de atividade humana nas sociedades hodiernas (Portugal, 2015) e exigindo, por esse motivo, novas formas de pensar a segurança e a diplomacia, mas agora no mundo digital também (Fernandes, 2014; Harari, 2024).

Outro desafio que se levanta é a crescente disseminação de desinformação (Harari, 2018). A facilidade de disseminar informações falsas e manipuladas na *Internet*, seja por parte dos próprios Estados ou por outros atores, está a ameaçar a soberania dos Estados e a estabilidade internacional (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2023). O fenómeno das *fake news*, aliado à difusão de propaganda e à manipulação da opinião pública por meio de plataformas de sociabilidade (*e.g. Facebook*, *TikTok* e X (ex-*Twitter*), entre outras) e dos *media online*, criam um cenário onde as normas tradicionais de verificação de informações são desafiadas constantemente (Zakaria, 2024). Esta situação requer, na nossa perspetiva, uma nova abordagem nas teorias das RI para, por exemplo, compreender, explicar e avaliar a forma como a desinformação interfere na construção de identidades e normas no sistema internacional.

Para enfrentar estes desafios, as teorias das RI necessitam, em nosso entendimento, de integrar novas perspetivas que levem em linha de conta a natureza única e híbrida do ciberespaço, bem como as tendências que nele emergem, o que implicará uma aproximação a outras áreas de conhecimento, como a ciência da computação, da sociologia digital e da psicologia cognitiva para, desta forma, desenvolver modelos teóricos mais completos e preditivos de comportamento dos atores do sistema internacional no ciberespaço. Neste desiderato, a investigação futura no seio das RI deverá, também, desenvolver e explorar modelos teóricos interdisciplinares que abordem as implicações éticas e legais das atividades no ciberespaço, considerando a necessidade de um desenvolvimento de normas e de mecanismos de governança que sejam mais eficientes e eficazes para aqueles que ali atuam, bem como para salvaguardar a segurança e o equilíbrio do sistema internacional.

## Conclusões

Partimos para este artigo com o objetivo de analisar e compreender a abordagem ao ciberespaço através das lentes teóricas do Realismo e do Construtivismo nas RI, considerando que se trata de um não-lugar antropológico e de uma estrutura não-física, socialmente e discursivamente construída.

A análise efetuada revelou a complexidade que as interações internacionais assumem num contexto digital em constante evolução. Assim, do resultado do trabalho aqui

desenvolvido e apresentado, é possível observar diferenças importantes na abordagem do Realismo e do Construtivismo ao ciberespaço: enquanto o Realismo destaca a competição pelo poder e a segurança dos Estados num cenário anárquico, o Construtivismo destaca a construção social das identidades, normas e significados que moldam as ações dos atores que atuam no ciberespaço. Esta dualidade teórica é essencial para uma compreensão abrangente das dinâmicas contemporâneas nas RI e aponta para a necessidade de uma abordagem teoricamente integrada à realidade do sistema internacional coetâneo, sobretudo, no que respeita ao ciberespaço, enquanto não-lugar antropológico, socialmente e discursivamente construído.

Se, por um lado, o Realismo, com sua matriz filosófica científica positivista, enfrenta desafios, nomeadamente, ao tentar aplicar as suas premissas à análise do ciberespaço, onde a natureza não-física e socialmente construída do espaço e das interações que nele ocorrem desafiam a sua visão materialista tradicional (Mearsheimer, 2018), fazendo com que naturalize o sistema internacional vigente e ignore as suas dimensões sociais e ideacionais, deixando patentes as suas limitações teóricas para explicar esta "nova" realidade virtual. Por outro, o Construtivismo, ainda que não alcançando as dinâmicas de disputa de poder na sua plenitude, oferece uma abordagem importante para as RI neste âmbito, designadamente, ao reconhecer que o ciberespaço não é apenas um campo de batalha para confrontos de poder, mas também um espaço onde significados e normas são constantemente negociados e redefinidos pelos atores que nele atuam.

Para ultrapassar estas limitações teóricas, no que ao ciberespaço respeita, acreditamos que a solução está na combinação do Realismo e do Construtivismo, numa lógica teórica de complementaridade nas RI. Este é, aliás, o caminho que nos parece oferecer uma análise mais abrangente do ciberespaço: assim, se o Realismo destaca as implicações de poder e segurança, o Construtivismo adiciona a dimensão da construção social, normas e identidades na formação das interações no ciberespaço – esta perspetiva dual é, em nosso entendimento e como já tivemos oportunidade de referir, crucial para melhor conhecer e compreender os desafios que o ciberespaço coloca às RI, especialmente, por oferecer a possibilidade de uma análise equilibrada que contemple não só as necessidades de segurança dos atores, mas também as complexas realidades sociais que moldam as ações daqueles no ciberespaço.

Entre estes desafios que o ciberespaço apresenta às RI, destacamos, em particular, a ausência de governança, o que vinca ainda mais o caráter anárquico desta geografia virtual, e a disseminação da desinformação. Se o primeiro desafio, amplia, pela ausência de uma governança global, o caráter anárquico do espaço digital, levando a incertezas e exponenciando o potencial de conflitos entre os Estados e outros atores no ciberespaço, o segundo desafio, materializado pelo fenómeno das *fake news*, aliado à difusão de propaganda e à manipulação da opinião pública por meio de plataformas de sociabilidade (*e.g. Facebook*, *TikTok* e X (ex-*Twitter*), entre outras) e dos *media online*, favorece um cenário onde as normas tradicionais de verificação de informações são desafiadas constantemente, colocando em questão a soberania dos Estados e a segurança/equilíbrio do próprio sistema internacional.

Em suma, a intersecção entre o Realismo e o Construtivismo, juntamente com os desafios impostos pelo ciberespaço, aponta, assim, para a necessidade urgente de desenvolver novos modelos teóricos que possam acomodar a complexidade da realidade internacional

contemporânea, representando este artigo, assim o esperamos, mais um passo nessa direção, sobretudo, para aprofundar o debate científico sobre a compreensão e explicação do ciberespaço, enquanto objeto de estudo, nas RI.

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# DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIPS AMONG DIMENSIONS OF GLOBALIZATION: ECONOMETRIC ANALYSIS ON COUNTRY INCOME GROUPS

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## Abstract

Globalization is a multidimensional phenomenon that includes economic, political, and cultural dimensions. The globalization process is shaped by the intertwined interactions of its dimensions. In this context, the main purpose of this study is to analyze the long–run relationships among economic, cultural, and political globalization according to country income groups worldwide and to investigate how they interact with each other. The study covers the period 1980–2020. Long–run relationships among the dimensions of globalization were analyzed with Johansen cointegration test. Long–run coefficients were estimated using FMOLS method. According to the findings obtained from the study, long–run relationships were determined among the dimensions of globalization. It was observed that the direction and degree of the relationships among the dimensions of globalization may differ depending on the income levels of countries. In all income groups, it was determined that political globalization and both economic and cultural globalization positive affect each other. It was determined that the interactions between economic and cultural globalization differed significantly according to country income groups. In general, the findings indicate that political integration promotes globalization processes, while economic and cultural integration processes support political integration.

## Keywords

Globalization, Dimensions of Globalization, Integration, Income Groups, Cointegration Analysis.

## Resumo

A globalização é um fenómeno multidimensional que inclui as dimensões económica, política e cultural. O processo de globalização é moldado pelas interações interligadas entre estas dimensões. Neste contexto, o principal objetivo deste estudo é analisar as relações de longo prazo entre a globalização económica, cultural e política, de acordo com os grupos de rendimento dos países a nível mundial, e investigar como estas interagem entre si. O estudo abrange o período de 1980 a 2020. As relações de longo prazo entre as dimensões da globalização foram analisadas com o teste de cointegração de Johansen. Os coeficientes de

longo prazo foram estimados utilizando o método FMOLS. De acordo com os resultados obtidos no estudo, foram determinadas relações de longo prazo entre as dimensões da globalização. Observou-se que a direção e o grau das relações entre as dimensões da globalização podem diferir dependendo dos níveis de rendimento dos países. Em todos os grupos de rendimento, verificou-se que a globalização política e tanto a globalização económica como a cultural se influenciam mutuamente de forma positiva. Verificou-se que as interações entre a globalização económica e a cultural diferiam significativamente de acordo com os grupos de rendimento dos países. Em geral, os resultados indicam que a integração política promove os processos de globalização, enquanto os processos de integração económica e cultural apoiam a integração política.

**Palavras-chave**

Globalização, Dimensões da Globalização, Integração, Grupos de Rendimento, Análise de Cointegração.

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# DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIPS AMONG DIMENSIONS OF GLOBALIZATION: ECONOMETRIC ANALYSIS ON COUNTRY INCOME GROUPS[1]

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## Introduction

The phenomenon of globalization has been increasingly felt worldwide since the second half of the 20th century, and became the focus of academic and social debate in the 1980s. Since then, the concept of globalization has been the subject of extensive debate within academia and public opinion, and many studies have been carried out on the subject. The main reason for profound interest in the concept of globalization is its complexity, encompassing numerous cultural, social, political, and technological processes, rather than being solely an economic phenomenon. Globalization, with its multidimensional structure, can directly and/or indirectly affect almost every area of social life such as economy, cultural structure, politics, law, and health. It is widely discussed how these effects, which can also be called the results of globalization, emerge in different areas and whether they are positive or negative. Because it causes such wide–ranging effects, the phenomenon of globalization has been and continues to be the focus of many researchers from different disciplines.

The globalization process constantly involves change and transformation. Therefore, it should not be overlooked that the effects of globalization may change over time. Furthermore, the globalization process is not uniform but can differ according to different regions of the world and income levels of countries. This is also true for the processes related to the dimensions of globalization. In addition to all these, some dimensions of globalization may become much more important in terms of the globalization process over time. Therefore, the globalization process and the processes related to the dimensions may exhibit variations in different periods, geographies, and societies. All these require the concept of globalization to be evaluated continuously.

Following the global financial crisis, globalization slowed considerably, and in some areas, it reversed. The slowdown in globalization, fueled by populist and protectionist forces

[1] This study is extracted from the PhD dissertation titled "The Dynamic Relationships between Economic, Cultural, and Political Globalization: Econometric Analysis" prepared by Can SAGLAM and supervised by Prof. Rahmi YAMAK at Karadeniz Technical University.

following the global financial crisis (Moffit, 2016; Steger, 2019), combined with the COVID–19 pandemic, has begun to pose a very serious threat to the globalization process (Irwin, 2020; McNamara & Newman, 2020; Steger, 2021). In the literature, these crises and their consequences related to the globalization process are evaluated from different perspectives. Some academics argue that deglobalization, also supported by the geo–economic rivalry between the US and China, signals a new historical conjuncture (Bergeijk, 2019; Irwin, 2020).

Another perspective on the current process of globalization is that these crises do not represent the end of globalization. The current situation represents a cyclical contraction. Although it may not be like the period before the global financial crisis, it is thought that the globalization process may enter a new golden age (Lund et al., 2019; James, 2021). Furthermore, it is argued that due to the increasing intensity and impact of digital globalization, the end of globalization is far from over (Steger & James, 2020). It is thought that the geo–economic and geopolitical rivalry between the US and China has created a bipolar world system (Acharya, 2017; Maher, 2018; Goldstein, 2020). It is stated that the bipolar world system has bifurcated globalization (Zhang, 2018; Xuetong, 2020; Owen, 2021; Zhao, 2022). Therefore, significant transformations have been occurring in the form of globalization itself in recent years, and these transformations should not be ignored when evaluating the globalization process (McNamara & Newman, 2020; Steger & James, 2020).

In the related literature, there is no consensus on issues such as the definition and conceptualization of globalization, approaches to globalization, the effects of globalization, and globalization theories. However, most of the studies on the concept concur with similar perspectives on issues such as the multidimensional nature of globalization, its pervasive impact on diverse domains of social life, and the interconnectedness of its various dimensions (Ritzer, 2007; Robinson, 2007). Multidimensional and complex conceptualizations that consider globalization as a phenomenon that operates simultaneously and interrelatedly in economic, cultural, and political areas are widely accepted (Robertson, 1992; Appadurai, 1996; Tomlinson, 1999; Modelski, 2007). It is argued that the boundaries among the dimensions of globalization are not immutable; on the contrary, these dimensions are interconnected and interrelated (Dreher & Gaston, 2008). Therefore, it is thought that the dimensions of globalization consist of intertwined processes. The multidimensional and pluralistic approach to the concept enables the perception of globalization as a holistic and comprehensive process in which many dimensions emerge simultaneously and in interaction with different processes (Rennen & Martens, 2003). In the literature, single–cause explanations of globalization that are reduced to capitalism or market expansion are widely criticized. In this context, many studies emphasize that globalization emerges as a result of the complex relationships between many reasons or driving forces that encompass all dimensions and that provide more comprehensive explanations of globalization. It is thought that considering globalization as a multidimensional process that occurs with many dimensions is more effective in evaluating the form, dynamics, effects, and results of globalization (Appadurai, 1990; 1996; Giddens, 1990; Held, 1995; Rosenau, 1997; Held et al., 1999; Steger, 2003; Scholte, 2005; Ritzer, 2010).

Globalization is not only evaluated with its economic, cultural, or political dimensions, but it refers to a process that includes all of these dimensions. Globalization is shaped by the mutual interactions of these dimensions. In addition to all these, it is also noteworthy that globalization is discussed a lot with general concepts. However, such discussions do not make the multidimensional phenomenon of globalization understandable (Hoffman, 2002). For this reason, it is emphasized that the dimensions of globalization should be defined and the relationships among these dimensions should be revealed (Hoffman, 2002; Ritzer, 2010). When the related literature is examined, although there are theoretical discussions and inferences on this subject, no empirical study has been found on the relationships among the dimensions of globalization, and if there is, it is thought that the empirical literature on this subject is quite limited. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to filling this gap in the literature.

The study aims to analyze the long–run relationships among economic, cultural, and political globalization according to country income groups worldwide and to investigate how the dimensions of globalization interact. In the study, firstly, the conceptual framework regarding the phenomenon of globalization is presented, then the dimensions of globalization are explained, and the views on the interactions among these dimensions are given. Subsequently, the data set and econometric methodology are introduced, and the findings obtained from the econometric analyses are reported. In the conclusion section, the findings regarding the relationships among the dimensions of globalization are evaluated.

## Globalization: Conceptual Framework

Globalization is a very complex concept due to its many different definitions. In general, the concept of globalization refers to the increasing interaction and interdependence of people, companies, governments, and cultures around the world. The extent of this interaction and interdependence began to increase in many areas, especially trade, finance, technology, communication, culture, and politics, after the 1980s and has reached critical levels today. However, there are different views on what the concept of globalization means and how it is defined. Different views on the concept make it difficult for researchers to come up with a single definition of globalization.

Researchers from different disciplines have defined globalization, and these definitions include significant characteristics of the concept. Determining the common points of globalization definitions provides a better understanding of the concept. In some definitions, globalization is considered as the spread of Western values, institutions, and practices (Scholte, 2005), while in others, it is considered as the universalization of modernity. Most definitions of globalization emphasize time–space compression (Harvey, 1989; Giddens, 1990; Robertson, 1992). Furthermore, the multidimensional nature of the globalization is frequently expressed in definitions (Appadurai, 1990; 1996; Robertson, 1992; Held, 1995; Abu–Lughod, 1999; Tomlinson, 1999; Steger, 2003; Modelski, 2007; McGrew, 2008; Howard–Hassman, 2010; Ritzer, 2010).

Other common points of globalization definitions can be expressed as follows. The definitions draw attention to the fact that globalization brings about a process of change and transformation worldwide and in almost every area of social life. As a result of this

change and transformation, it is emphasized that the world has become a single place (McLuhan, 1962; Meyer, 1980; Ritzer, 2010). In the definitions of globalization, the integration of communities, governments, and people around the world is emphasized (Abu–Lughod, 1999; Stiglitz, 2002; Steger, 2003). In this direction, the concepts of interrelationship and complex interdependence are included in the definitions (Modelski, 1968; Wallerstein, 1974; Giddens, 1990; Abu–Lughod, 1999; Steger, 2003; Scholte, 2005; McGrew, 2008). In the emergence of these interrelationships and dependence, networks are emphasized (Meyer, 1980; Held et al., 1999; Ritzer, 2010). In definitions of globalization, the concept of flow, which refers to the cross–border and worldwide mobility of capital, goods, information, and people through existing networks, is frequently included (Held, 1995; Appadurai, 1996; Held et al., 1999; Stiglitz, 2002; Ritzer, 2010). Most definitions emphasize technological advances that facilitate faster, more efficient, and less costly economic, political, and sociocultural flows to remote locations around the world (Harvey, 1989; Stiglitz, 2002).

Globalization has been also defined based on a specific dimension such as economic (Wallerstein, 1974; Harvey, 1989; Friedman, 1999; Stiglitz, 2002; Bhagwati, 2004), political (Meyer, 1980; Held et al., 1999; Howard–Hassman, 2010), and socio–cultural (Appadurai, 1990; Robertson, 1992; Tomlinson, 1999; Ritzer, 2007). Definitions based on the economic perspective draw attention to capitalist system, international division of labor, transnational production, and financial system. Definitions of globalization from an economic perspective focus on the expansion of capitalism as the fundamental driving force of globalization processes. Definitions based on the political dimension of globalization generally focus on global governance and the international institutions, actors, and global practices that increase the tendency toward global governance. In definitions centered on political processes, attention is drawn to the creation of world society awareness in order to implement and increase global governance practices. In the socio–cultural definitions of globalization, the ideas of societies having a global consciousness together and the world society are included.

## The Dimensions of Globalization and the Relationships among Dimensions of Globalization

### The Dimensions of Globalization

The concept of globalization includes three main dimensions: economic, cultural, and political (Ritzer, 2010; Heywood, 2011). When the globalization process is considered together with its dimensions, it is seen that these dimensions interact with each other and that these dimensions have an intertwined structure. In this context, it would be both wrong and misleading to evaluate the phenomenon of globalization only as an economic, cultural, or political development and analyze the process. If the globalization process is discussed by ignoring its various dimensions, the complex interrelationships of this process that shapes societies and the world will be overlooked (Giddens, 1990; Friedman, 1999; Held et al., 1999). In many studies, it is stated that the globalization process emerges as a result of the relationships among all its dimensions. However, it should not be forgotten that the dimensions of globalization include different processes and components. Therefore, economic, cultural, or political globalization processes do

not work in the same way. Undoubtedly, when expressing the phenomenon of globalization, it should not be ignored that the processes related to the dimensions of globalization interact with each other and that the globalization process emerges as a result of these relationships (Appadurai, 1990; 1996; Giddens, 1990; Held, 1995; Ohmae, 1995; Castells, 1996; Held & McGrew, 2000; Steger, 2003; Scholte, 2005; Robinson; 2007; Ritzer, 2010).

The globalization process consists of various processes, institutions, and actors. Economic globalization includes trade and financial globalization, transnational corporations (TNCs), and global economic governance institutions. Cultural globalization is shaped by the change in consumer behaviors and ideologies, the cultural convergence of societies, and media organizations. Political globalization encompasses the erosion of nation–states, the emergence of global governance, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and non–governmental organizations (NGOs). Each of these can directly and indirectly affect the other. Therefore, globalization refers to comprehensive and holistic process.

Although globalization is related to all areas of social life, it is thought to be more closely related to economic processes. Some globalization theorists focus directly on economic globalization when conceptualizing globalization and argue that economic globalization is the fundamental dynamic of the globalization process (Ritzer, 2010). Economic globalization is a concept related to the increase in foreign direct investments as well as foreign trade and the complex connections of financial transactions. The economic dimension of globalization is shaped by many phenomena such as economic integration, global economy, foreign direct investment, foreign trade, international capital, and free trade (Steger, 2003; Ritzer, 2010; Heywood, 2011). With economic globalization, global economic interrelations are intensifying (Steger, 2003) and national economies are being drawn into a single global economy (Heywood, 2011).

The political dimension is very important in terms of the globalization process. It is necessary not to reduce the phenomenon of globalization to just economic globalization or technological developments (Ritzer, 2010). The political dimension maintains its importance in the globalization process, as governments have regulatory and/or restrictive effects in many areas. The political globalization process includes critical political issues such as the increasing effectiveness of IGOs and NGOs and the global governance mechanism. These issues related to the political globalization process are associated with the replacement of the nation–state by a new form of global governance (Keohane, 1995; Steger, 2003). In this context, with the political globalization process, political relations around the world are intensifying and expanding (Steger, 2003), and the responsibility for policymaking is passing from national governments to international organizations (Heywood, 2011).

The cultural dimension of globalization is as important as its other dimensions. When globalization is evaluated from a historical perspective, it is thought that cultural and social processes date back to ancient times. It is noteworthy that the cultural dimension makes significant contributions to the globalization process. In the literature, it is thought that both cultural globalization shapes the globalization process and the globalization process shapes cultural practices (Appadurai, 1996; Tomlinson, 1999). The social and cultural transformations that started especially in the 1950s gradually accelerated after

the late 1960s. In this process of change and transformation, Marshall McLuhan's (1962) expression of the existence of globalization with the "global village" metaphor actually constitutes an important turning point. Cultural globalization refers to the global flows of information, goods, and images produced anywhere in the world, which tend to eliminate cultural differences that exist both internationally and interpersonally (Heywood, 2011).

Among the theories of globalization, there are theories that directly address the cultural dimension of globalization. These theories, also referred to as theories of global culture, focus on globalizing cultural structures and flows. Cultural theories of globalization discuss such issues as the globalization of religions, communication and information, and the relationship between globalization and consumption, migration, and tourism (Robinson, 2007). Theories of global culture are addressed from different perspectives such as homogenization (Ritzer, 2010), heterogenization (Friedman, 1995), hybridization (Pieterse, 1995; Hannerz, 1996), and glocalization (Robertson, 1992). The debate on cultural homogenization and heterogenization is shaped around the question, "Does globalization make people and societies similar or different from each other?".

## The Relationships among Dimensions of Globalization

It is necessary to express how the dimensions of globalization affect each other. The disappearance of borders and the formation of a more flexible structure with the globalization process benefit capital and accelerate economic globalization. If the basis of globalization is the removal of trade barriers and the integration of national economies (Stiglitz, 2002; Bhagwati, 2004), the economic globalization process cannot be considered independently of other dimensions of globalization. In this context, it is stated that other integration processes support economic globalization.

The rise of the global economy threatens sovereignty of nation–states. However, economic integration occurs as a result of nation–states increasing their political integration by becoming involved in global governance networks within the scope of their policies (Ohmae, 1995; Friedman, 1999). While economic globalization is realized through the integration of national economies, this process needs to be supported by political regulations (Rodrik, 2011). Economic integration processes are supported by political integration through international organizations, agreements and norms (Keohane & Nye, 2000). In addition, economic integration creates strategic partnerships in the world economy and paves the way for the political integration process. Therefore, it is stated that economic and political processes are in a complex and intertwined relationship with globalization (Held, 1999; Held & McGrew, 2000).

Economic globalization can significantly affect government policies and cause governments to be included in the global governance mechanism. This situation is also reflected in the discourses of political leaders. It is seen that governments use globalization discourses to integrate into the global economy and governance (Held & McGrew, 2000). At this point, it is noteworthy that developing countries want to ensure capital flow to their countries by supporting neoliberal policies and aim for a better position for themselves in global governance institutions. Thus, it is thought that they are trying to integrate into the global economy by increasing their level of political globalization. Developed countries can implement this strategy to maintain their positions

in the global economy and governance. Therefore, countries are increasing their political integration to benefit from the positive effects of economic globalization (Rosenau, 1997). In addition, with the globalization process, developing countries aim to position themselves in the global economy better. In this direction, the balance of power may change (Amin, 2006). Developing countries can be effective in the global economy by increasing their level of economic integration. By supporting this with political integration, they increase their power in global governance and try to strengthen their hierarchical position in the global economy (Wallerstein, 1974; Ritzer, 2010).

As a result of the increase in economic integration, processes related to the global economy cannot be determined by nation–states alone. Global governance structures have a critical role in the sustainability of economic activities (Held & McGrew, 2002; Steger, 2003). Institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), and the World Trade Organization (WTO) have become important actors in the governance of the global economy. These institutions have an intergovernmental nature. Therefore, these institutions are formed by the coming together of nation–states. International economic organizations support global economic integration through political arrangements. These organizations pave the way for political globalization by creating cooperation in the world economy. Nation–states are at the center of these and similar organizations, unions, and agreements. Becoming a member of such institutions, joining unions, and being a party to agreements causes the globalization processes to become intertwined (Ruggie, 1998; Steger, 2003; Ritzer, 2010; Heywood, 2011).

With economic globalization, consumer ideology is spreading globally. This situation causes changes and transformations in the traditional cultural structures and lifestyles of societies (Sklair, 2000). As a result of the global spread of brands such as McDonald's and Starbucks, the eating and drinking habits of societies are affected. This effect can cause the acceleration of cultural integration, standardization, and cultural homogenization (Pieterse, 1995; Ritzer, 2010). In addition, with commercial globalization, the consumption cultures of societies are changing due to international trade in cultural products and services (Sklair, 2000). In this regard, TNCs trigger various social and cultural transformations in the countries where they operate, thus affecting cultural integration.

The spread of universal values such as human rights, freedom, and democracy on a global scale shapes international political arrangements and global governance and leads to increased political integration (Held, 1995; Held & McGrew, 2002). Therefore, cultural globalization can shape political structures by supporting the spread of international norms and values (Robertson, 1992; Ruggie, 1998). Political integration also has significant impacts on cultural processes. Political globalization both increases the spread of TNCs and leads to the adoption of global values and norms through NGOs. Finally, nation–states become determinants of cultural processes as well as economic processes by increasing their political integration through their participation in international organizations and their cooperation (Keohane & Nye, 2000).

## Data and Econometric Process

### Data

The aim of the study is to empirically analyze the long–run relationships among economic, cultural, and political globalization. In the literature, many indicators and indices are suggested regarding globalization and its dimensions. Among the globalization indices, the KOF Globalization Index is measured to cover 203 countries and the period 1970–2020. In addition, 43 variables are used in measuring the KOF Globalization Index and it takes more variables into consideration than other globalization indices. The KOF Globalization Index measures the dimensions of globalization used in the econometric analysis of the study. Additionally, the KOF Globalization Index measures globalization by grouping countries according to income levels. For these reasons, the KOF Globalization Index has become the most widely used globalization index in the literature (Potrafke, 2015; Gygli et al., 2019). The globalization index variables used in the analysis of the study were obtained from the KOF Swiss Economics Institute.

The data used in the study are annual and cover the period of 1980–2020. The main reason why the study period began in 1980 is that there is a consensus in the literature that contemporary globalization fully emerged after this period. In the study, the relationships among the dimensions of globalization are analyzed separately according to the income group classifications of countries worldwide. The country income groups considered in the study are high income, upper–middle income, lower–middle income, and low income. All of the variables were used in logarithmic form. Abbreviations and definitions of all variables are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Abbreviations and Definitions of Variables

| Variable Abbreviation | Variable Definition |
|---|---|
| LECO | Logarithm of Economic Globalization Index |
| LCUL | Logarithm of Cultural Globalization Index |
| LPOL | Logarithm of Political Globalization Index |

**Note:** The initial letter "L" in the variable abbreviations indicates that the logarithm of the relevant series is taken.

## Econometric Methodolgy and Models

The econometric methodology used in this study is as follows: First of all, the Augmented Dickey–Fuller (ADF) unit root test developed by Dickey & Fuller (1981) and the Phillips–Perron (PP) unit root test developed by Phillips & Perron (1988) were applied to all three variables. After that, long–run relationships among variables were investigated with cointegration methods. The Johansen cointegration test (Johansen, 1988; Johansen & Juselius, 1990) was used. Subsequently, long–run elasticity coefficients were obtained to determine the direction and degree of long–run relationships among the dimensions of globalization. If the series are stationary in their first differences and there is a long–run relationship among the series, the coefficients as a result of the estimates made with the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method can be biased and inconsistent. In this case,



hypothesis tests lose their validity, endogeneity problems arise, and estimates are not efficient. Fully Modified Ordinary Least Squares (FMOLS) method developed by Phillips & Hansen (1990), correct possible asymptotic bias and endogeneity problems that may arise in OLS estimates and ensure that efficient estimators are obtained. Moreover, these model provides more reliable results in small samples. In this study, long–run elasticity coefficients were estimated using FMOLS method.[2] The econometric process was applied to each country income group in line with the purpose and main arguments of the study. There are three different econometric models in the study. In these models, each dimension of globalization is considered separately as a dependent variable and the other two dimensions as explanatory variables. Econometric models are expressed below.

***Model 1:*** LECO = f (LCUL, LPOL)

***Model 2:*** LCUL = f (LECO, LPOL)

***Model 3:*** LPOL = f (LECO, LCUL)

## Empirical Findings

Graphs 1, 2, 3, and 4 show the time course of economic, cultural, and political globalization indices for country income groups from 1980 to 2020. Non–logarithmic raw data were used in the graphs. Graph 1 shows the index values for high income countries. The graph shows that cultural globalization had the highest index values, while political globalization had the lowest index values during the period. The economic globalization index showed an increasing trend. Although the cultural globalization index increased between 1980 and 2000, it decreased in 2001 and 2002. In high income countries, the political globalization index declined in most periods between 1980 and 1990 and experienced a break in 1990.

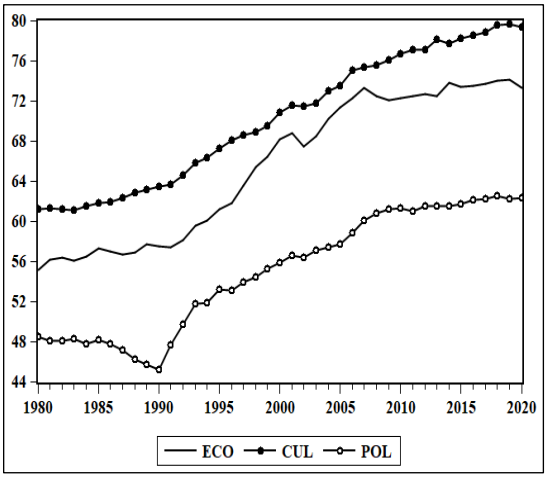
In the following period, political globalization increased rapidly. Index values for upper–middle income countries are presented in Graph 2. In this graph, it is seen that the globalization indices had close values from 1980 to 1992. During this period, the globalization indices remained horizontal and experienced a common break in 1991. The political globalization index rose remarkably after 1991. Economic globalization increased in upper–middle income countries until 2007 and remained stable in the following period. Although cultural globalization remained at a low level compared to economic and political globalization, it continued its increasing trend from 1994 to 2020. Graph 3 shows the globalization indices for the lower–middle income group. Throughout the period, political globalization reached higher values than economic and cultural globalization. Although the values of the political and economic globalization indices were close to each other in the period 1980–1990, political globalization increased further in the following years and a separation occurred between the indices. It can be stated that the increasing trend of economic globalization in lower–middle income countries slowed down and remained

[2] Long–run elasticity coefficients were also estimated by the Dynamic Least Squares (DOLS) method developed by Stock & Watson (1993) and the Canonical Cointegration Regression (CCR) method developed by Park (1992). However, the findings obtained from the DOLS and CCR methods were not reported because they were parallel to the FMOLS findings.

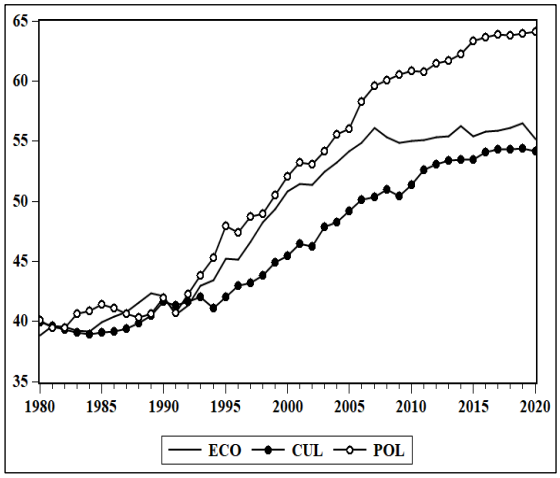
stable after 2007. In Graph 4, the indices are presented for the low income group. In low income countries, political globalization was higher than economic and cultural globalization between 1980 and 2020. The difference between political globalization and other dimensions of globalization has increased, especially since the early 2000s. In this income group, cultural globalization had the lowest level of globalization compared to other dimensions.

ADF and PP unit root test results for stationary analysis are presented in Table 2. According to the ADF and PP unit root test results, it was found that the economic, cultural, and political globalization series were not stationary at their levels, but all three series were stationary at the first difference in all country income groups.

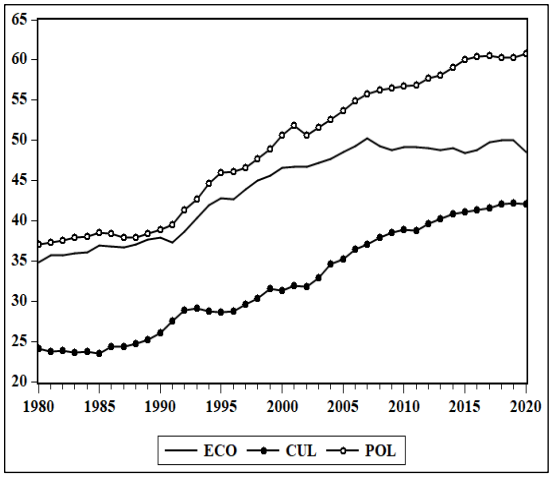
**Graph 1.** Globalization Indices for High Income Group




**Graph 2.** Globalization Indices for Upper–Middle Income Group




**Graph 3.** Globalization Indices for Lower–Middle Income Group




**Graph 4.** Globalization Indices for Low Income Group

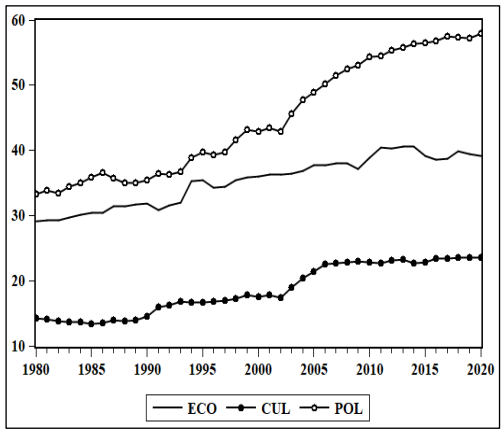


**Table 2.** Unit Root Test Results

| | ADF | | PP | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Intercept** | **Trend–Intercept** | **Intercept** | **Trend–Intercept** |
| | ***High Income Group*** | | | |
| LECO | -1.238 (0) | -0.300 (0) | -1.148 [3] | -0.735 [3] |
| ΔLECO | -4.442*** (0) | -4.478*** (0) | -4.423*** [2] | -4.456*** [2] |
| LCUL | -0.420 (0) | -1.144 (0) | -0.423 [3] | -1.484 [3] |
| ΔLCUL | -5.170*** (0) | -5.104*** (0) | -5.140*** [2] | -5.062*** [2] |
| LPOL | -1.287 (6) | -2.391 (6) | -0.464 [2] | -2.086 [3] |
| ΔLPOL | -3.488** (2) | -3.841** (0) | -3.912*** [4] | -3.840** [4] |
| | ***Upper–Middle Income Group*** | | | |
| LECO | -1.372 (0) | -0.168 (0) | -1.310 [2] | -0.422 [2] |
| ΔLECO | -4.776*** (0) | -4.886*** (0) | -4.803*** [2] | -4.897*** [1] |
| LCUL | 0.203 (0) | -2.760 (0) | 0.097 [3] | -2.818 [3] |
| ΔLCUL | -5.889*** (0) | -5.785*** (0) | -5.908*** [3] | -5.816*** [3] |
| LPOL | -0.343 (0) | -1.510 (0) | -0.374 [3] | -1.782 [3] |
| ΔLPOL | -6.110*** (0) | -6.038*** (0) | -6.129*** [3] | -6.058*** [3] |
| | ***Lower–Middle Income Group*** | | | |
| LECO | -1.981 (0) | 0.127 (0) | -1.857 [1] | -0.053 [3] |
| ΔLECO | -4.085*** (0) | -4.049** (1) | -4.026*** [3] | -4.324*** [5] |
| LCUL | -0.880 (3) | -2.272 (1) | -0.146 [0] | -2.429 [1] |
| ΔLCUL | -3.199** (1) | -4.341*** (0) | -4.274*** [6] | -4.139** [7] |
| LPOL | -0.754 (0) | -0.672 (0) | -0.705 [3] | -1.315 [3] |
| ΔLPOL | -3.766*** (0) | -3.768** (0) | -3.766*** [0] | -3.768** [0] |
| | ***Low Income Group*** | | | |
| LECO | -1.377 (0) | -2.005 (0) | -2.101 [36] | -1.818 [5] |
| ΔLECO | -5.469*** (1) | -5.638*** (1) | -6.491***[28] | -11.15***[38] |
| LCUL | -0.315 (0) | -2.275 (1) | -0.435 [2] | -2.268 [3] |
| ΔLCUL | -4.499*** (0) | -4.430*** (0) | -4.499*** [0] | -4.430*** [0] |
| LPOL | -0.269 (0) | -1.613 (0) | -0.282 [3] | -1.765 [1] |
| ΔLPOL | -4.723** (1) | -4.644** (1) | -5.059*** [6] | -4.986** [6] |

**Note:** ***, **, and * represent %1, %5, and %10 significance levels, respectively. Δ is the first difference operator. The maximum lag length is taken 9. The values in parentheses indicate the optimal lag lengths. The values in square brackets indicate the bandwidths.

The results of the Johansen cointegration test are presented in Table 3. For the high income group, the trace statistic was obtained as 44.298 and was found to be greater than the 5% critical value. The maximum eigenvalue statistic was calculated as 26.501. This value is greater than the critical value at the 5% level. Therefore, the null hypothesis that the rank is equal to zero was rejected and one cointegration equation was determined for the high income group. The values of the trace and maximum eigenvalue statistics for the upper–middle income group were found to be greater than the 5% critical value. Thus, the null hypothesis expressed as $r \leq 1$ was rejected according to both test results. As seen in Table 3, the trace statistic and the maximum eigenvalue statistic for the lower–middle income group were calculated as 32.817 and 22.845, respectively. These values were greater than the critical value at the 5% level. The trace statistic and maximum eigenvalue statistic for the low income group were determined to be greater than the 5% critical values. According to the Johansen cointegration test results, there is long–run relationship among globalization variables for all income groups.

**Table 3.** Johansen Cointegration Test Results

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***High Income Group*** | | | |
| $H_0$ | Trace Statistic | 0.05 Critical Value | Prob. |
| r=0 | 44.298 | 35.192 | 0.004 |
| r≤1 | 17.796 | 20.261 | 0.105 |
| r≤2 | 2.383 | 9.164 | 0.700 |
| $H_0$ | Max. Eigen Statistic | 0.05 Critical Value | Prob. |
| r=0 | 26.501 | 22.299 | 0.012 |
| r≤1 | 15.413 | 15.892 | 0.059 |
| r≤2 | 2.383 | 9.164 | 0.700 |
| ***Upper–Middle Income Group*** | | | |
| $H_0$ | Trace Statistic | 0.05 Critical Value | Prob. |
| r=0 | 45.397 | 35.192 | 0.002 |
| r≤1 | 22.883 | 20.261 | 0.021 |
| r≤2 | 4.957 | 9.164 | 0.288 |
| $H_0$ | Max. Eigen Statistic | 0.05 Critical Value | Prob. |
| r=0 | 22.514 | 22.299 | 0.046 |
| r≤1 | 17.926 | 15.892 | 0.023 |
| r≤2 | 4.957 | 9.164 | 0.288 |
| ***Lower–Middle Income Group*** | | | |
| $H_0$ | Trace Statistic | 0.05 Critical Value | Prob. |
| r=0 | 37.817 | 35.192 | 0.025 |
| r≤1 | 18.649 | 20.261 | 0.082 |
| r≤2 | 5.429 | 9.164 | 0.239 |
| $H_0$ | Max. Eigen Statistic | 0.05 Critical Value | Prob. |
| r=0 | 22.845 | 22.299 | 0.041 |
| r≤1 | 13.219 | 15.892 | 0.125 |
| r≤2 | 5.429 | 9.164 | 0.239 |
| ***Low Income Group*** | | | |
| $H_0$ | Trace Statistic | 0.05 Critical Value | Prob. |
| r=0 | 46.680 | 35.192 | 0.001 |
| r≤1 | 19.345 | 20.261 | 0.066 |
| r≤2 | 5.981 | 9.164 | 0.192 |
| $H_0$ | Max. Eigen Statistic | 0.05 Critical Value | Prob. |
| r=0 | 27.335 | 22.299 | 0.009 |
| r≤1 | 13.363 | 15.892 | 0.119 |
| r≤2 | 5.981 | 9.164 | 0.192 |

The long–run elasticity coefficients obtained from FMOLS method for the high income group are reported in Table 4. For Model 1, the long–run coefficients of the cultural and political globalization variables were found to be positive and statistically significant. According to findings of Model 2, the coefficients of the economic and political globalization variables were also found positive and statistically significant. According to the findings obtained from Models 1 and 2, there is a positive long–run relationship between economic and cultural globalization variables. As in findings of Model 1, the long–run effect of political globalization on cultural globalization is also positive. According to findings of Model 3, it was concluded that the long–run coefficients of economic and cultural globalization variables were positive and statistically significant. The findings from Model 3 are similar to the results of Models 1 and 2 in terms of the long–run effects of economic and cultural globalization.

**Table 4.** Long–Run Coefficients: High Income Group

| Variable | Coefficient | Standard Error | t-statistic |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Model 1* | | | |
| Constant Term | -0.360 | 0.280 | -1.286 |
| LCUL | 0.679*** | 0.244 | 2.778 |
| LPOL | 0.412* | 0.207 | 1.987 |
| *Model 2* | | | |
| Constant Term | 0.737*** | 0.162 | 4.535 |
| LECO | 0.411** | 0.186 | 2.206 |
| LPOL | 0.447** | 0.184 | 2.423 |
| *Model 3* | | | |
| Constant Term | -0.557*** | 0.106 | -5.228 |
| LECO | 0.429*** | 0.098 | 4.365 |
| LCUL | 0.651*** | 0.114 | 5.672 |

**Note:** ***, **, and * represent %1, %5, and %10 significance levels, respectively.

The long–run coefficients and t–statistics calculated for the upper–middle income group are presented in Table 5. For Model 1, the long–run elasticity coefficient of the cultural globalization variable was found to be negative and statistically significant. In Model 1, the elasticity coefficient of the political globalization variable were found to be positive and statistically significant at least at the 1% level. Findings indicate that political globalization affects economic globalization more than cultural globalization. The results of Model 2, economic globalization has a negative effect on cultural globalization, whereas political globalization has a positive effect. In Model 2, the positive effect of political globalization is greater than the negative effect of economic globalization in the long–run. Models indicate that the long–run relationship between economic and cultural globalization is negative in the upper–middle income group. According to findings of Model 3, the long–run coefficients of the economic and cultural globalization variables were found to be positive and statistically significant at least at the 1% level. FMOLS findings indicate that the long–run effect of the cultural globalization variable on the dependent variable is greater than economic globalization.

**Table 5.** Long–Run Coefficients: Upper–Middle Income Group

| Variable | Coefficient | Standard Error | t-statistic |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Model 1* | | | |
| Constant Term | 1.696*** | 0.386 | 4.386 |
| LCUL | -0.641** | 0.305 | -2.099 |
| LPOL | 1.177*** | 0.209 | 5.636 |
| *Model 2* | | | |
| Constant Term | 1.458*** | 0.120 | 12.148 |
| LECO | -0.245** | 0.116 | -2.115 |
| LPOL | 0.845*** | 0.089 | 9.437 |
| *Model 3* | | | |
| Constant Term | -1.555*** | 0.143 | -10.826 |
| LECO | 0.630*** | 0.127 | 4.942 |
| LCUL | 0.795*** | 0.144 | 5.524 |

**Note:** ***, **, and * represent %1, %5, and %10 significance levels, respectively.

The long–run elasticity coefficients for the lower–middle income group are given in Table 6. The results of Model 1, long–run coefficient of the cultural globalization variable was found to be negative. The coefficient of the political globalization variable obtained from the FMOLS method was calculated as 1.386 and was found to be statistically significant at least at the 1% level. The findings of Model 1 indicate that political globalization affects economic globalization more than cultural globalization in the lower–middle income group. The findings obtained from Models 1 and 2 show that the long–run effects of economic and cultural globalization on each other are negative in the lower–middle income group, as well as in the upper–middle income group. In addition to all these findings, political globalization is a more important determinant of both economic and cultural globalization in the lower–middle income group. As seen in findings of Model 3, the long–run coefficients of the economic and cultural globalization variables are positive and statistically significant at least at the 1% level. When these findings are evaluated together with the findings of Models 1 and 2, there is a positive long–run relationship between the political globalization variable and other globalization variables.

**Table 6.** Long–Run Coefficients: Lower–Middle Income Group

| Variable | Coefficient | Standard Error | t-statistic |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Model 1* | | | |
| Constant Term | 0.423 | 0.269 | 1.574 |
| LCUL | -0.588** | 0.221 | -2.658 |
| LPOL | 1.386*** | 0.254 | 5.446 |
| *Model 2* | | | |
| Constant Term | -0.106 | 0.382 | -0.278 |
| LECO | -0.684** | 0.312 | -2.189 |
| LPOL | 1.585*** | 0.221 | 7.159 |
| *Model 3* | | | |
| Constant Term | -0.189 | 0.184 | -1.028 |
| LECO | 0.616*** | 0.098 | 6.288 |
| LCUL | 0.504*** | 0.060 | 8.365 |

**Note:** ***, **, and * represent %1, %5, and %10 significance levels, respectively.

The long–run findings for the low income group are presented in Table 7. According to findings of Model 1, the long–run elasticity coefficients of cultural and political globalization variables are positive and statistically significant. In Model 2, the long–run coefficient of economic globalization was found to be positive and statistically significant. Therefore, the long–run effects of economic and cultural globalization on each other are positive. In this respect, the findings are similar to the findings obtained from the high income group, while they differ from the findings obtained from the upper–middle and lower–middle income groups. In Model 2, the coefficient of political globalization was calculated as 0.732 and was found to be statistically significant at least at the 1% level. Based on these findings, political globalization has a greater long–run effect on cultural globalization than economic globalization in the low income group. The long–run effects of economic and cultural globalization on political globalization are positive. Findings indicate that the long–run effect of cultural globalization on political globalization is greater than economic globalization in the low income group.

**Table 7.** Long–Run Coefficients: Low Income Group

| Variable | Coefficient | Standard Error | t-statistic |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Model 1* | | | |
| Constant Term | 1.719*** | 0.113 | 15.189 |
| LCUL | 0.326*** | 0.083 | 3.911 |
| LPOL | 0.232** | 0.089 | 2.602 |
| *Model 2* | | | |
| Constant Term | -1.994*** | 0.442 | -4.504 |
| LECO | 0.596** | 0.258 | 2.308 |
| LPOL | 0.732*** | 0.140 | 5.206 |
| *Model 3* | | | |
| Constant Term | 0.497* | 0.287 | 1.733 |
| LECO | 0.413*** | 0.130 | 3.178 |
| LCUL | 0.630*** | 0.066 | 9.517 |

**Note:** ***, **, and * represent %1, %5, and %10 significance levels, respectively.

The long–run relationship among economic, cultural, and political globalization variables was investigated for all country income groups. The long–run effects of the dimensions of globalization on each other are positive in high and low income countries. Unlike these findings, the long–run relationships between economic and cultural globalization are negative in upper–middle and lower–middle income countries. Cultural globalization is the determinant of the economic globalization process in high and low income countries. Findings indicate that political globalization affects economic globalization more than cultural globalization in upper–middle and lower–middle income countries. The long–run effects of economic and political globalization on cultural globalization are similar in high income countries. For other country income groups, political integration is the determinant of cultural integration processes. Economic globalization affects the political globalization process more than cultural globalization in lower–middle income countries. In all remaining country income groups, cultural globalization is the determinant of the political globalization process. Cultural globalization is the dimension at the center of the globalization process, and economic and political processes contribute to other processes in high income countries. The globalization process is essentially determined by political processes in upper–middle and lower–middle income countries. Furthermore, economic and cultural processes significantly support political integration in these country groups. There is no dominant dimension in the globalization process in low income countries and all dimensions of globalization promote each other to a certain extent.

## Conclusion

This study attempts to empirically determine the degree and direction of long–run relationships among economic, cultural, and political globalization. The study covers the period 1980–2020 and four different country income groups. Globalization variables used in econometric analyses were obtained from the KOF Swiss Economic Institute. The long–run relationships among the dimensions of globalization were analyzed using Johansen cointegration test. Long–run elasticity coefficients were calculated using FMOLS method. According to the findings obtained from Johansen cointegration test, there is long–run relationship among economic, cultural, and political globalization for all income groups. According to the long–run elasticity coefficient findings, the long–run effects of the

dimensions of globalization on each other are positive in high and low income countries. Unlike these findings, the long–run relationships between economic and cultural globalization are negative in upper–middle and lower–middle income countries.

Findings regarding the interrelationships of economic and political globalization processes indicate that these processes support each other and are intertwined (Held, 1999; Held & McGrew, 2000). Political integration processes are supported by economic integration and the fact that countries are party to international organizations that are active in the governance of the global economy. As countries increase their trade openness, political communication between countries increases and political globalization processes are promoted. In addition, economic integration occurs as a result of countries being included in the global governance mechanism within the context of the policies they implement and increasing their level of political integration (Ohmae, 1995; Friedman, 1999). Therefore, economic globalization occurs with the integration of countries into the international global economy, but this process needs to be supported by political regulations (Keohane & Nye, 2000; Rodrik, 2011). International economic organizations, regional unions, and trade agreements support global economic integration through political arrangements (Ruggie, 1998; Steger, 2003; Heywood, 2011). As a result, the findings that economic and political globalization processes positively affect each other indicate that these processes promote each other and support the views in this direction.

The long–run effects of economic and cultural globalization processes on each other were found to be positive in high and low income countries. These findings are in line with expectations, considering that processes such as the increase in international trade, the production, consumption, and spread of cultural products and services on a global scale, the change in consumer behavior, and standardization encourage each other (Steger, 2003; Ritzer, 2010). Moreover, findings indicate that increased economic integration may lead to cultural homogenization (Ritzer, 2010) or hybridization (Pieterse, 1995) in high and low income countries. Especially the abundance of cultural capital and the easier adoption of global consumption patterns in high income countries (Ritzer, 2010) may cause cultural and economic integration to positively affect each other. On the other hand, the long–run effects of economic and cultural globalization on each other were determined to be negative in upper–middle and lower–middle income countries. This finding indicates that global economic integration may create pressure on the preservation of local cultural identities in relevant country groups (Pieterse, 1995) and may cause cultural heterogeneity rather than homogeneity (Friedman, 1995). It is thought that increasing economic globalization may lead to strong reactions towards the preservation of cultural identities in these country groups. In this regard, it can be stated that cultural processes are much more resistant to economic processes in lower–middle income countries. There is a positive relationship between cultural and political globalization in all income groups in the long–run. These findings imply that increased cultural integration positively affects global political structures and processes. As a result of the spread of global norms and values, cultural globalization can be expected to increase its influence on political processes (Robertson, 1992; Ruggie, 1998). The findings are in line with expectations, considering that the spread of universal values such as human rights, freedom, and democracy on a global scale can shape international political arrangements and global governance (Held, 1995; Held & McGrew, 2002).

According to the statistical findings, cultural globalization is the dimension at the center of the globalization process, and economic and political processes contribute to other processes in high income countries. The determining effect of the cultural dimension on globalization processes in high income countries can be explained by the effect of high education levels, cultural diversity, and advanced communication technologies. The globalization mechanism operates similarly in upper–middle and lower–middle income countries, and the globalization process is essentially determined by political processes. Moreover, economic and cultural processes significantly support political integration in these country groups. In particular, the decisive role played by foreign investments and international trade on political stability may increase this effect. It may increase the impact of political processes on economic and cultural integration due to countries that aim to strengthen or maintain their place in the global economy or are economically dependent on foreign countries. In low income countries, there is no dominant dimension in the globalization process. All dimensions of globalization promote each other. This study empirically supports the view that the globalization process represents a holistic process that emerges as a result of the interactions of the dimensions it contains. The findings demonstrate that the degree and direction of the relationships among the dimensions of globalization may differ according to the income levels of the countries. In general, the findings indicate that political integration promotes globalization processes, while economic and cultural integration processes support political integration.

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# INDEPENDENT WOMEN ON BOARDS OF DIRECTORS: INTRODUCING THE "SANDWICH EFFECT" CONCEPT

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## Abstract

This article introduces the Sandwich Effect, a new conceptual model that explains how independent women directors operate at the intersection of regulatory governance requirements and market pressures for inclusion, legitimacy and transparency. Drawing on Agency, Institutional and Resource Dependence theories, the model highlights the dual role played by independent female directors as agents of compliance and as carriers of market-signaling effects. To illustrate its relevance, the article presents an exploratory analysis of PSI-listed companies, examining gender composition, independence, adherence to governance recommendations, and market valuation indicators. While the empirical patterns show no significant association between gender diversity and ROE, they reveal a strong positive relationship between the presence of independent women, compliance with governance best practices, and market valuation, supporting the model's central premise that qualified diversity is valued by external stakeholders. The study offers a replicable theoretical framework that enhances understanding of how board structure, independence, and gender interact to influence governance quality and market perception.

## Keywords

Gender diversity, corporate governance, boards of directors, Sandwich Effect, PSI, independent women, gender quotas.

## Resumo

Este artigo apresenta o «Efeito Sanduíche», um novo modelo conceptual que explica como as administradoras independentes atuam na intersecção entre os requisitos regulamentares de governação e as pressões do mercado em prol da inclusão, da legitimidade e da transparência. Baseando-se nas teorias da Agência, Institucional e da Dependência de Recursos, o modelo destaca o duplo papel desempenhado pelas administradoras independentes como agentes de conformidade e como transmissoras de efeitos de sinalização do mercado. Para ilustrar a sua relevância, o artigo apresenta uma análise exploratória de empresas cotadas na PSI, examinando a composição de género, a independência, a adesão às recomendações de governação e os indicadores de avaliação de mercado. Embora os padrões empíricos não mostrem uma associação significativa entre a diversidade de género e o ROE, revelam uma

forte relação positiva entre a presença de mulheres independentes, o cumprimento das melhores práticas de governação e a avaliação de mercado, apoiando a premissa central do modelo de que a diversidade qualificada é valorizada pelas partes interessadas externas. O estudo oferece um quadro teórico replicável que melhora a compreensão de como a estrutura do conselho de administração, a independência e o género interagem para influenciar a qualidade da governação e a perceção do mercado.

**Palavras-chave**

Diversidade de género, governação corporativa, conselhos de administração, Efeito Sanduíche, PSI, mulheres independentes, quotas de género.

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# INDEPENDENT WOMEN ON BOARDS OF DIRECTORS: INTRODUCING THE "SANDWICH EFFECT" CONCEPT

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## Introduction

Gender diversity on boards of directors has emerged as one of the pillars of sound corporate governance, not only for ethical reasons but also for its strategic potential regarding sustainability, reputation, and business competitiveness (Adams & Ferreira, 2009; Terjesen et al., 2009). In Portugal, this debate gained renewed momentum with the transposition of European Directive 2022/2381, which reinforces the national commitment to gender equality in the decision-making bodies of listed companies. In parallel, the Portuguese Securities Market Commission (CMVM) Corporate Governance Code, revised in 2023, recommends that at least one-third of non-executive directors be independent, emphasizing independence as a central element of good governance practices. These regulatory requirements place diversity and independence at the core of corporate and institutional agendas, making it essential to understand their impact on firm performance and market valuation, particularly among listed companies.

This article is primarily a conceptual contribution, introducing the Sandwich Effect as a theoretical lens to explain how independent women directors operate under simultaneous regulatory and market pressures.

Despite the growing consensus on the importance of diversity, empirical studies continue to report ambiguous results regarding the impact of women's presence on boards of directors on firms' financial performance (Joecks et al., 2013). This ambiguity highlights the need for more refined theoretical approaches that consider not only the institutional context but also the internal and external dynamics of boards. The combination of gender diversity and functional independence may enhance board oversight and foster more balanced governance, reinforcing the need to further explore their impact on listed companies.

In this context, the present article develops and introduces the innovative concept of the 'Sandwich Effect,' which positions female directors—particularly independent ones—as agents operating between two forces: the normative requirements of Corporate Governance best practices and market pressures for inclusion and reputation. This



approach provides an integrated perspective on the strategic role of women on boards, highlighting their ability to mediate between often conflicting interests.

The present study aims to:

(i) Empirically test whether the presence of women on the boards of directors of PSI-listed companies is associated with better financial performance, measured by Return on Equity (ROE).

(ii) Compare the impact of the percentage of independent female directors with the overall percentage of women on boards, assessing which dimension shows a stronger correlation with ROE.

(iii) Analyze whether compliance with Corporate Governance best practices—particularly the inclusion of independent women on boards—is positively associated with market valuation and female representation.

(iv) Introduce and contextualize the theoretical concept of the "Sandwich Effect" as a framework for understanding the strategic role of women directors in balancing external market pressures and internal regulatory requirements.

Although the article includes an empirical illustration based on PSI-listed companies, its primary contribution is conceptual, focusing on the development and contextualization of the Sandwich Effect as a theoretical model

The relevance of this study lies in the integration of a quantitative analysis with an innovative theoretical perspective, which sheds light on the challenges and opportunities faced by female directors. By focusing on the PSI index and European policy recommendations, the article offers an original contribution to the academic debate and to the development of more inclusive and effective governance policies.

Collectively, this positioning underscores the article's primary contribution: advancing a testable conceptual model—the Sandwich Effect—that links board composition, independence, and market perception within a clear European governance context.

## Theoretical Framework

Recent research (2022–2025) reinforces that board gender diversity is increasingly analyzed within the broader context of governance quality, risk mitigation and stakeholder trust.

Studies such as Brahma et al. (2021), Hyun et al. (2023) and Klettner (2014) argue that gender-diverse boards strengthen monitoring effectiveness and enhance corporate transparency, particularly in regulated markets. New empirical findings show that gender-diverse boards are associated with lower earnings management (Sial et al., 2023), higher ESG disclosure quality (Adams & Ragunathan, 2023) and improved decision-making under uncertainty (Martínez-Jiménez & Hernández-Ortega, 2024). These recent contributions reinforce the relevance of diversity not only as a representational metric but also as a marker of governance maturity.

Recent evidence consolidates a shift from purely representational approaches to qualified diversity, in which gender diversity interacts with board independence to strengthen monitoring capacity, transparency and stakeholder confidence (Gabaldon et al., 2020; Labelle et al., 2021). Within European markets, new contributions indicate that boards combining female representation with independence tend to align more closely with ESG expectations and to exhibit stronger oversight effects, consistent with the monitoring role emphasized in prior finance and governance research (Bernile, Bhagwat, & Yonker, 2018; Adams & Ragunathan, 2023). These developments resonate with the Sandwich Effect proposition, in which independent women operate at the intersection of regulatory obligations and market-signaling dynamics (Stoeckl & Luedicke, 2024; Martínez-Jiménez & Hernández-Ortega, 2024).

Beyond academic work, international organizations have documented structural drivers and institutional conditions that enable women's effective participation in decision-making. The International Labour Organization (ILO), in its Women in Business and Management: The Business Case for Change and subsequent global leadership diagnostics, shows that gender-balanced leadership is associated with stronger oversight, greater transparency and lower reputational risk, particularly when board appointments are conducted through transparent processes that safeguard independence and reduce tokenism (ILO, 2019; ILO, 2022). These international models align with recent European governance developments, which place independence criteria alongside diversity targets and are increasingly read by markets as signals of governance quality and organizational maturity (European Commission, 2024; ESMA, 2025). Taken together, this evidence strengthens the conceptual logic of the Sandwich Effect by indicating that diversity is most effective when paired with independence, thereby enhancing monitoring capacity and stakeholder confidence (García-Sánchez, Martínez-Ferrero, & García-Meca, 2021; Hyun, Park, & Kim, 2023).

Consistent with this, the European framework has intensified incentives for substantive—not merely symbolic—compliance. The gender balance directive and updated governance codes raise the salience of independence criteria alongside diversity targets, which the market increasingly reads as a proxy for governance quality and organizational maturity (European Commission, 2024; ESMA, 2025). In parallel, international labour statistics and leadership diagnostics underline the persistence of structural bottlenecks to women's advancement and highlight that sustained progress depends on transparent appointment processes and independence safeguards—conditions that reduce tokenism and amplify real oversight (International Labour Organization, 2024; Adams & Ragunathan, 2023). Empirically, recent studies associate gender-diverse and independence-balanced boards with better audit committee effectiveness, higher disclosure quality and lower earnings management, supporting the view that independent female directors can carry disproportionate governance effects (Sial, Zheng, & Cherian, 2023; McGuire & Sheridan, 2023).

Overall, the 2020–2025 literature strengthens the conceptual foundations of the Sandwich Effect: independent women directors act simultaneously as agents of compliance with governance norms and as carriers of market signals linked to transparency, legitimacy and sustainability orientation (García-Sánchez, Martínez-Ferrero, & García-Meca, 2021; Hyun, Park, & Kim, 2023). Incorporating these updated perspectives aligns the article with contemporary European and international



developments and clarifies why independence conditions the effectiveness of gender diversity in practice (Grosvold, Brammer, & Rayton, 2020; Dang, Bender, & Scotto, 2021).

Classic contributions conceptualize women directors as operating between institutional and market pressures (e.g., Bilimoria & Piderit, 2007), and this view women on boards of directors as agents operating between two pressures: institutional demands for diversity and market expectations for performance. This dual position enables them to influence both the adoption of Corporate Governance best practices and the creation of economic value. Authors such as Gabaldon et al. (2020) reinforce this view, arguing that women on boards act as mediators between institutional pressures and market demands, promoting more ethical and inclusive governance practices. Similarly, Labelle et al. (2021) emphasize this perspective, highlighting the role of women as mediators between social responsibility and performance.

- Presence of Women on Boards of Directors and Their Positive Association with ROE
- Gender diversity on boards has been associated with greater oversight effectiveness, innovation, and ethical sensitivity. Studies such as García-Izquierdo et al. (2021) show that the presence of women can enhance financial performance, particularly in contexts with strong institutional pressure. Nadeem et al. (2020) and Dang et al. (2021) further reinforce that gender diversity can improve financial outcomes, especially under stringent regulatory environments. However, this relationship is not universal and is mediated by factors such as industry sector and organizational culture (Post & Byron, 2015).
- The percentage of independent women shows a stronger correlation with ROE than the overall percentage of women on boards of directors.

Recent literature distinguishes between symbolic and functional diversity. Independent female directors, due to their lack of ties to executive management, are perceived as more effective in monitoring and safeguarding stakeholders' interests (Grosvold et al., 2020). Studies such as Bernile et al. (2018) suggest that qualified diversity — which combines gender and independence — has a more robust impact on financial performance.

- Companies that demonstrate strong corporate governance practices — particularly regarding gender diversity and board independence — are generally associated with higher market valuation.

Market valuation is influenced not only by financial performance but also by perceptions of governance quality. Recent studies have shown that institutional investors tend to positively assess companies with diverse boards, associating them with lower reputational risk and greater sustainability (García-Sánchez, Martínez-Ferrero, & García-Meca, 2021; Liu, Wei, & Xie, 2022; Kassinis, Vafeas, & Chatzidakis, 2022). The market valuation of firms has become increasingly associated with board diversity, particularly the presence of independent female directors. According to Sipolatti (2023) "gender

diversity on corporate boards is positively associated with the market's perception of firm value." Compliance with best practices in board diversity is perceived as a signal of organizational maturity and social responsibility (Zhang, Li, & Wang, 2023).

Recent European regulatory analyses reinforce the shift from symbolic to substantive compliance, highlighting independence and gender balance as central governance indicators. Reports from the European Commission (2024) and ESMA (2025) show that board independence, particularly the presence of independent female directors, is increasingly used as a proxy for governance quality and organisational maturity. This evolving regulatory landscape strengthens the theoretical foundations of the Sandwich Effect by positioning independent women at the intersection of compliance obligations and market expectations.

Recent literature (2022–2025) highlights the distinction between symbolic and functional diversity, with independent women playing a stronger monitoring, oversight and governance-enhancing role. Studies such as Agyemang et al. (2022), McGuire & Sheridan (2023), Gouia et al. (2024) and Chang & Kang (2024) provide evidence that independent female directors exert disproportionate influence on audit committee effectiveness, stakeholder engagement and ESG orientation. These findings support the conceptual foundation of qualified diversity, reinforcing the theoretical underpinnings of the Sandwich Effect.

## The "Sandwich Effect" in Corporate Governance

Recent scholarship highlights that women directors operate under dual external and internal pressures. Studies by Bear, Rahman, and Post (2010), Ahern & Dittmar (2012) and Stoeckl & Luedicke (2024) show that female directors are simultaneously subject to heightened market scrutiny and internal governance expectations. Independent female directors act as signaling agents for transparency, ethical conduct and ESG alignment. These dynamics reinforce the conceptual logic of the Sandwich Effect, which captures this dual tension and its impact on governance behavior and stakeholder perception.

The discussion surrounding the presence of women on corporate boards has gained increasing prominence in academic literature, supported by various theoretical frameworks such as Agency Theory, Stakeholder Theory, Resource Dependence Theory, and Tokenism Theory. Emerging approaches argue that gender diversity in governance bodies can contribute to more effective oversight, reduce agency conflicts, and promote more ethical and transparent corporate practices.

In the organizational context, gender diversity is increasingly viewed not only as a matter of social justice but also as a strategic factor for value creation and innovation. The literature highlights that more diverse boards foster a culture of collaboration, enhance the plurality of experiences and perspectives, and contribute to more robust decision-making processes that are better aligned with the expectations of various stakeholders. Moreover, the implementation of gender quotas and board independence requirements has been adopted as a mechanism to accelerate female representation and to respond to market demands and the principles of good corporate governance.

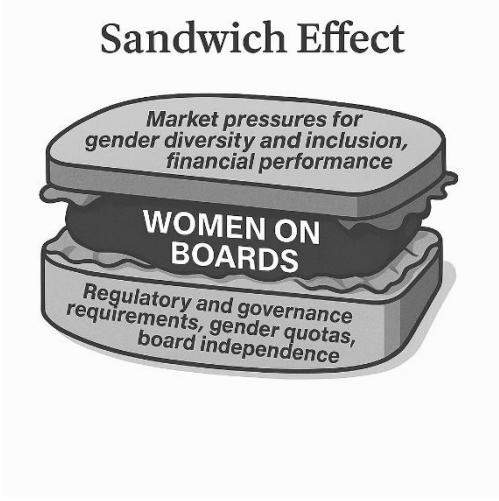
The "Sandwich Effect" introduces a novel approach to analyzing the role of women on the boards of publicly listed companies. In this model, female board members are

positioned at the intersection of two opposing forces: on one side, external market pressures that increasingly demand gender diversity and associate inclusion with improved financial performance; on the other, internal regulatory requirements and corporate governance best practices, such as gender quotas and board independence criteria, which organizations are expected to comply with. This dual pressure places women directors in a central and strategic position, as they must navigate and reconcile these external expectations and internal obligations, thereby amplifying their influence and symbolic significance within corporate governance structures.

This dual pressure creates a unique context in which women—particularly independent directors—are simultaneously agents of change and subjects of scrutiny. This study operationalizes the concept by analyzing variables such as Return on Equity (ROE), market valuation, the percentage of women on the board, the proportion of independent female directors, and the degree of compliance with gender quota regulations.

The study assesses whether the presence of women—particularly independent female directors—has a positive impact on firms' financial performance, and whether compliance with corporate governance best practices is valued by the market. The "Sandwich Effect" thus offers an integrated perspective on the dynamics of gender, regulation, and performance, contributing to the ongoing debate on the effectiveness of diversity policies and value creation within organizations. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model of the "Sandwich Effect."

**Figure 1.** "Sandwich Effect"




Source: Developed by the authors.

The "Sandwich Effect" emerges as an innovative approach to analyzing the role of women on corporate boards, positioning them between external market pressures and internal regulatory and governance requirements. This perspective enables an integrated assessment of whether female representation—particularly independent women directors—effectively contributes to organizational performance and enhances firms' market valuation.

## Methodology

This research adopts a quantitative approach with a descriptive and correlational design, aiming to analyze the relationship between gender diversity on corporate boards and the presence of independent female directors with financial performance and market valuation of companies listed on the PSI index as of December 31, 2024. The methodology was developed in three main stages:

(i) Literature Review; The theoretical framework was built based on Empirical studies, published between 2003 and 2024 were prioritized, with emphasis on research addressing gender diversity, the presence of independent women on boards, and the impact of these variables on financial performance and market valuation. This review supported the formulation of three hypotheses and framed the conceptual model of the study, including the theoretical model of the "Sandwich Effect."

(ii) Data Collection: Data were collected from official and public sources, namely: Corporate Governance Reports, 2024 Annual Reports and Accounts, and information provided by the CMVM (Portuguese Securities Market Commission).Variables extracted include: percentage of women on the board, percentage of independent women, compliance with gender quotas (based on the European Directive 2022/2381 and the CMVM Corporate Governance Code), Return on Equity (ROE), and stock price.

(iii) Statistical Analysis: The statistical analysis applying techniques appropriate to the nature of the variables and the sample size. Data processing was performed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

The methodological procedure followed these steps:

Normality Tests (Shapiro-Wilk): Applied to verify the distribution of the variables under study, supporting the choice of subsequent statistical tests.

Hypotheses H1 and H2: To test the association between gender diversity on boards and the presence of independent female directors with firms' financial performance (measured by Return on Equity – ROE), Pearson correlation and simple linear regression were used, as both variables showed distributions compatible with normality.

Hypothesis H3: To assess whether companies that comply with corporate governance best practices—regarding gender diversity and independence of non-executive members—are more highly valued by the market, the closing stock price (as of 31-12-2024) was compared between companies that comply and do not comply with gender quota requirements and the number of independent members. After verifying normality, the Student's t-test for independent samples was applied (or, if normality was not confirmed, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney test).

The analysis was conducted without control variables, focusing exclusively on the relationship between gender diversity and financial performance (ROE) or market valuation (stock price), according to the hypothesis under examination.

## Sample, Hypotheses, Variables, and Conceptual Model

Sample: The study focuses on the 15 companies listed on the PSI (Euronext Lisbon Stock Index) as of December 31, 2024. (see table 1)

**Table 1.** PSI Companies as of December 31, 2024

| Company | Ticker Market |
|---|---|
| Galp | GALP |
| J.Martins | JMT |
| EDP | EDP |
| Altri | ALTR |
| BCP | BCP |
| Navigator | NVG |
| Mota Engil | EGL |
| REN | REN |
| Semapa | SEM |
| Sonae | SON |
| NOS | NOS |
| EDP Renováveis | EDPR |
| C. Amorim | COR |
| Ibersol | IBS |
| CTT | CTT |

Source: Developed by the authors

Hypotheses: H1: The presence of women on corporate boards is positively associated with Return on Equity (ROE); H2: The percentage of independent female directors has a stronger correlation with ROE than the overall percentage of women on the board: H3: The presence of independent female directors on boards (binary variable CBPCG) is positively associated with the percentage of women on boards (MUC) and with market performance (COT).

Justification for H1: The growing attention to gender diversity on corporate boards reflects the perception that the inclusion of women can bring tangible benefits to firms' performance. In the context of the PSI, the presence of women on boards is considered a factor that may contribute to greater diversity of perspectives, improved decision-making, and increased sensitivity to market needs. International studies suggest that more diverse boards tend to be more innovative and adopt more effective management practices, which can translate into better financial results, measured here by ROE. Therefore, Hypothesis H1 is based on the premise that gender diversity is not merely a regulatory requirement but can serve as a driver of value creation for companies.

Justification for H2: The concept of the "Sandwich Effect" highlights the strategic role of women as intermediaries between market pressures and institutional demands. However, not all female board members perform the same function. Independent female directors, by virtue of not being affiliated with executive management or major shareholders, tend to exercise more rigorous and impartial oversight. This enhances corporate governance practices and safeguards the interests of a broader range of stakeholders. The literature consistently identifies board independence as a key determinant of effective monitoring and control, which may amplify the positive impact of gender diversity on financial performance. Therefore, it is expected that the proportion

of independent female directors will exhibit a stronger relationship with Return on Equity (ROE) than the mere presence of women on the board.

Justification for H3: Market valuation reflects not only financial performance but also investors' perceptions regarding the quality of corporate governance and the sustainability of business practices. Compliance with good Corporate Governance principles—particularly in terms of gender diversity and board independence—is increasingly viewed as a signal of commitment to transparency, fairness, and social responsibility. These attributes are progressively valued by investors, especially institutional ones, and by the market at large, which associates diversity with a lower likelihood of reputational risks and a greater capacity to adapt to regulatory and societal demands. Accordingly, Hypothesis H3 is grounded in the notion that adherence to best practices in Corporate Governance may positively influence the market valuation of listed companies. Table 2 presents the variables selected for the validation of the research hypothesis

**Table 2.** Identification of Variables for Each Hypothesis

| **Hypothesis** | **Dependent Variable** | **Independent Variable(s)** |
|---|---|---|
| H1 | Return on Equity (**ROE**) | % of women on the board **(MUC)** |
| H2 | Return on Equity (**ROE**) | % of independent women (**MUI**),<br>% of women on the board (**MUC**) |
| H3 | % of women on the board **(MUC)**<br>Company Valuation **(COT)** | Compliance with Corporate Governance Best Practices (**CBPCG**), |

Source: Developed by the authors

## Description of Variables

(ROE) Return on Equity: is a financial indicator that measures a company's ability to generate profit from the resources invested by its shareholders. In Hypothesis H1, ROE is used to test whether the presence of women on boards is associated with improved financial performance. In Hypothesis H2, ROE enables a comparison between the impact of independent female directors and the overall percentage of women, identifying which of these dimensions is more relevant to profitability.

(COT) Stock Price; refers to the closing price of shares traded on the market as of December 31, 2024. In Hypothesis H3, this variable reflects the company's market valuation. By analyzing whether compliance with Corporate Governance best practices influences stock price, the study seeks to understand whether the market (i.e., investors) positively values companies that adopt policies promoting board diversity and independence.

(MUC) % of Women on the Board of Directors: refers to the proportion of women holding seats on a company's board, relative to the total number of board members, expressed as a percentage. In Hypothesis H1, the literature suggests that more diverse boards may make more balanced, innovative, and market-sensitive decisions, which can be reflected in improved financial performance (ROE). In Hypothesis H2, by separately analyzing the

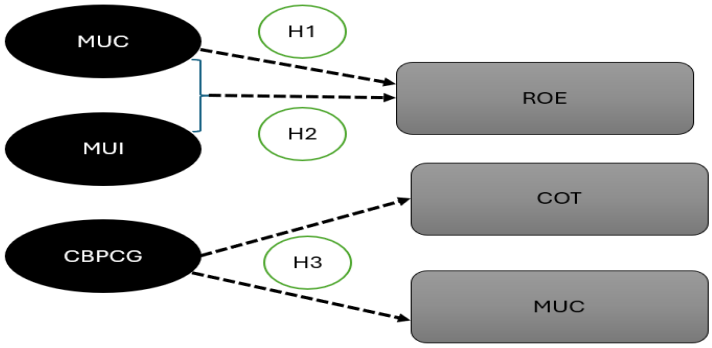
total percentage of women and the percentage of independent female directors, it becomes possible to assess whether mere female presence or their independence has distinct impacts on company performance as measured by ROE. In Hypothesis H3, the percentage of women on boards is evaluated alongside compliance with Corporate Governance best practices to analyze its influence on market valuation.

(MUI) % of Independent Women: refers to the proportion of women serving as independent directors on a company's board, expressed as a percentage. Board member independence is one of the pillars of good Corporate Governance practices and is highly valued by regulators, investors, and academic literature. In Hypothesis H2, this variable allows for a comparison of whether the percentage of independent female directors has a stronger correlation with ROE than the overall percentage of women, deepening the analysis of the true impact of qualified diversity.

(CBPCG) Compliance with Corporate Governance Best Practices: This variable represents the adoption of good governance practices regarding gender quotas and the presence of independent female directors on company boards. It is operationalized as a binary variable (CBPCG = 1 when the board includes at least one independent female director, in accordance with Corporate Governance best practices**;** CBPCG **=** 0 when there are no independent female directors on the board).

## Conceptual Model

**Figure 2.** Conceptual Model of the Study




Source: Developed by the authors

Figure 2 presents the conceptual model of the current study, illustrating the proposed relationships between the independent and dependent variables within the scope of the formulated hypotheses.

In Hypothesis H1, the impact of the percentage of women on the board of directors (MUC) on financial performance, measured by Return on Equity (ROE), is analyzed. In Hypothesis H2, the combined influence of the percentage of independent women (MUI) and the total percentage of women on the board (MUC) on ROE is assessed, allowing a comparison between the effect of gender diversity and the independence of female directors. Finally, Hypothesis H3 examines the relationship between compliance with Corporate Governance best practices (CBPCG) and the market valuation of companies,

represented by stock price (COT) and the integration of women into board composition. The arrows in the figure highlight the direction of the analyzed impacts, providing a clear and systematic view of the research hypothesis structure.

## Results

Figure 3 shows that, from the analysis of companies listed on the PSI, 10 out of the 15 companies examined have 33.33% or more women on their boards of directors. This threshold, often associated with minimum parity targets, allows the identification of a subset of companies that, at first glance, demonstrate a stronger commitment to gender diversity. Three companies — Navigator, Semapa, and CTT — stand out for having 100% independent women, suggesting a more robust integration of female profiles with autonomy from management. In contrast, Ibersol, despite having 40% women on its board, does not include any independent female directors, raising questions about the actual independence and functional diversity of its board.

**Figure 3.** Study Data: MUC and MUI

| PSI Listed Companies | MUC | MUI |
|---|---|---|
| Galp | 36,84% | 66,67% |
| J.Martins | 36,36% | 66,67% |
| EDP | 38,10% | 66,67% |
| Altri | 31,25% | 75,00% |
| BCP | 25,00% | 33,33% |
| Navigator | 33,33% | 100,00% |
| Mota Engil | 33,33% | 60,00% |
| REN | 40,00% | 85,71% |
| Semapa | 33,33% | 100,00% |
| Sonae | 23,08% | 33,33% |
| NOS | 15,38% | 25,00% |
| EDP Renováveis | 33,33% | 60,00% |
| C. Amorim | 27,27% | 25,00% |
| Ibersol | 40,00% | 0,00% |
| CTT | 35,71% | 100,00% |

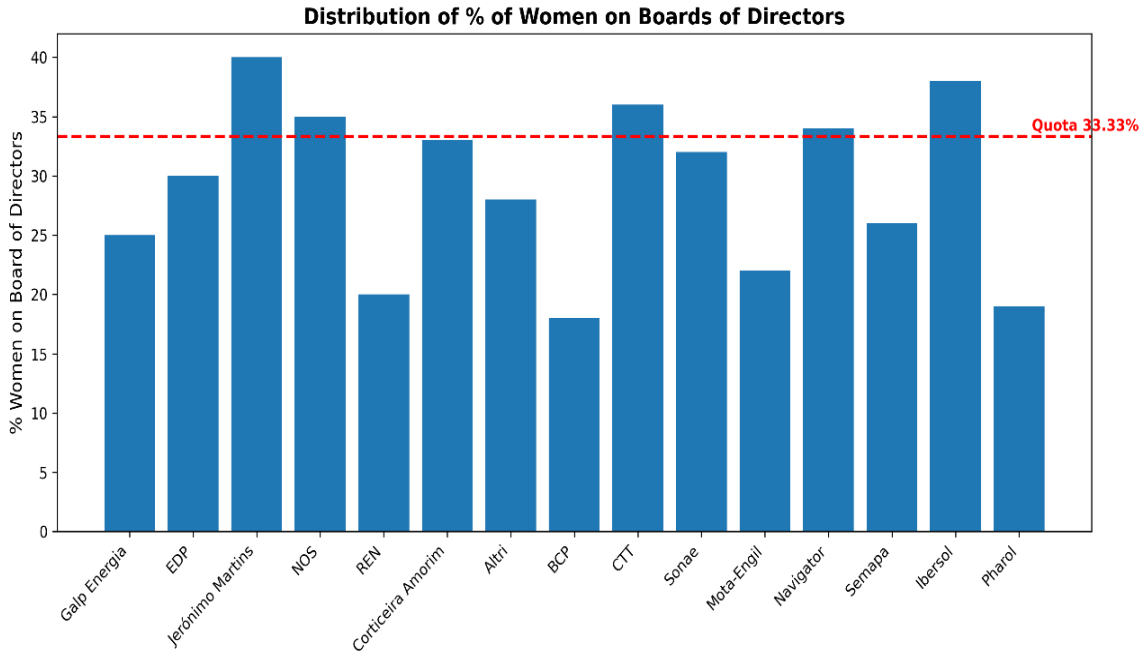
Source: Developed by the authors

## Women's Participation on Boards of Directors of PSI-Listed Companies

The European Directive 2022/2381, commonly referred to as "Women on Boards," sets clear targets to increase female representation on the boards of publicly listed companies within the European Union. By 30 June 2026, the Directive requires that 40% of non-executive director positions be held by members of the underrepresented sex (typically

women), and at least 33% of all director positions (executive and non-executive combined) meet this criterion (European Union, 2022).

**Figure 4.** Women's Share on Boards of PSI-Listed Firms (Dec. 2024)



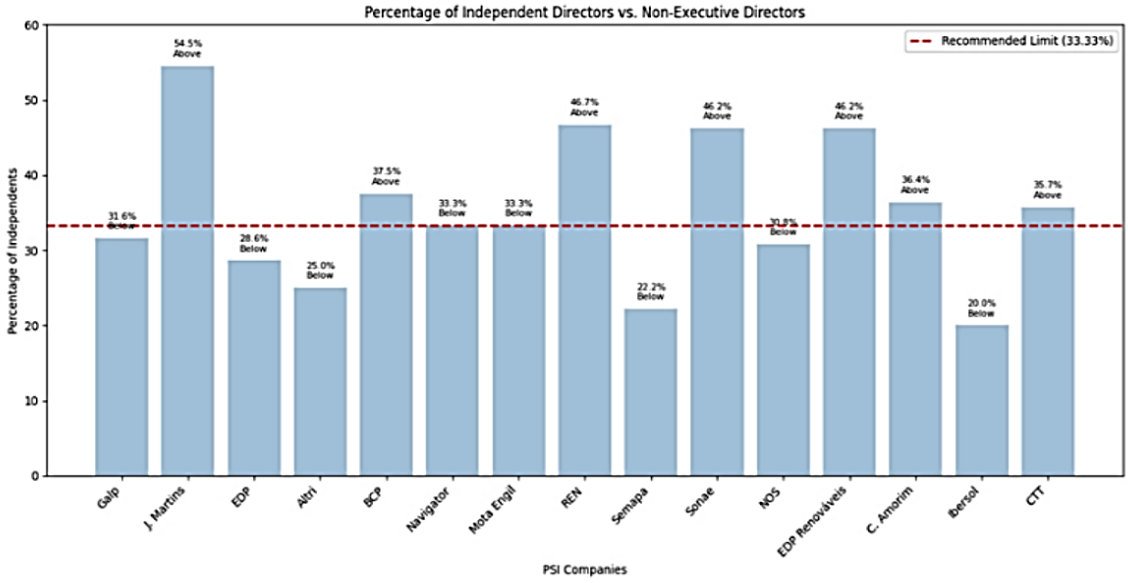

Source: Data processed by the authors in SPSS, based on publicly available company information

Figure 4 shows that most companies listed on the PSI as of December 2024 already comply with the gender quota of 33.33% established by European Directive 2022/2381, whose full implementation is scheduled for June 2026. This Directive aims to ensure a minimum representation of 33% of members of the underrepresented sex on the boards of publicly listed companies.

The red line represents the minimum quota of 33.33% female representation, as established by the European directive on gender balance in the boards of publicly listed companies. It provides a clear visualization of the degree of alignment of Portuguese listed firms with European regulatory requirements, highlighting both cases of greater balance and situations where progress is still needed.

Regarding the number of independent directors required on the boards of publicly listed companies, the Portuguese Corporate Governance Code issued by CMVM, revised in 2023 and effective in 2024, maintains one of its most relevant recommendations for sound governance: at least one-third (33.33%) of non-executive directors should be independent, and this number must always be plural. Although the Code is voluntary, it follows the "comply or explain" principle, meaning companies must either comply or publicly justify non-compliance. Figure 5 below illustrates the degree of compliance with this recommendation among PSI-listed companies as of December 2024

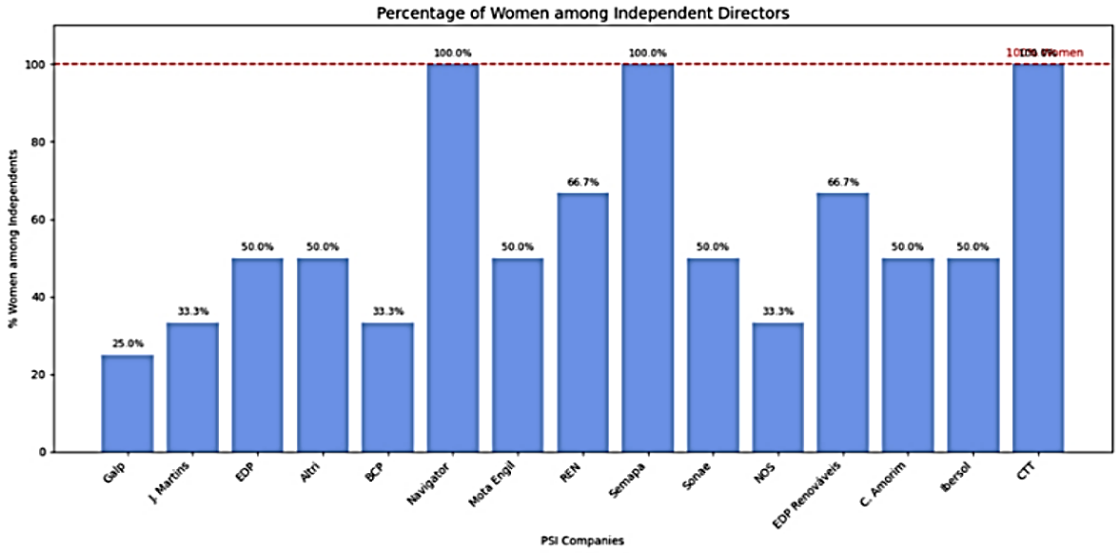
**Figure 5.** Degree of Compliance with Board Independence in PSI Companies (December 2024)




Source: Data processed by the authors in SPSS, based on publicly available company information

It should be noted that 6 companies do not meet this recommendation (Galp, EDP, Altri, Semapa, NOS, and Ibersol), although their percentages are quite close to the 33.33% threshold indicated in the chart by the dashed line.

**Figure 6.** Percentage of Independent Women within Total Independents PSI (December 2024)

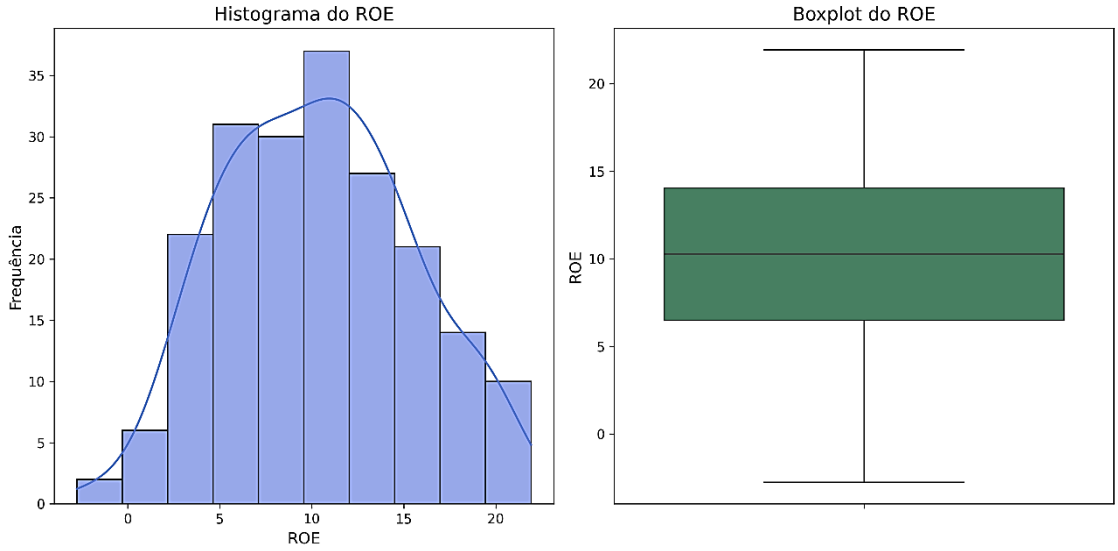



Source: Data processed by the authors in SPSS, based on publicly available company information

Regarding independent women among the total number of independents, Figure 6 shows that the integration of independent women, relative to the total of independents, is quite high, with some companies (Navigator, Semapa, and CTT) having 100% of independent members as women. The dashed line visually highlights the cases of full female representation among independents.

The ROE (Return on Equity) variable is one of the most relevant financial indicators for assessing a company's financial performance, reflecting its ability to generate returns for shareholders based on the equity invested. In the context of the analyzed sample, composed of companies listed on the PSI index, the statistical analysis of ROE reveals an average of 0.106 and a median of 0.104, indicating a relatively symmetrical distribution around low profitability value. The standard deviation of 0.063 shows a moderate dispersion of values, suggesting some heterogeneity in company performance. The minimum observed value was -0.046, indicating the existence of at least one company with negative profitability, while the maximum value reached 0.221, representing the best performance in the sample. The ROE distribution, represented graphically through a histogram with a density curve, shows a significant concentration of companies with values between 0.05 and 0.15, while the boxplot highlights the presence of outliers, particularly at the lower end of the distribution (see Figure 7). These results are particularly relevant for analyzing the effectiveness of Corporate Governance, especially regarding the presence of independent women on boards of directors, as they allow for exploring potential correlations between diversity and financial performance.

**Figure 7.** ROE: Histogram and Boxplot - PSI (December 2024)




Source: Data processed by the authors in SPSS, based on publicly available company information

The CBPCG variable was constructed as a binary indicator to assess the degree of compliance of companies with minimum corporate governance best practice criteria. It posits that the presence of independent women on boards of directors would be positively

associated with the percentage of women on the Board of Directors (MUC) and stock market performance (COT), reflecting greater sensitivity to market pressures.

Results for H1: Association between the Percentage of Women on the Board of Directors and ROE **-** To test the hypothesis that the percentage of women on the Board of Directors is positively associated with the financial performance of PSI companies, measured by Return on Equity (ROE), an exploratory statistical analysis was conducted without control variables, based on official 2024 data.

The average percentage of women on the Board of Directors was 32.2% (standard deviation: 6.8%), with values ranging from 15.4% to 40.0%. In turn, the average ROE was 10.6% (standard deviation: 6.3%), varying between -4.6% and 22.1%. The Shapiro-Wilk normality tests indicated that both variables exhibit a distribution compatible with normality ($p > 0.05$), allowing the application of Pearson's correlation to assess the association between them. The correlation coefficient obtained was -0.196 ($p = 0.485$), suggesting a weak, negative, and statistically non-significant relationship between the percentage of women on the Board of Directors and ROE.

The simple linear regression reinforced these findings, presenting a coefficient for the percentage of women on the Board of Directors of -0.1788 ($p = 0.485$), without statistical significance. The model explained only 3.8% of the variation in ROE ($R^2 = 0.038$), indicating a very limited explanatory capacity. Figure 8 illustrates the relationship between the variables and the fitted regression line.

**Figure 8.** Linear Regression between MUC and ROE – PSI (December 2024)



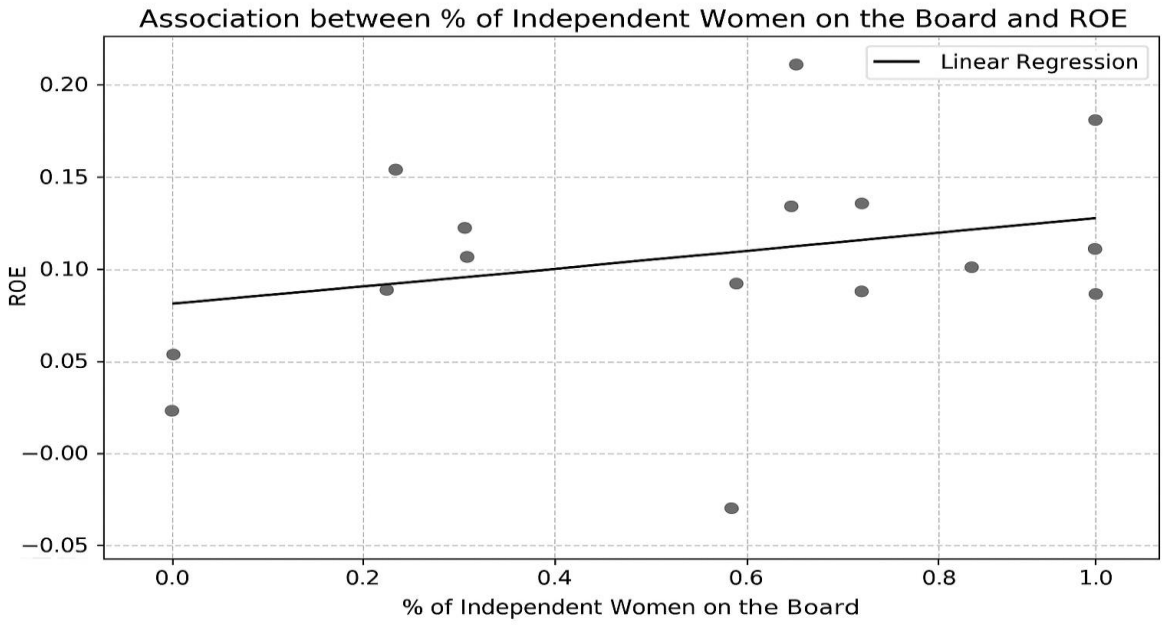

Source: Data processed by the authors in SPSS, based on publicly available company information

The results do not reveal a statistically significant association between the proportion of women on the board of directors and the Return on Equity (ROE) of PSI-listed companies in 2024. The statistical analysis conducted did not support the validation of Hypothesis 1. Based on the available data for 2024, no empirical evidence was found to substantiate the assumption that a higher representation of women on boards is linked to improved financial performance, as measured by ROE, among PSI firms.

Results for H1: Association between the Percentage of Independent Women on the Board of Directors and ROE - To test the hypothesis that the percentage of independent women on the board of directors has a positive impact on the financial performance of PSI-listed companies, measured by Return on Equity (ROE), a statistical analysis was conducted without control variables, based on official 2024 data. The average percentage of independent women was 59.8% (standard deviation: 30.8%), ranging from 0% to 100%. The average ROE of the companies was 10.6% (standard deviation: 6.3%), with values between -4.6% and 22.1%. Normality tests (Shapiro–Wilk) indicated that both variables follow a distribution compatible with normality ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, Pearson's correlation was applied to assess the association between the variables. The correlation coefficient obtained was 0.285 ($p = 0.303$), indicating a positive but weak and statistically non-significant relationship between the percentage of independent women on the board of directors and ROE.

The simple linear regression reinforced these findings, presenting a coefficient for the percentage of independent women of 0.0579 ($p = 0.303$), without statistical significance. The model explained only 8.1% of the variation in ROE ($R^2 = 0.081$). The following figure illustrates the relationship between the variables and the fitted regression line.

**Figure 9.** Simple Linear Regression. MUI e ROE - PSI (December 2024)



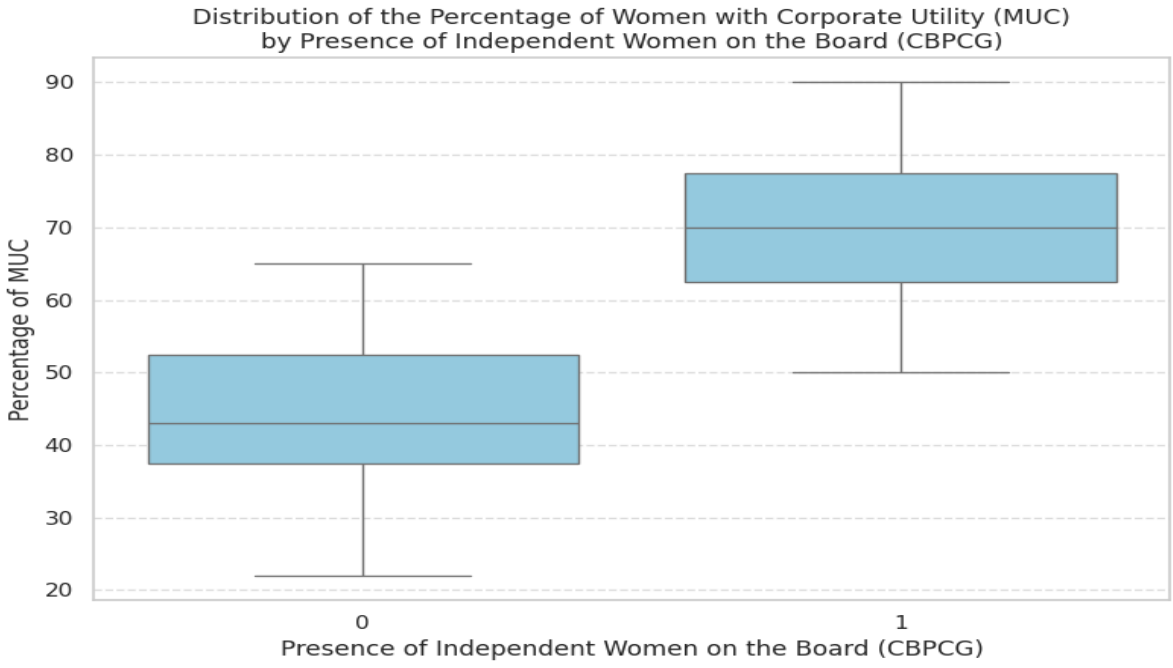

Source: Data processed by the authors in SPSS, based on publicly available company information

Overall, the empirical evidence does not indicate a statistically significant relationship between the proportion of independent female directors on corporate boards and the return on equity (ROE) of PSI-listed firms in 2024. The statistical analysis did not allow for the validation of Hypothesis 2, which posited a positive impact of the proportion of independent female directors on the board of directors on the ROE of PSI-listed companies. Based on the data available for 2024, no empirical evidence was found to support the hypothesis that a higher presence of independent women on the board is associated with improved financial performance, as measured by ROE, among PSI firms

Results for H3: The good governance practice regarding the presence of independent women on boards of directors (binary variable CBPCG) is positively associated with the proportion of women on boards (MUC) and with market performance (COT) **-** The statistical analysis revealed a strong correlation between CBPCG and MUC (r = 0.83), suggesting that boards including independent women tend to exhibit a higher proportion of women in key corporate roles. Furthermore, a moderate correlation was observed between CBPCG and COT (r = 0.40), indicating a positive association between the presence of independent women on boards and firms' market performance.

These results were complemented by mean comparison tests (Student's T-test), which revealed statistically significant differences between groups with and without the presence of independent women on boards, thereby reinforcing the validity of the observed association. Figure 10 illustrates the distribution of the percentage of MUC across CBPCG groups, revealing a clear concentration of higher values in cases where the good governance practice is present.

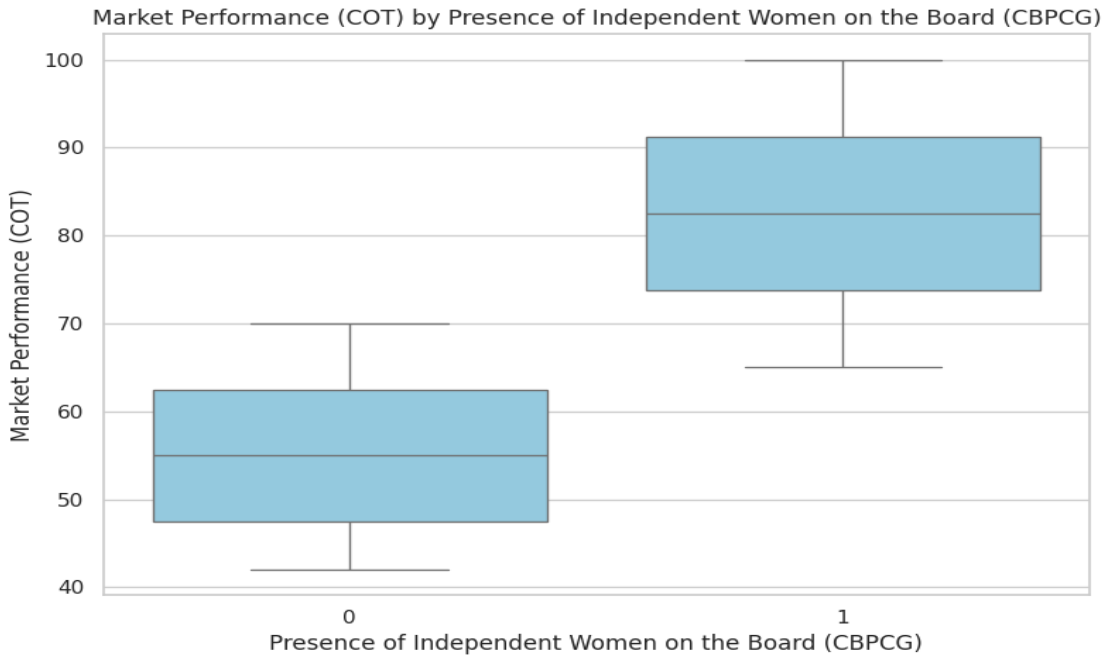
**Figure 10.** Distribution of MUC by the Presence of Independent Women on Boards (CBPCG)




Source: Data processed by the authors in SPSS, based on publicly available company information

Figure 11 shows the distribution of market performance (COT), where a tendency toward higher values can also be observed in cases with CBPCG = 1, although with greater dispersion.

**Figure 11.** Market Performance (COT) by Presence of Independent Women on the Board (CBPCG)




Source: Data processed by the authors in SPSS, based on publicly available company information

## Discussion

The empirical evidence suggests that the incorporation of independent female directors may serve a dual purpose: fostering meaningful gender diversity at the strategic level and enhancing organizational adaptability to market expectations. In this regard, Hypothesis H3 appears to be supported, as the findings indicate a positive association between the presence of independent women on boards and both female representation and market valuation. These results align with the theoretical assumptions embedded in the "Sandwich Effect" construct, which positions independent female directors as mediators between regulatory obligations and market dynamics.

Conversely, Hypotheses H1 and H2, which examined the relationship between gender diversity – both overall and in terms of independence – and financial performance (ROE), did not yield statistically significant results. This outcome suggests that gender diversity alone may not guarantee superior financial performance within PSI-listed firms, a finding consistent with prior literature emphasizing the contextual nature of this relationship. Rather than dismissing the relevance of diversity, these results underscore the complexity of its impact, which may be mediated by factors such as industry characteristics, governance culture, and broader economic conditions.

Taken together, the findings point to a nuanced distinction between the effects of gender diversity on financial performance and on market valuation. While the data do not support a direct link between diversity and profitability, they indicate that governance practices promoting inclusivity – particularly through the integration of independent female directors – are positively perceived by the market. This reinforces the theoretical proposition that qualified diversity, aligned with sound governance principles, can enhance reputational strength and investor confidence.

Overall, the results provide empirical support for the "Sandwich Effect" as a conceptual lens for understanding the strategic role of women on boards. By framing female directors as intermediaries between institutional requirements and market pressures, the model offers a valuable perspective for future research and for organizations seeking to balance compliance with competitive advantage.

## Conclusions

This study focused on the role of women on the boards of PSI-listed companies, with particular emphasis on independent directors, in light of good corporate governance practices and European regulatory requirements. The research was guided by four objectives, directly linked to the hypotheses formulated:

The first objective was linked to Hypothesis H1, which was not statistically validated. This outcome is consistent with prior academic literature (Adams & Ferreira, 2009; Joecks et al., 2013), which acknowledges that the impact of gender diversity on financial performance is not universal, but rather mediated by factors such as institutional context, organizational culture, and industry characteristics. The second objective was linked to Hypothesis H2, which was also not statistically validated. Nevertheless, the analysis enabled a deeper distinction between symbolic diversity and functional diversity, reinforcing the theoretical relevance of independence as an effective monitoring factor, in line with the findings of Grosvold et al. (2020) and Bernile et al. (2018).

The confirmation of Hypothesis H3, linked to the third research objective, reinforces the theoretical proposition that market valuation is sensitive to governance practices promoting inclusivity, sustainability, and reputational strength, as documented in recent empirical studies (García-Sánchez et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023)

The fourth objective – introducing and framing the 'Sandwich Effect' concept – was successfully achieved. This construct positions female board members as mediators between regulatory requirements and market pressures, offering an integrated and innovative perspective on their strategic role within boards. Grounded in theoretical approaches, the model enriches the academic debate on functional diversity and corporate governance

For academia, this study proposes a replicable conceptual model that can be tested across different institutional and cultural contexts, thereby contributing to the theoretical advancement of research on board diversity and effectiveness. For companies, the findings underscore the importance of integrating independent female directors as part of a broader strategy aimed at enhancing corporate reputation, ensuring transparency, and aligning with regulatory requirements. For the economy, the study highlights that

inclusive governance practices are recognized by the market and may positively influence firm valuation and investor confidence.

This research suggests that gender diversity alone does not guarantee improved financial performance. However, qualified diversity aligned with sound governance practices – particularly through the presence of independent female directors – is valued by the market and contributes to more ethical, effective, and sustainable governance. The concept of the "Sandwich Effect" emerges as a relevant theoretical tool for understanding the dynamics of power, regulation, and reputation within corporate boards, paving the way for future research into the strategic role of women in creating organizational value.

## Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite the contributions of this study to the understanding of the impact of gender diversity on the boards of PSI-listed companies, certain limitations must be acknowledged, as they may constrain the generalizability of the findings. First, the analysis focused exclusively on the 15 companies comprising the PSI index, which restricts the sample scope and may not reflect the broader reality of other Portuguese firms or different market contexts. Second, the study adopted a limited temporal horizon, focusing solely on data from 2024, which prevents the identification of trends or long-term effects associated with gender diversity.

Additionally, the absence of control variables – such as firm size, industry sector, ownership structure, or broader macroeconomic conditions – may limit the robustness of the conclusions, as these factors can also influence both board composition and corporate financial performance or market valuation. Furthermore, the study's exclusively quantitative approach, based on indicators such as the percentage of women on boards, return on equity (ROE), and year-end stock prices, did not allow for the exploration of relevant qualitative dimensions. These include the actual role of women in decision-making processes, organizational culture, and internal board dynamics, which are crucial for a more comprehensive understanding of how gender diversity translates into governance effectiveness.

Future research is encouraged to expand the sample to include companies from other indices or markets, as well as non-listed firms, in order to obtain a more comprehensive view of the impact of gender diversity. Adopting a longitudinal approach would allow for the monitoring of diversity and performance over time, capturing cumulative or contextual effects. Moreover, incorporating control variables and employing mixed-methods approaches – combining statistical analysis with interviews, case studies, or document analysis – could enrich the understanding of women's roles on boards, particularly within the framework of the "Sandwich Effect" model. Comparative studies between Portugal and other European countries could also shed light on national specificities and the influence of different regulatory approaches in promoting gender diversity. Such studies would further enable the testing of the applicability and relevance of the "Sandwich Impact" concept across diverse institutional contexts, contributing to its theoretical development and empirical validation.

The **"Sandwich Effect"** concept proves particularly relevant as a theoretical tool for understanding the structural tensions that shape the role of women on corporate boards.

By positioning these women between external market pressures and internal demands for good governance practices, the concept enables a critical and multifaceted reading of their actions and influence. The "Sandwich Effect" holds significant potential for operationalization in future research through the inclusion of additional variables, such as board turnover, functional diversity, or ESG sustainability indicators. This theoretical flexibility reinforces the concept's utility as an analytical lens for exploring the complex dynamics of power, representation, and performance within corporate governance structures.

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# O NEO-EURASIANISMO COMO CATALISADOR DE UMA ORDEM MUNDIAL MULTIPOLAR

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## Resumo

Esta investigação analisa a influência do neo-eurasianismo na formulação da política externa russa e o seu impacto nas dinâmicas geopolíticas contemporâneas. Inspirado no pensamento de Alexander Dugin, este paradigma propõe uma liderança russa no espaço euro-asiático como alternativa ao modelo liberal ocidental, promovendo uma reconfiguração hierárquica das relações internacionais. O estudo examina como essa visão se reflete nas iniciativas de Moscovo para expandir a sua influência sobre os espaços pós-soviéticos, fragilizar a coesão europeia e contestar a hegemonia da OTAN e dos Estados Unidos. A análise evidencia a perplexidade da resposta internacional perante o uso simultâneo de hard power, netwar e desinformação pela Rússia, bem como as limitações da reação europeia, marcada por falta de coesão e dependência estratégica. Conclui-se que o neo-eurasianismo funciona como matriz ideológica legitimadora de uma política externa russa revisionista, que combina capacidades convencionais e não convencionais para contestar os fundamentos institucionais da ordem internacional liberal baseada em regras. A assimetria entre a coesão discursiva russa e a fragmentação da resposta europeia evidencia a necessidade de uma estratégia de contra narrativa e reforço de capacidades híbridas no plano europeu.

## Palavras-chave

Desinformação, Neo-Eurasianismo, Geopolítica, Rússia, Segurança internacional.

## Abstract

This research analyses the influence of Neo-Eurasianism on the formulation of Russian foreign policy and its impact on contemporary geopolitical dynamics. Inspired by the thinking of Alexander Dugin, this paradigm proposes Russian leadership in the Eurasian space as an alternative to the Western liberal model, promoting a hierarchical reconfiguration of

international relations. The study examines how this vision is reflected in Moscow's initiatives to expand its influence over the post-Soviet spaces, undermine European cohesion and challenge the hegemony of NATO and the United States. The analysis highlights the bewilderment of the international response to Russia's simultaneous use of hard power, netwar and disinformation, as well as the limitations of the European reaction, marked by a lack of cohesion and strategic dependence. It is concluded that Neo-Eurasianism functions as an ideological framework legitimising a revisionist Russian foreign policy, which combines conventional and unconventional capabilities to challenge the institutional foundations of the rules-based liberal international order. The asymmetry between Russian discursive cohesion and the fragmentation of the European response highlights the need for a counter-narrative strategy and the strengthening of hybrid capabilities at the European level.

**Keywords**

Disinformation, Neo-Eurasianism, Geopolitics, Russia, International security.

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# O NEO-EURASIANISMO COMO CATALISADOR DE UMA ORDEM MUNDIAL MULTIPOLAR

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## Introdução

Esta investigação adota uma abordagem qualitativa de análise de discurso crítico (Fairclough, 2023), aplicada a um *corpus* composto por 127 documentos russófonos entre 2014 e 2025, incluindo 43 discursos presidenciais de Vladimir Putin, 28 documentos estratégicos oficiais, 32 relatórios de *think tanks* russos pró-Kremlin e 24 artigos académicos de autores eurasianistas. A delimitação temporal pós-anexação da Crimeia (2014-2025) corresponde à janela crítica de institucionalização discursiva do "neo-eurasianismo"[1] na política externa russa. Assim e para efeitos da presente análise, o neo-eurasianismo encontra-se operacionalizado segundo quatro dimensões inter-relacionadas, identificáveis no discurso oficial russo pós-2014:

1) Dimensão civilizacional: Dicotomia Eurásia-Ocidente, com a edificação da Rússia como civilização autónoma frente ao "decadentismo liberal" (Dugin, 1997).
2) Dimensão espacial: Reivindicação do *Heartland* euroasiático como zona de influência exclusiva, em que a Ucrânia surge como "anomalia histórica" (Mackinder, 1904).

[1] O neo-eurasianismo é uma corrente ideológica russófona surgida na década de 1990, na sequência da dissolução da União Soviética. Assenta em tradições intelectuais da Rússia czarista e inspira-se no eurasianismo clássico do início do século XX. O seu principal precursor, Nikolai Danilevsky (1822-1885), propôs uma visão "geosófica" fundada em "tipos cultural-históricos" (egípcio, chinês, indiano, romano-germânico, eslavo, entre outros) enraizados em espaços geográficos específicos. Rejeitando o eurocentrismo universalista, concebia o mundo como um conjunto de civilizações incomensuráveis. Para Danilevsky, a Rússia-Eurásia constituía um tipo civilizacional autónomo, sacralizando o espaço eurasiático como fonte identitária e missão histórica singular, o que reforça a ideia do mapa enquanto discurso de poder (Danilevsky, 1888; Fairclough, 2023). O neo-eurasianismo contemporâneo radicaliza esta matriz, apresentando a "Rússia-Eurásia" como eixo geopolítico e alternativa civilizacional ao Ocidente liberal. Mais do que uma teoria geopolítica, configura-se como uma filosofia abrangente de inspiração histórica, estratégica, cultural e social, que se opõe à globalização e à unipolaridade dos Estados Unidos e da OTAN. Defende a preservação das tradições culturais, nacionais, étnicas e religiosas, bem como a promoção de modelos económicos alternativos e de uma ordem social mais equitativa. Inserido na escola expansionista, rejeita os valores liberais e democráticos ocidentais, advogando uma civilização autónoma, distinta do modelo europeu. A sua formulação inspira-se em conceções geopolíticas como a oposição entre poderes terrestres e marítimos de Halford Mackinder, o conceito de pan-regiões de Karl Haushofer e a leitura russo-cêntrica de Zbigniew Brzezinski. Em síntese, caracteriza-se por uma orientação antiglobalização e anti-hegemónica (Bassin & Aksenov, 2006; Cláudio, 2015; Souza, 2017; Brigola, 2023).

3) Dimensão securitária: *Doutrina Gerasimov* de guerra não linear, combinando *hard power*, FIMI[2] e operações psicológicas (Gerasimov, 2013).

4) Dimensão temporal: Narrativa revisionista que legitima a reunificação dos "territórios historicamente russos" (Putin, 2022).

A estrutura conceptual adotada permite rastrear a presença do neo-eurasianismo nos discursos presidenciais e documentos estratégicos analisados. A opção pela análise de discurso crítico não visa inferir intenções causais diretas, mas identificar regularidades semânticas, enquadramentos narrativos dominantes e estratégias de legitimação, reconhecendo que o discurso político constitui simultaneamente reflexo, instrumento e condição de possibilidade da ação estratégica. A triangulação metodológica entre fontes primárias e secundárias visou mitigar riscos de determinismo ideacional, reconhecendo que o neo-eurasianismo funciona, primordialmente, como teoria legitimadora e não como variável causal exclusiva (Patton, 2002). Trata-se, assim, de um repertório ideacional flexível, mobilizado seletivamente para conferir coerência simbólica, legitimidade histórica e densidade civilizacional a decisões estratégicas moldadas por imperativos de poder, segurança e oportunidade (Clover, 2016; Shekhovtsov, 2021; Umland, 2022; Tkachuk, 2025; Simola & Leppänen, 2025).

## A Ascensão do Eurasianismo na Política Externa Russa

O contexto geopolítico atual caracteriza-se pela prevalência da impermanência, imprevisibilidade e da volatilidade na relação entre os múltiplos atores do Sistema Político Internacional. A política externa russa reflete, na sua essência, um pensamento geopolítico de matriz irredentista, influenciado pela ideologia euroasiática radicada no expansionismo e na dominação mundial (Freire, 2023). O neo-eurasianismo postula a constituição de um eixo geopolítico euroasiático liderado pela Rússia, articulando potências como China, Índia, Irão e Turquia numa configuração de alianças hierárquicas que contestam a hegemonia ocidental no sistema internacional (Dugin, 1997; Clover, 2016). Esta visão civilizacional rejeita o universalismo liberal em favor de uma pluralidade de espaços culturais autónomos, nos quais a Rússia-Eurásia assumiria primazia no *Heartland* continental (Ferreira & Terrenas, 2016; Milhazes, 2016). Mais do que isso, esta doutrina defende a necessidade de fragmentar a União Europeia (UE) – símbolo vivo do internacionalismo liberal –, exaurir a influência dos Estados Unidos da América (EUA) no plano global e, especificamente em relação à Ucrânia, propõe a sua dissolução como

[2] *Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference* (FIMI) reporta-se a ações coordenadas e intencionais, conduzidas por atores estatais ou não estatais, que manipulam a informação para influenciar processos políticos, desestabilizar sociedades e enfraquecer instituições democráticas. Na UE, estas práticas visam amplificar divisões internas, fomentar a polarização e comprometer a sua posição global, afetando a tomada de decisões e a execução de políticas estratégicas. Atores estatais russos e entidades afiliadas ao Kremlin coordenam-se para conduzir operações de FIMI. Estas ações são realizadas através de redes diplomáticas russas, serviços de segurança, meios de comunicação estatais, plataformas de redes sociais, empresas privadas e intermediários locais. Todos estes elementos são utilizados de forma compreensiva e integrada para se reforçarem mutuamente, maximizando o alcance e o impacto da desinformação e da manipulação informativa. A FIMI "(…) refere-se a comportamentos, em geral não ilegais, de natureza intencional e coordenada, levados a cabo por atores estatais ou não estatais – ou seus intermediários – com o objetivo de distorcer informação, influenciar valores, processos políticos e decisões democráticas" (Serviço Europeu para a Ação Externa, 2024, p. 4).

entidade soberana e independente, passando a ser parte integrante do território periférico da grande Rússia, considerando as suas afinidades ao nível da língua, costumes e raça (Dugin, 1997; Cláudio, 2015; Umland, 2022).

Esta lente revisionista do equilíbrio de poderes na geopolítica global, com enfoque russocêntrico, inspira-se em correntes geopolíticas clássicas como as teorias do geógrafo Halford Mackinder[3], segundo as quais o eixo do destino da geopolítica mundial assenta no "*Heartland*" do supercontinente euroasiático, área que corresponde, sensivelmente, ao território onde se encontra a Ucrânia – a "terra fronteiriça" (Kaplan, 2022). Segundo esta tese, o domínio do espaço da Eurásia garantiria a supremacia global, despertando, por isso, a atenção das grandes potências da Ásia interior, nomeadamente a Rússia e a China, tradicionalmente mais belicosas e dogmáticas (Sloan, 1999a). E assim a Ucrânia, estrategicamente localizada entre as zonas de influência europeia e russa, tornou-se o áxis e o ponto de ignição da disputa de poder mundial (Milhazes, 2016; Kaplan, 2022).

Um dos defensores mais exaltados desta visão imperialista, Alexander Dugin, categorizou a Ucrânia como um elemento-chave no que apelidou de "luta civilizacional" com o Ocidente, sustentando que a independência ucraniana constitui uma grave ameaça à sobrevivência da Rússia ante o avanço da Organização do Tratado do Atlântico Norte (OTAN), consequente da *Mauerfall* (1989) e do colapso da União Soviética[4], a 26 de dezembro de 1991. A ideologia supremacista pró-russa, enraizada em precursores como Nikolay Yakovlevich Danilevsky (1822-1885), cujos "tipos cultural-históricos" geosóficos concebem a Eurásia como civilização espacialmente autónoma e antiocidental, é profusamente desenvolvida nos trabalhos de Dugin (Danilevsky, 1888). A sua obra seminal "Fundamentos da Geopolítica", publicada em 1997, parece influenciar, de modo transversal, os sectores do pensamento político e geoestratégico do Kremlin. Embora Dugin exerça uma influência ideológica periférica no *establishment* pós-soviético (Shekhovtsov, 2021), o neo-eurasianismo funde-se organicamente com a doutrina de guerra não linear de Valery Gerasimov (2013). Em 2024, esta filosofia materializou-se em mais de 1.200 incidentes cibernéticos russos registados na UE (Bartles, 2016; Simola & Leppänen, 2025). Charles Clover (2016) documenta esta hibridização como uma síntese pragmática entre o eurasianismo radical e a *realpolitik* putinista, refletida numa retórica oficial de "democracia soberana" (Dugin, 1997; Umland, 2022; Fairclough, 2023;

[3] Halford John Mackinder, geógrafo, académico e político inglês, é amplamente reconhecido como um dos fundadores da geopolítica clássica e da geoestratégia. Em 1904, publicou o artigo "*The Geographical Pivot of History*", no qual formulou a "Teoria do *Heartland*", um conceito que, desde então, influenciou a política externa das grandes potências mundiais, especialmente a Rússia pós-soviética e a China. Segundo esta doutrina, a potência que consiga controlar a Ásia Central – "o grande pivot" – tornar-se-á o Estado mais poderoso na política internacional. O autor tinha uma visão de um mundo dividido entre potências terrestres e marítimas, à semelhança do que se verificou na Primeira Guerra Mundial (Bassin & Aksenov, 2006). Durante a maior parte do século XX, os EUA consideraram crucial impedir que qualquer potência ou grupo de potências dominasse o território euroasiático, confirmando a influência da Teoria do *Heartland* na política das Grandes Potências (Fettweis, 2003). No extremo ocidental, Finlândia, Estados Bálticos, Polónia e Ucrânia constituíam uma zona neutra de enorme interesse estratégico para prevenir o avanço da Aliança euro-atlântica. Hodiernamente, o *Heartland* euroasiático corresponde à Rússia e às antigas repúblicas soviéticas da Ásia Central – Cazaquistão, Quirguistão, Tajiquistão, Turquemenistão e Uzbequistão –, sendo balizado pela bacia do Cáspio e pela Geórgia (Scott & Alcenat, 2008).

[4] O colapso da União das Repúblicas Socialistas Soviéticas (URSS) foi um dos eventos geopolíticos mais marcantes do século XX. A dissolução da superpotência comunista (1922-1991) teve profundas consequências políticas, económicas e sociais no mundo inteiro. Na sua origem estiveram uma crise económica crónica; a corrupção e estagnação política; a invasão do Afeganistão e os vários conflitos separatistas; as reformas da *Perestroika* (reestruturação económica) e da *Glasnost* (liberdade de expressão); e as crescentes exigências independentistas das repúblicas soviéticas.

Zakaria, 2025). A tradução do neo-eurasianismo em práticas de política externa ocorre através de mediações institucionais concretas, envolvendo elites políticas, complexos securitários, aparelhos mediáticos e redes informais de influência, o que explica a coexistência de coerência discursiva e pragmatismo tático na ação externa russa.

A crescente centralidade da Ásia-Pacífico tem reforçado este posicionamento da Rússia, antecipado por Geoffrey Sloan no final do século passado (Sloan, 1999b). A determinação da política externa russa contra a "globalização do Ocidente", intrinsecamente marcada por esta perspetiva irredentista, continua a pôr em causa a ordem internacional liberal estabelecida com o final da Segunda Guerra Mundial, em 1945, desafiando convenções, tratados e princípios fundamentais do direito internacional[5]. Remontando às raízes dos postulados marxistas-leninistas, o regime russo assume que a sua influência "(…) deve necessariamente acarretar mudanças, não apenas na forma e instituições da democracia, mas mais especificamente uma mudança que garanta a extensão, de uma forma inédita, na história do mundo (…)" (Lenine, 2024, p. 68).

Deslizando entre a apatia e a comoção, a comunidade internacional esforça-se por acompanhar a escalada da conflitualidade contemporânea, procurando aplacar o expansionismo de Moscovo, mormente através de sanções político-diplomáticas e económicas (Redação DN, 2022). Apesar da condenação generalizada por parte da comunidade internacional da "Operação Militar Especial na Ucrânia", levada a cabo pela Rússia em fevereiro de 2022, a UE enfrenta tensões internas, marcadas por desafios persistentes no domínio da confiança mútua entre os Estados-Membros, perante a necessidade de definição de uma resposta coordenada para travar as ambições do agressor russo ao território e às reservas de minerais raros da vizinha Ucrânia. Este cenário foi agravado pela inesperada retirada de apoio norte-americano e pela apatia do Reino Unido – agora separado da UE –, contrariando os compromissos diplomáticos firmados no Memorando de Budapeste sobre Garantias de Segurança, assinado em 1994 (Sahuquillo, 2024). Assistimos, como nunca, a um crescendo de incerteza e a um número exponencial de riscos globais, instantaneamente mediatizados e instrumentalizados na conquista do poder (Bauman, 2001; Beck, 2009). O alargamento estratégico da orla europeia – ou "*Rimland*", como foi teorizada por Nicholas Spykman, em 1942 – até ao Mar Negro e a adesão de novos países à OTAN (nomeadamente, a Suécia e Finlândia, sem esquecer a promessa de abertura à Ucrânia), parece surgir como farol da esperança na contraposição da democracia ao autocratismo. A rivalidade *Heartland* (de orientação terrestre) *Vs*. *Rimland* (de valência marítima) é, presentemente, uma realidade incontornável nas Relações Internacionais (Spykman, 1944 e 2017; Kaplan, 2022; Colibășanu, 2023).

Depois de ter desmerecido os repetidos alertas de Charles de Gaulle[6], a Aliança (trans)Atlântica, firmada pelo Tratado do Atlântico Norte em 4 de abril de 1949, corre

[5] A este respeito, assinalamos as invasões russas à Polónia e à Finlândia (1939), à Estónia e Lituânia (1940), à Hungria (1956), à Checoslováquia (1968), ao Afeganistão (1979), à Chechénia (1994 e 1999), à Geórgia (2008) e à Síria (2015). O desejo intemporal de combinar o poderio em terra com o marítimo esteve na origem da invasão ao Afeganistão e na tentativa de desestabilização do Paquistão na década de 1980 (Kaplan, 2022).
[6] O general De Gaulle acreditava que a Europa deveria ser uma potência geopolítica por si só, com uma política de defesa própria, sem submissão a Washington. O seu pensamento crítico do "Atlantismo" e defensor da independência da defesa militar francesa influenciou inúmeros debates sobre a autonomia estratégica da Europa. A mudança de posicionamento de Trump em relação à defesa europeia confirmou essa teoria (Verdú, 2025).

agora um perigo de morte face à expansão russa e ao posicionamento transacional da administração norte-americana. O distanciamento dos EUA em relação à guerra russo-ucraniana, iniciada, em 2014, com a anexação unilateral da península da Crimeia e alargada à escala total, em 2022, com a ocupação dos territórios do leste da Ucrânia, nomeadamente os *oblast* do Donetsk, Lugansk, Zaporijia e Kherson; a ameaça de bloqueio e retirada norte-americana da OTAN; e a aproximação entre Trump e Putin, colocam em perspetiva a viabilidade de um cessar-fogo consequente ou mesmo a eficácia de uma eventual reação da Europa em defesa da Ucrânia (Plesha, 2020; Sosa, 2024). A UE enfrenta três limitações estruturais na sua capacidade de resposta estratégica: a ausência de forças armadas próprias com comando unificado; a dependência histórica da garantia de segurança dos EUA no quadro da OTAN; as divergências internas entre Estados-Membros, permeáveis a operações de influência externa (Barata, 2014; Applebaum, 2025). Estas fragilidades estruturais comprometem a formulação de uma política externa comum coerente e coesa ante as ameaças híbridas russas[7]. Conclui-se que a fragmentação da resposta europeia não resulta apenas de défices materiais, mas de uma assimetria narrativa estrutural, na qual a UE privilegia discursos normativos e procedimentais, enquanto a Rússia opera com narrativas estratégicas simplificadas, emocionalmente mobilizadoras e historicamente ancoradas.

A administração republicana dos EUA tem evidenciado ainda práticas de favorecimento de redes empresariais próximas do poder executivo, designadas na literatura como *crony capitalismo* (Haggard & Kang, 2020), em simultâneo com uma diplomacia europeia marcada por divergências internas entre os Estados-Membros. Esta conjugação de fatores dificulta a reversão das alterações territoriais ocorridas desde 2014, nomeadamente na Crimeia e no leste da Ucrânia (Agência Lusa, 2025). Assistimos, em direto, ao redesenho do mapa geopolítico do século XXI. Ao fazer um paralelo com as mudanças políticas e socioeconómicas operadas na ordem internacional durante a ascensão e queda do Terceiro Reich, pode argumentar-se que a segunda presidência de Donald Trump está a contribuir para uma transformação da ordem mundial contemporânea, ainda de contornos, tendências e efeitos incertos, mas potencialmente tão disruptiva quanto outras inflexões autoritárias do século XX (Fairclough, 2023). A *Pax Americana* (longa paz), decorrente da hegemonia dos EUA, transformou-se numa *Totius Mundi Dubitationem* (incerteza global), compelindo a um novo olhar sobre o tabuleiro internacional, repleto de novos desafios, obstáculos e dubiedades (Bauman, 2001; Colibășanu, 2023; Sahuquillo, 2025).

Todavia, é plausível que este momento de adversidade global se revele uma oportunidade única para a França e o Reino Unido – as únicas potências nucleares do "Velho Continente" –, bem como a Alemanha – motor da economia europeia –, assumirem, de uma vez, as rédeas da defesa europeia e emanciparem o seu complexo securitário e militar. O caminho percorrido pela Polónia serve de lição à dormência dos demais Estados-Membros da OTAN defronte da iminência de um confronto aberto com a Federação da Rússia num futuro próximo. Atualmente, a Polónia, reconciliada com uma

[7] Neste quadro difuso, atenda-se, por exemplo, à Hungria de Viktor Orbán, tida como o país mais corrupto da Europa e com estreitas afinidades à Rússia; à Eslováquia de Robert Fico, forte crítico do apoio militar à Ucrânia; ou ao financiamento russo da candidata presidencial de extrema-direita, Marine Le Pen, em França, no ano de 2014 – recentemente condenada por desvios de fundos europeus –, casos que constituem algumas das muitas perplexidades que a UE enfrenta no seu círculo interno, superestimuladas por Moscovo (Barata, 2014; Applebaum, 2025).

Alemanha economicamente solidária e desbelicizada, despende mais do seu produto interno bruto (PIB) com a defesa do que qualquer outro país da OTAN. No primeiro trimestre de 2025, o presidente polaco, Andrzej Duda, anunciou a intenção de investir 4,7% do PIB na infraestrutura militar (Euronews & EBU, 2025).

Numa inversão de paradigma, os EUA – outrora apresentados como sentinelas da liberdade e da democracia – evidenciam sinais de captura por dinâmicas iliberais, em parte convergentes com o "putinismo", fenómeno nacionalista que reconfigurou os equilíbrios de poder no frágil tabuleiro internacional (Zakaria, 2025; Sellers, 2025c). Em 20 de janeiro de 2025, o retorno de Trump à Casa Branca, enquanto 47.º presidente dos EUA, polarizou a sociedade norte-americana e gerou uma avalanche de arbitrariedades geopolíticas e geoeconómicas – desde a "guerra das tarifas" aduaneiras à manifestação pública de interesse na anexação do Canal do Panamá, do Canadá e da Gronelândia – com implicações globais e que sugerem o despontar de uma mudança histórica que poderá acelerar a substituição da ordem internacional liberal[8] por uma "ordem das grandes potências", como propagandeada pelo neo-eurasianismo (Dugin, 2025).

O lema "*Make America Great Again*" (MAGA), central na retórica da segunda presidência Trump, projeta uma visão nacionalista que, em certos aspetos discursivos, designadamente a crítica à globalização liberal e a exaltação da soberania nacional, apresenta afinidades funcionais com elementos do imaginário neo-eurasiano, ainda que enraizado em tradições ideológicas distintas (Fairclough, 2023; Zakaria, 2025; Dugin, 2025). Esta convergência retórica não implica, contudo, uma coordenação estratégica formal, mas antes uma sintonia conjuntural em torno da rejeição do universalismo liberal (Rufo, 2023). Segundo Robert Kaplan, "democracia e moralidade não são sinónimos" (Kaplan, 2022, p. 51). Ao advogar o regresso da política *hardline*, o executivo dos EUA reconhece a primazia da "lei do mais forte", de pendor quase isolacionista, favorecendo o seu relacionamento pragmático com outras grandes potências, nomeadamente a Federação da Rússia, a República Popular da China e a República Popular Democrática da Coreia (Coreia do Norte), em detrimento da promoção dos valores liberais ou do apoio à segurança e desenvolvimento sustentável dos países mais vulneráveis (Nye, 2003).

A ascensão, a nível global, de uma propensão nacionalista de índole autoritária, em parte patrocinada pelo regime de Putin, constitui um dos traços mais marcantes da atual conjuntura política internacional (Rufo, 2023). A reescrita da história, ao estilo da Revolução Cultural Chinesa (1966-1976), destaca-se como uma das principais táticas utilizadas pelos regimes autoritários, desde os fascistas aos neo-eurasianos, para apagar progressos em áreas como a raça, identidade, género e classes sociais. Para tal, o totalitarismo recorre à securitização e a um sistema de ensino hermético, antemurado por *mass media* e por redes sociais totalmente controladas pelo Estado (como o *Truth Social* de Trump, a *VKontakte* de Putin ou a *Weibo* de Xi Jiping). A consolidação e manutenção do poder é caucionada pelo controlo da narrativa, ao jeito do que Nietzsche designou de "perspetivismo": "(…) não há fatos, só interpretações [*Interpretationen*]. (…) Tudo é subjetivo (…)" (Nietzsche, 2008, p. 260). Perante a perversão transversal do ecossistema de informação, afigura-se crucial, mais do que nunca, preservar uma

[8] Conjunto de relações globais, baseadas em regras e estruturadas, baseadas no liberalismo político-económico e no internacionalismo liberal desde o final da década de 1940 (Lake, Martin, & Risse, 2021).

memória coletiva que reconheça as lutas e conquistas sociais (Clover, 2016; Stanley, 2025).

A multipolarização político-ideológica das sociedades da era digital tem-se revelado extremamente fraturante, servindo, em grande medida, o propósito estratégico do maquiavelismo neo-eurasiano. Atenda-se, a este respeito ao que se passa nos EUA, em particular o antagonismo entre republicanos e democratas (Rufo, 2023). A degradação da ordem internacional liberal, fundada em regras convencionadas, cede espaço ao caos do oportunismo transacional e à cobiça do autoritarismo (Hurrell, 2015). Segundo Anne Applebaum (2024), a ganância, a cleptocracia, o controlo da narrativa, a transformação do sistema operativo e a difamação das democracias constituem os cinco pilares dos regimes ditatoriais. Os sistemas autocráticos coevos são apoiados por redes sofisticadas, compostas por estruturas financeiras cleptocráticas, avançadas tecnologias de vigilância e conglomerados de propagandistas profissionais (prestadores de serviços) aos vários regimes, desde a Rússia à China e do Irão à Coreia do Norte. Estes regimes autocráticos dispõem de redes avançadas que integram estruturas financeiras opacas, tecnologias modernas de vigilância e capacidades de influência informacional profissionalizada, articuladas numa estratégia integrada de projeção de poder global (Goudarzi, 2022; Applebaum, 2024). O condicionamento de apoio militar dos EUA à celebração de acordos com a Ucrânia para a exploração de depósitos de minerais de terras raras, ilustra uma estratégia de barganha assimétrica em que o suporte securitário é instrumentalizado para obter contrapartidas económicas estratégicas (Umland, 2022; Alexandre, 2025). Esta postura traduz as tensões entre os princípios declarados da ordem liberal e os imperativos de *realpolitik* nas relações transatlânticas (Zakaria, 2025).

Com recurso à tecnologia[9] e ao poderio militar, o "trumpismo" dividiu a América e parece convergir com o putinismo, numa inflexão política de 180 graus, para moldar a ascensão de uma ordem mundial, ainda volátil, mas que resulta num realinhamento significativo para o cenário geopolítico do século XXI[10] (Hurrell, 2015; Rufo, 2023; Fernandes, 2024a, 2024b, 2025a). Incontornavelmente, a emergência do populismo conservador e o impacto de Trump na política internacional ocidental traduzem fenómenos reais e relevantes para a contemporaneidade, com ressonâncias imprevisíveis. A provocação que sobressai do neo-eurasianismo de Dugin oferece uma perspetiva alternativa e desafiadora sobre a ordenação mundial vigente, questionando a globalização liberal

[9] Disseminada no envolvente mediático digital, a "infodemia" pode ser compreendida como a proliferação excessiva de informações, tanto verídicas quanto imprecisas, que compromete a capacidade dos indivíduos de localizar fontes fidedignas e orientações confiáveis, sobretudo em contextos de tomada de decisão urgente (Zarocostas, 2020).

[10] A ligação de Donald Trump à Rússia remonta, pelo menos, a 1977, altura em que o seu casamento com a cidadã checa, Ivana Marie Zelníčková, o colocou na mira dos serviços de inteligência checos, a StB, e soviéticos, o *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti* (KGB). No entanto, especula-se que o cultivo de relações do Kremlin com Trump terá ocorrido no final da década de 1980, quando o empresário visitou a União Soviética e arrecadou vários investidores para os seus negócios. Segundo Yury Shvets, antigo agente do KGB, a ligação foi facilitada por Semyon "Sam" Kislin, um empresário ucraniano ligado aos serviços de inteligência e segurança soviéticos (Sellers, 2025a). Os ataques verbais que propalou contra a OTAN aquando do seu regresso aos EUA despertaram a especulação de Trump ter sido aliciado e colaborado ativamente com os soviéticos. Segundo Alnur Mussayev, antigo responsável do KGB no Cazaquistão, o norte-americano tornou-se num ativo do KGB com o nome-código "Krasnov" (Sellers, 2025b). A maioria das acusações sobre a conexão entre Trump e a KGB gira em torno de transações financeiras envolvendo dinheiro russo, *i.e.*, de transações que podem ser vistas como indícios de manipulação ou apoio do KGB (Unger, 2018). Neste contexto, importa não esquecer a comprovada interferência russa nas eleições presidenciais dos EUA, em 2016, em favor de Donald Trump (*U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence*, 2020; Fernandes, 2022).

ocidental na disposição multipolar das grandes potências soberanas (Wilson, 2008; Dugin, 2025).

O caso da guerra de longa duração entre russos e ucranianos revela-se paradigmático. Assente no domínio geográfico – a base da estratégia, da geopolítica e da geoeconomia (Kaplan, 2022) – e na supressão e no revisionismo histórico, o irredentismo da Rússia compagina-se com as políticas czaristas e soviéticas. Desde logo, o putinismo põe em causa a legitimidade da Ucrânia como um país independente, livre e soberano. Em 2022, o antigo presidente da Rússia, Dmitry Medvedev, ridicularizou publicamente "(…) uma pseudo-história do estado ucraniano (…)" e defendeu que o objetivo de Moscovo é "(…) uma Eurásia aberta entre Lisboa e Vladivostok" (Redação DN, 2022). Notoriamente, assiste-se a uma mobilização sistémica para reescrever a narrativa histórica e projetar a *Heartland* russófona para o comando político do mundo, mediante a absorção dos territórios limítrofes (Colibășanu, 2023). Efetivamente, a estratégia implícita à política externa russa baseia-se num ideal expansionista, autoritário e radical que encara a dissolução da União Soviética como um grave erro histórico e que deve ser corrigido, a qualquer custo. A doutrina do neo-eurasianismo sustenta, entre outros posicionamentos extremistas, que a Rússia deve restaurar o seu magistério de influência sobre o antigo espaço soviético, nele incluindo a Finlândia, os Estados Bálticos (Estónia, Letónia e Lituânia) e a Polónia, os quais, à semelhança da Ucrânia, são considerados como obstáculos estratégicos à projeção do poder russo na *Mitteleuropa* (Europa Central), no Mar Báltico e no palco mundial (Rodríguez Cobos, 2024).

O expansionismo por parte daquele que é o maior país do mundo, com profundidade de distância e território – estendido ao longo de 170 graus de longitude –, materializa-se não apenas através de ações militares típicas, mas sobretudo através de mecanismos de guerra híbrida, que combinam recursos tipicamente militares com ações não convencionais, tal como os ciberataques, os veículos de desinformação, a pressão económica e diplomática, as operações de influência e psicológicas, a sabotagem, a espionagem e os confrontos diretos, entre outras estratégias[11] (Lin, 2019; Simola & Leppänen, 2025; Fernandes, 2025a, 2025b). "Para o capitalismo, o movimento revolucionário internacional não traz a paz, mas espada" (Jones, 2022, p. 27). Estas táticas insidiosas, que esbatem os limites dos arquétipos normativos internacionais e

[11] Entre dezembro de 2024 e fevereiro de 2025, os grupos de intrusão UAC-0050 e UAC-0006, com ligações a interesses russos, levaram a cabo campanhas cibernéticas com motivações financeiras, de espionagem e desestabilização política, com particular incidência sobre a Ucrânia. Os alvos destas operações incluíram entidades governamentais, empresas dos setores da defesa, energia e gás, bem como jornalistas e organizações não-governamentais envolvidas no contexto do conflito. Paralelamente, registaram-se operações psicológicas, como o envio de ameaças de bomba e terrorismo, dirigidas a instituições ucranianas e a países aliados, nomeadamente Suíça, Alemanha, Polónia e França. Estas ações apresentam características compatíveis com o *modus operandi* do grupo UAC-0050, associado à designação "*Fire Cells Group*". Estes grupos operam como extensões informais de estruturas estatais, atuando de forma híbrida entre o cibercrime e os serviços de inteligência. As suas atividades abrangem a infiltração de infraestruturas críticas, a manipulação da informação e a extração ilícita de recursos financeiros. Embora os ataques se concentrem maioritariamente na Ucrânia, empresas internacionais também se revelam alvos preferenciais quando representam interesses estratégicos para os Estados envolvidos. A utilização de serviços de alojamento resistentes à fiscalização (*bulletproof hosting*) revela uma estreita articulação entre agentes do cibercrime e redes de inteligência. Esta infraestrutura beneficia de mecanismos legais opacos, baseados em empresas fictícias sediadas em paraísos fiscais e em identidades virtuais, dificultando a responsabilização legal e o desmantelamento destas redes. O caso da *Zservers* – provedor de serviços de hospedagem com sede na Rússia – é paradigmático: apesar das sanções impostas pelo governo dos EUA, os seus administradores não foram detidos, tendo conseguido relocalizar as suas operações e reforçar a segurança dos seus sistemas, demonstrando a elevada adaptabilidade e resiliência destas estruturas clandestinas (Intrisec, 2025).

intervêm prolificamente nos seus interstícios, constituem uma parte substancial da doutrina russa de confronto indireto ou por procuração (*by proxy*), inspirada por uma longa tradição de subversão política e militar, bem patenteada na *doutrina Gerasimov* (Gerasimov, 2013; Bartles, 2016; Fernandes, 2024a). A "desinformação-como-serviço" é, presentemente, uma das armas mais portentosas do aparelho bélico russo na arena global, estendendo-se em todo o plano da geopolítica digital como uma ameaça existencial (Umland, 2022; Mecklin, 2024; Gouliev, 2025; Intrisec, 2025).

## A Ameaça aos Estados Bálticos e o Corredor de Suwałki

Neste intrincado enquadramento, a posição fronteiriça da Polónia, da Lituânia, Letónia e Estónia – todos Estados-Membros da OTAN desde 1999 (Polónia) e 2004 (Estados Bálticos), respetivamente –, fez com que se tornassem alvos prioritários da estratégia disruptiva do Kremlin, sofrendo sucessivos ataques cibernéticos e campanhas massivas de manipulação da opinião pública nos *media* e, sobretudo, na *manosphere*[12]. A guerra híbrida russa tem sido particularmente intensa contra a Estónia, Letónia e Lituânia, países que, apesar de pequenos em dimensão, ocupam, juntamente com a Finlândia (membro da OTAN desde 2023), um espaço estratégico fundamental junto do Mar do Báltico, essencial para a contenção da influência russa no norte da Europa (Kaplan, 2022). Segundo relatórios independentes, só em 2024, os Estados Bálticos enfrentaram cerca de 4.500 ataques cibernéticos atribuídos à Rússia, o que ilustra a operacionalização da sua doutrina híbrida (Simola & Leppänen, 2025; Tkachuk, 2025). A desconexão energética dos Estados Bálticos à Rússia e à Bielorrússia (BRELL), concretizada em 2025, integrou os três países Bálticos no sistema elétrico europeu (ENTSO-E), mitigando as chantagens russas sobre as infraestruturas críticas e exemplificando uma notável resiliência estratégica (Rodríguez Cobos, 2024; Bellamy & AP, 2025).

A Estónia foi um dos primeiros alvos dessa estratégia quando, em 2007, enfrentou um ciberataque maciço atribuído a fábricas de *trolls*, *bots* e *hactivistas* de aluguer pró-Kremlin, após a remoção de um monumento da era soviética, em Tallinn. Este ataque paralisou as infraestruturas críticas do país, incluindo bancos, redes governamentais e meios de comunicação, demonstrando a poderosa capacidade da Rússia em utilizar a envolvente digital como um campo de batalha (Ottis, 2008; Vaidišová, 2022; Fernandes, 2024a).

Desde então, ataques semelhantes têm sido lançados, de modo massificado e por diferentes meios, contra as instituições, serviços e empresas (públicas e privadas) da Letónia e da Lituânia, visando não apenas as suas redes digitais, mas também espalhando campanhas de desinformação que procuram deslegitimar os seus governos e fomentar a desordem social. Em 2022, a Lituânia sofreu intensos ciberataques a entidades governamentais e infraestruturas essenciais, na sequência do bloqueio parcial do trânsito de mercadorias russas para Kaliningrado, um exclave estratégico russo no Báltico (Łukasik-Turecka & Malužinas, 2023).

[12] Comumente traduzida como "manosfera", a expressão significa o conjunto de comunidades *online* de homens com interesses ou ideologias específicas, muitas vezes controversas, sujeita a um elevado risco de radicalização, especialmente junto dos mais jovens.

A Polónia, pela sua posição como elo fundamental entre a Europa Ocidental e os Estados Bálticos, também tem sido alvo frequente de campanhas de desinformação e múltiplas operações de guerra híbrida. A Rússia tem disseminado narrativas falsas sobre a política polaca, promovendo desconfiança em relação à OTAN e amplificando tensões históricas entre Varsóvia e Kyiv (Kruttke, 2024). Estes intensos ciclos de hostilidade fazem parte de um esforço amplo de um ecossistema pró-Kremlin, criado para desestabilizar a coesão europeia e enfraquecer o apoio à Ucrânia (Kuczyńska-Zonik, 2016; Shuker & Topor, 2021).

Neste particular, a Polónia e a Lituânia partilham um ponto geograficamente vulnerável, conhecido como o Corredor de Suwałki, o qual constitui um estreito intervalo de território, com menos de 100 quilómetros de extensão, que separa Kaliningrado da Bielorrússia, aliada de Moscovo. O Corredor de Suwałki constitui o único ponto de ligação terrestre entre os Estados Bálticos e o território principal da OTAN, configurando um *chokepoint* estratégico que, em caso de bloqueio pelas forças russo-bielorrussas, isolaria militarmente a Estónia, Letónia e Lituânia do apoio aliado (Sadowski & Maj, 2022). Exercícios militares russo-bielorrussos, nome-código *Zapad*, têm simulado cenários de neutralização deste corredor, elevando a sua saliência na doutrina estratégica da OTAN e contribuindo para a mudança de postura de não-alinhamento militar de países como a Suécia e a Finlândia (Broeker, 2025).

A escalada da guerra híbrida russa tem também um forte impacto na segurança marítima, particularmente no Mar Báltico, onde a Rússia tem sido acusada de ataques a infraestruturas submarinas, como cabos de comunicação e gasodutos. Em outubro de 2022, foi registada uma explosão nos gasodutos *Nord Stream* 1 e 2, levantando suspeitas sobre a autoria do ataque e demonstrando a vulnerabilidade das infraestruturas energéticas europeias a operações de espionagem e de sabotagem (Virág & Tancsa, 2023). A segurança das redes de comunicação submarinas também está em risco. Os cabos de fibra ótica que ligam os Estados Bálticos ao resto da Europa são alvos potenciais da estratégia russa de guerra não convencional. Qualquer interrupção nestes sistemas comprometeria as comunicações civis e militares, colocando em risco a capacidade de resposta da OTAN em caso de conflito (Hernández-Benito, 2024; Simola & Leppänen, 2025).

Desde a declaração de independência da URSS, em 1990, e a subsequente dissolução do bloco soviético, no ano seguinte, os Estados Bálticos têm mantido relações tensas com a Rússia, despertando a necessidade de resiliência geopolítica multidimensional. Nos últimos anos, o já referido desmantelamento do BRELL, no contexto da criação de uma nova rede energética integrada com o restante espaço da UE, reforçou a resiliência dos Estados Bálticos. Esta infraestrutura inclui, entre outros elementos, cabos submarinos no Mar Báltico (como o *Harmony Link*, entre a Lituânia e a Polónia; o *Baltic Sea Submarine Cable*, entre a Suécia, Estónia e Finlândia; e o *Fenno-Skan 3*, entre a Suécia e a Finlândia), reforçando a interligação energética com a UE. Os três países bálticos, que partilham uma fronteira terrestre de 1633 quilómetros com a Rússia e a Bielorrússia, notificaram Moscovo e Minsk da sua intenção de concretizar a desconexão em 2024, numa estratégia destinada a minimizar o risco de uma reação hostil por parte destas potências totalitárias. Em 2025, depois de décadas de dependência de Moscovo, a adesão ao ENTSO-E revestiu um profundo significado simbólico e geopolítico para os Estados Bálticos (Bellamy & AP, 2025). A independência do gás russo passa por novas

interligações entre a Lituânia, Polónia e Finlândia (*Balticconnector*), bem como pelo programa nuclear (*Olkiluoto 3*, na Finlândia) e a aposta nas energias eólica e solar no Mar Báltico. De facto, os ensinamentos a retirar das experiências da Suécia, Finlândia e Polónia no campo da energia nuclear podem ser muito benéficos para enfrentar as intimidações nucleares da Rússia (Broeker, 2025). Um investimento semelhante está a ser desenvolvido ao nível das linhas de ferro instaladas entre os Estados Bálticos e a Europa Central, como a *Rail Baltica*, que liga Tallin a Varsóvia, ou o desenvolvimento do túnel subaquático que ligará Tallin a Helsínquia. Nos termos do Regulamento (UE) 2024/1679 do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 13 de junho de 2024, a Rede Transeuropeia de Transportes promete revolucionar as estradas, caminhos de ferro, aeroportos e infraestruturas hídricas, aumentando os fluxos entre os Estados Bálticos e o resto do continente europeu. Como seria de esperar, todo este reforço sistémico da coesão social, económica e territorial da UE exaltou o regime russo, que aumentou a pressão sobre os sectores críticos da energia, transportes, comunicações e defesa na *Rimland* europeia.

Os casos dos Estados Bálticos exemplificam a operacionalização concreta da doutrina de guerra híbrida russa no *Rimland* europeu, combinando a pressão militar convencional no Corredor de Suwałki com a disrupção digital e dependência energética. Esta estratégia confirma a centralidade do neo-eurasianismo como matriz legitimadora de uma política externa expansionista que contesta, simultaneamente, a coesão da OTAN e a autonomia dos Estados sucessores da URSS. Neste contexto, a gigantesca máquina de propaganda e desinformação russa, recentemente enformada pela *Global Fact-Checking Network* (GFCN) moscovita, criada em contraposição à *International Fact-Checking Network* (IFCN) ocidental, reveste uma importância angular na prossecução da estratégia neo-eurasiana (Lin, 2019; Oledan, *et al*., 2021; Colibășanu, 2023; Fernandes, 2024a, 2024b; Sadeghi, 2025). A reescrita da história e o controlo da narrativa, ainda que falsa, são objetivos primordiais das autocracias (Applebaum, 2024; Fernandes, 2025a, 2025b).

## O *Holodomor* e a Desinformação no Cenário Global

As intimações russas, apoiadas pelo exclave de Kaliningrado, à segurança da Ucrânia, Finlândia, Estónia, Letónia, Lituânia e Polónia, principalmente no Corredor de Suwałki e no Mar Báltico, atestam que a guerra híbrida e a desinformação multimédia, promovida pelo Kremlin, continuam a ser os maiores desafios à segurança europeia no século XXI. O revisionismo histórico e territorial insere-se, como vimos anteriormente, numa tradição mais ampla de repressão dos ímpetos autonomistas e independentistas da Ucrânia, cuja opressão remonta ao período czarista e soviético (Fernandes, 2025a, 2025b).

Nesta comensuração, o *Holodomor*[13] (1932-1933), reconhecido como genocídio por 26 Estados e pelo Parlamento Europeu (Resolução 1481/2008), constitui um precedente histórico da instrumentalização da fome como arma política pelo regime soviético, visando suprimir a identidade nacional ucraniana e a resistência camponesa à coletivização forçada (Applebaum, 2022). Esta prática estabelece uma continuidade

[13] O termo vem do ucraniano e significa "morte por fome". O *Holodomor* é um dos eventos mais trágicos da história da Ucrânia, sendo relembrado anualmente no quarto sábado de novembro, como um dia de homenagem às vítimas.

estrutural com as atuais campanhas russas de negação do Holodomor, enquanto "mito nacionalista ucraniano", conforme documentado em discursos oficiais pós-2014.

O jornalista galês, Gareth Jones, foi uma das poucas testemunhas ocidentais do *Holodomor*, a "Grande Fome" que devastou a Ucrânia sob o regime comunista. O *Holodomor* traduziu-se numa política deliberada de confiscação de colheitas e extensa repressão dos camponeses ucranianos, causando a morte de milhões de pessoas. Em 1933, Jones viajou para a União Soviética e, desafiando as restrições impostas aos jornalistas estrangeiros, deslocou-se clandestinamente para as zonas rurais da Ucrânia. Nos seus relatos, descreveu aldeias inteiras despovoadas, pessoas morrendo à beira das estradas e camponeses desesperados que não tinham acesso a bens essenciais, enquanto os soviéticos exportavam as grandes quantidades de cereais requisitadas para financiar o triplo objetivo do Plano Quinquenal[14]. Documentando os testemunhos de alguns sobreviventes, Gareth Jones expôs publicamente a instrumentalização da fome como um crime premeditado pelo regime comunista contra os ucranianos. Ao regressar ao Ocidente, o jornalista publicou alguns artigos nos principais jornais britânicos e norte-americanos, denunciando uma tragédia humana e morticínio sem precedentes. No entanto, a sua voz foi parcialmente abafada por propagandistas pró-soviéticos que minimizaram as denúncias e ajudaram a perpetuar a negação do *Holodomor* por décadas a fio (Jones, 2022).

A manipulação da narrativa histórica e a disseminação de desinformação foram os pilares fundamentais da estratégia soviética para encobrir os crimes do regime, incluindo a "Fome Vermelha" e outras formas de repressão contra os povos que integravam a antiga União Soviética (Applebaum, 2022). O Hotel Metropol de Moscovo desempenhou uma função central na manipulação da narrativa e disseminação de desinformação, funcionando como um epicentro de controle e monitorização dos jornalistas estrangeiros deslocados na URSS (Philps, 2024). Ali, os correspondentes ocidentais eram aliciados através de subornos, luxos e regalias, ou intimidados com ameaças diretas ou chantagens comprometedoras (*Kompromat*), de forma a garantir que transmitiam para o Ocidente uma imagem idílica e distorcida da verdadeira realidade soviética (Jones, 2022; Applebaum, 2022). Rememore-se que, durante a década de 1930, Moscovo era um dos destinos mais difíceis para os jornalistas estrangeiros, os quais enfrentavam severas restrições à circulação e ao acesso à informação. O decadente Metropol, um dos edifícios mais luxuosos da cidade, tornou-se o local onde o regime soviético mantinha os correspondentes ocidentais sob vigilância constante, de modo a controlar a narrativa além-fronteiras (Philps, 2024).

De entre os muitos jornalistas estrangeiros que se fixaram no Hotel Metropol, o correspondente do *New York Times* em Moscovo, Walter Duranty, destacou-se como um dos mais influentes e controversos. Este jornalista recebeu elogios pela sua cobertura da União Soviética e até mesmo um Prémio *Pulitzer*, em 1932, mas as suas reportagens omitiram intencionalmente os horrores do *Holodomor*, perfilhando a linha oficial do regime durante os catorze anos que ali esteve colocado. Duranty, tido por George Orwell como um "criptocomunista" e uma marioneta do *bolchevismo* revolucionário, publicou um artigo no *New York Times*, de 31 de março de 1933, com o título: "Os russos têm

[14] O plano, delimitado entre outubro de 1928 a 30 de setembro de 1933, visava a a industrialização rápida, a coletivização completa da agricultura e a eliminação de todos os elementos capitalistas na *Rodina-mat'* ("Pátria Mãe").

fome, mas não estão famintos". Na peça, o correspondente anglo-americano escreveu: "Não há fome real ou mortes por fome, mas há mortalidade generalizada por doenças devido à desnutrição" (Jones, 2022, p. 100). Relatos posteriores indicam que Duranty, tal como outros jornalistas, desfrutava de acesso privilegiado a bens de luxo e eventos exclusivos organizados pelas autoridades soviéticas, enquanto enfrentava pressões das elites comunistas para não relatar qualquer informação que pudesse comprometer a imagem da URSS no plano internacional. As suas reportagens sugeriam que as alegações sobre fome em massa na Ucrânia eram exageradas ou infundadas, alinhando-se com a estratégia soviética de desinformação (Duranty, 1944; Jones, 2022; Applebaum, 2022). Enquanto Gareth Jones arriscava a própria vida para relatar a aterradora realidade do *Holodomor*, Duranty e outros colegas ajudavam a construir uma narrativa falsa e distópica que encobria a verdade (Philps, 2024).

O protótipo da "manipulação e interferência de informação estrangeira", então, personificado no Hotel Metropol, era apenas uma parte de um esforço maior do regime soviético para controlar a perceção externa da realidade dentro da URSS. A estratégia do *Soviete Supremo* incluía, antes de tudo, restrições ao acesso e à liberdade de circulação dos jornalistas estrangeiros. Na prática, os correspondentes eram limitados a áreas específicas e só podiam viajar para outras regiões com autorização prévia, quase sempre acompanhados por "guias" do regime. Seguidamente, qualquer material jornalístico enviado ao exterior passava por um rigoroso processo de censura e escrutínio. Os jornalistas que publicassem reportagens desfavoráveis ao regime soviético eram declarados *persona non grata* e expulsos do país. Para criar um ambiente de cooptação, os jornalistas estrangeiros eram expostos à propaganda soviética e persuadidos, através de benefícios ou de intimidações, a adotar uma postura favorável ao regime. Neste contexto, a URSS investiu sistematicamente em operações de desinformação para desacreditar jornalistas e eliminar dissidentes, perseverando na promoção de explanações falsas no Ocidente. No caso do *Holodomor*, utilizou agentes e simpatizantes no estrangeiro para denegrir as denúncias como propaganda "anti-soviética" (Jones, 2022; Philps, 2024).

Aqui chegados, certificamos que a manipulação-interferência-corrupção do ecossistema de informação internacional tem sido uma ferramenta primordial do imperialismo russo ao longo da história, quer ao tempo da União Soviética, quer da atual governação de Putin. A herança soviética neste domínio deixou marcas profundas, sendo visível na forma como a Rússia contemporânea conduz as suas operações de espionagem e desinformação, difamação e sabotagem, entre outras, recorrendo à massificação de campanhas multidimensionais para ocultar crimes de guerra, justificar agressões militares e incitar divisões no seio dos países ocidentais. A guerra híbrida russa, caracterizada por ataques cibernéticos e pela disseminação sistemática de *fake news* através de hordas de *hactivistas*, *trollagem* institucionalizada, *botnets* e *outlets* de desinformação (oficiais e *by proxy*), reproduz os três princípios fundamentais da propaganda soviética, ainda vigentes: o controlo absoluto da informação; a construção de narrativas manipuladas; e a difamação de fontes que denunciam a realidade dos factos (Applebaum, 2022; Intrisec, 2025; Fernandes, 2025a, 2025b).

A mais recente reedição dos relatos de Gareth Jones surge num contexto em que a Ucrânia enfrenta uma redobrada vaga de hostilidades encomendadas por pelo regime russo, tornando-se um testemunho ainda mais relevante da longa tradição de resistência

e sacrifício ucraniano à dominação russa. Ainda hoje, o *Holodomor* continua a ser um elemento central na assunção da identidade nacional ucraniana, sendo um símbolo da impiedosa repressão histórica imposta pelo Kremlin. Anne Applebaum aprofundou a análise das causas e consequências deste genocídio, demonstrando como a "Grande Fome" foi utilizada como um cruel instrumento de repressão política, destinado a aniquilar sentimentos autonomistas e nacionalistas ucranianos. A sua investigação revela ainda uma continuidade histórica entre a repressão estalinista da década de 1930 e a política autocrática da Rússia contemporânea, mormente com a invasão da Ucrânia em 2014 e 2022 e a degradação sistemática da sua soberania, identidade nacional e integridade territorial. A instrumentalização da fome e da repressão política pelo regime soviético encontra paralelos diretos nas atuais táticas de Moscovo, que continua a privilegiar o uso da desinformação e da manipulação da opinião pública como armas estratégicas. Recordamos, nesta oportunidade, as palavras da escritora ucraniana Victoria Amelina, uma das muitas vítimas mortais dos bombardeamentos russos: "O sistema soviético nunca comemorou o Holocausto. Uma razão para isso é que, a partir do momento em que se define e identifica um genocídio, passam a ser reconhecíveis outros crimes genocidas. O império soviético não queria que aprendêssemos a nossa história" (Amelina, 2023).

Acontece, porém, que a estratégia de distorção da realidade empregue pelo maquinismo de Putin já não se confina à Ucrânia, estendendo-se a toda a Europa e ao espaço transatlântico (Fernandes, 2024a). Presentemente, mais do que "factos alternativos", assistimos a "realidades alternativas", geradas por inteligência artificial generativa (IA generativa) e magnificadas por *computer generated images*, que corroboram as narrativas autocráticas e iludem a perceção das pessoas do mundo que as rodeia[15] (Fernandes, 2022 e 2024b; Zelenskyy, 2025). A realidade e a ficção influenciam-se, interpenetram-se e confundem-se uma com a outra (Allen & Nehrin, 2025).

Nos últimos anos, a UE e a OTAN têm expressado crescente preocupação com os constantes ataques cibernéticos e campanhas massivas de manipulação e interferência na informação pró- Kremlin. Países como a Ucrânia, Polónia, Lituânia, Letónia, Estónia, Suécia e Finlândia têm sido os alvos preferenciais destas ofensivas, dada a sua posição geopolítica e a sua história de resistência à influência russa. A crescente militarização da região de Kaliningrado e a interferência (*i.e.*, sabotagem) em redes de comunicações no Mar Báltico intensificam as preocupações sobre uma possível ofensiva russa na área, seja

[15] A rápida disseminação de ferramentas de IA generativa, como os modelos de linguagem de grande escala (LLM), geradores de imagens e tecnologias de *deepfake*, está a transformar profundamente o cenário da desinformação. Muitos especialistas comparam o impacto da IA generativa ao da invenção da imprensa ou da *internet*, atribuindo-lhe um "potencial de superalimentação" da desinformação, funcionando como um amplificador de seu alcance e eficácia. Mesmo antes da popularização do *ChatGPT*, já se discutia o potencial desestabilizador das *deepfakes*, com alertas sobre a possível corrupção do ecossistema de informação e a IA como uma arma de disrupção em massa. A IA generativa tem o potencial de tornar a desinformação mais rápida (na geração e disseminação automatizada de conteúdos); mais barata (ao reduzir os custos humanos e financeiros com produção e distribuição); mais persuasiva (através de conteúdos hiper-realistas como *deepfakes*); mais personalizada (com base na análise de dados e adaptação da mensagem ao público-alvo); e mais abrangente (graças à automação e à acessibilidade de ferramentas de IA para qualquer utilizador comum). Adicionalmente, a IA generativa introduz dinâmicas mais complexas, criando falsas evidências, invertendo o ónus da prova; questionando qualquer conteúdo como manipulado ("dividendo do mentiroso" ou "defesa *deepfake*"); facilita a criação de personagens falsas críveis (*bots*, avatares, apresentadores digitais); e promove um efeito psicológico de superpotência, motivando criadores de desinformação a confiar cegamente na eficácia da IA. Em suma, a IA generativa aumenta a quantidade, a qualidade e a capacidade de disseminação da desinformação, inaugurando uma nova era de falsificações potencialmente indistinguíveis da realidade, comprometendo, mesmo que indiretamente, a integridade da informação (Allen & Nehrin, 2025).

através de incursões convencionais ou de operações híbridas. Mas também Portugal, Espanha, França, Alemanha, Reino Unido, Chéquia, Eslováquia, Balcãs, Geórgia, Arménia e Moldávia, sem esquecer a miríade de países que compõem os continentes americanos, africanos e asiáticos, têm sido objeto destas operações de influência de longo alcance, sobretudo pelos novos territórios geopolíticos digitais (Fernandes, 2024a, 2024b). Segundo os alarmantes resultados de um estudo realizado nos EUA, um terço dos americanos acredita amplamente na desinformação russa sobre os mais variados temas quotidianos, nomeadamente a atinente à guerra russo-ucraniana (Skibinsk, 2025; Zelenskyy, 2025; Fernandes, 2025a).

Pode concluir-se que a chamada "roleta-russa" de desinformação e propaganda não constitui um fenómeno novo, mas antes a continuidade de uma estratégia de longo prazo que remonta a períodos antigos. Enquanto "agente do caos", a Rússia continua a utilizar táticas de manipulação e influência para moldar a perceção global dos seus atos, esconder crimes de guerra e justificar as agressões contra países circunvizinhos.

"Antes de uma nação poder ser reconstruída, os seus cidadãos têm de perceber como em primeiro lugar foi destruída: como foram minadas as suas instituições, como foi retorcida a sua linguagem, como foram manipuladas as suas pessoas. Precisam de conhecer pormenores concretos e não teorias gerais e precisam de ouvir histórias específicas, não generalizações sobre as massas. Precisam de uma melhor compreensão do que motivou os seus predecessores, de vê-los como pessoas reais e não como caricaturas a preto-e-branco, vítimas ou vilões. Só então é possível, lentamente, reconstruir" (Applebaum, 2023, p. 609).

A análise da propaganda soviética e das suas complexas redes de desinformação, tal como expostos por Jones e profundados por Applebaum, revelam-se essenciais para compreender as ameaças da Rússia contemporânea. Uma vez consolidado esse entendimento, importa maximizar a capacidade conjunta das democracias ocidentais para resistir ao polimorfismo neo-eurasiano e à sua estratégia integrada de projeção de poder global (Goudarzi, 2022; Fernandes, 2025a, 2025b; Simola & Leppänen, 2025).

## Podemos confiar na Rússia?

Ao olharmos para o passado, a história revela-nos como a Rússia tem vindo a transgredir repetidamente uma série de acordos e tratados internacionais, desrespeitando os compromissos diplomáticos assumidos e os princípios fundamentais do direito internacional. Este comportamento censurável tem gerado grandes preocupações ao nível global, especialmente devido ao impacto na estabilidade regional (Clover, 2016; Fernandes, 2024a, 2024b, 2025a).

De entre os principais acordos quebrados, destacamos o Memorando de Budapeste (1994), assinado pela Rússia, EUA e Reino Unido, o qual garantia a soberania e a integridade territorial da Ucrânia em troca da sua renúncia às armas nucleares soviéticas estacionadas no seu território. A anexação da Crimeia pela Rússia, em 2014, e a intervenção militar no Donbass (2014-2022) violaram diretamente esse compromisso, comprometendo a soberania territorial da Ucrânia, conforme consagrado na Resolução da Assembleia Geral das Nações Unidas ES-11/4 (2022) (Olszański, Sarna, & Wierzbowska-Miazga, 2014; Plesha, 2020).

Os Acordos de Minsk I (2014) e Minsk II (2015), concebidos para estabelecer um cessar-fogo e criar as condições para uma solução política do conflito no Donbass, também foram desrespeitados pela Rússia e pelos separatistas apoiados por Moscovo. Embora esses acordos tenham sido uma tentativa de resolver o conflito, o Kremlin violou repetidamente os compromissos estabelecidos através da manutenção de apoio militar às forças separatistas no Donbass, do estacionamento de tropas e armas pesadas da linha de frente e do desrespeito pelo cessar-fogo. Estas ações disruptivas prolongaram o conflito e minaram a eficácia dos acordos (Pifer, 2016; Zbigniew, 2015).

Em 2022, a invasão militar da Ucrânia representou mais uma violação flagrante da Carta das Nações Unidas (1945), da qual a Rússia é signatária e membro permanente do Conselho de Segurança. Os princípios da não agressão e da proibição do uso da força contra Estados soberanos foram reiteradamente transgredidos (Bowett, 2009; Wood, 2013). Além disso, a Rússia violou o Tratado de Amizade, Cooperação e Parceria celebrado com a Ucrânia (1997), conhecido por *Big Treaty*, que reconheceu formalmente as fronteiras ucranianas, incluindo a Crimeia, e estabeleceu princípios de respeito mútuo e cooperação. A incorporação da Crimeia e o apoio militar aos separatistas no Donbass constituem, como vimos, uma violação direta deste tratado, que proibia alterações unilaterais das fronteiras (Sorokowski, 1996; Litvinenko, 2016; Plesha, 2020).

As Convenções de Genebra (1949) e o Protocolo Adicional I (1977), que regem o direito internacional humanitário, foram igualmente desprezadas. Estas normas proíbem a ocupação ilegal de territórios e a deportação forçada de populações civis, tendo a Rússia sido acusada de cometer crimes de guerra, como a deportação forçada de civis ucranianos (inclusive, crianças) para o seu território, execuções sumárias, bombardeios indiscriminados e destruição de infraestruturas civis (Canton, 2021). Apesar das Convenções de Genebra e dos seus Protocolos Adicionais; do Estatuto de Roma do Tribunal Penal Internacional (1998); da praxe internacional; e do *jus cogens*, proibirem expressamente ataques contra as populações civis, quase diariamente registam-se baixas ucranianas não militares, como atestou o ataque russo a Sumy (Pereira, 2025; Kherson & Rih, 2025).

Finalmente, a Convenção de Montevidéu (1933), que estabeleceu os critérios para o reconhecimento de Estados e o princípio da não ingerência nos seus assuntos internos, foi identicamente ignorada por Moscovo. O apoio aos separatistas do Donbass, a anexação da Crimeia e o reconhecimento ilegal das "repúblicas populares" de Donetsk e Luhansk, em 2022, trespassam os princípios de não intervenção e de respeito pela integridade territorial dos Estados (Plesha, 2020; Egede, 2025).

Todas estas transgressões revelam o aparente desrespeito da Rússia pelas normas internacionais fundamentais e pelos direitos humanos (Parlamento Europeu, 2025). No entanto, a Rússia justifica as suas ações como "autodefesa preventiva", invocando o disposto no Artigo 51.º da Carta das Nações Unidas. O argumento, apesar de refutado pelo Tribunal Internacional de Justiça, através de um parecer consultivo em 2024, enfatiza uma hermenêutica no direito internacional humanitário e sublinha a necessidade de mecanismos robustos na ordem liberal. Pelo exposto, a Rússia surge, no presente quadro empírico, como um ator estruturalmente pouco fiável e contestado como parceiro internacional (Zelenskyy, 2025).

## Conclusão

A análise desenvolvida ao longo desta investigação demonstrou que a política externa russa recente é estruturada por uma lógica irredentista e uma estratégia de projeção de poder que articula instrumentos militares convencionais com operações de guerra híbrida, ciberataques e campanhas de desinformação, tecnologicamente sofisticadas (Fernandes, 2024a, 2024b, 2025a; Parlamento Europeu, 2025). O neo-eurasianismo, tal como radicalizado por Alexander Dugin, fornece uma gramática ideológica que legitima a reconstrução de esferas de influência no espaço pós-soviético e a contestação da ordem liberal internacional, ancorando a ambição de uma Eurásia alternativa ao Ocidente liberal (Umland, 2022; Applebaum, 2023). A anexação da Crimeia, a intervenção no Donbass e a invasão alargada da Ucrânia – com o apoio operacional da Coreia do Norte e da China – ilustram esta lógica de expansão de "espaço vital", reinterpretando, em chave contemporânea, os conceitos clássicos de *Lebensraum* e de *Heartland* (Ratzel, 1901; Diaz-Maurin, 2024, 2025; Kaplan, 2022).

Os resultados do estudo mostram que o neo-eurasianismo não pode ser reduzido a mera retórica putinista, devendo antes ser entendido como um enquadramento espacial-identitário que articula a tradição geopolítica, o revisionismo histórico e a visão civilizacional multipolar (Danilevsky, 1888; Clover, 2016). A sua matriz conceptual assenta na leitura geosófica de Danilevsky, na centralidade do *Heartland* mackinderiano e no *Lebensraum* ratzeliano, combinados com a "Quarta Teoria Política" de Dugin, concebida para ultrapassar o liberalismo, o comunismo e o fascismo (Bassin & Aksenov, 2006; Dugin, 1997, 2012). A convergência desta arquitetura ideacional com a *doutrina Gerasimov* potencia o uso sistemático da desinformação, de FIMI e de operações cognitivas como instrumentos estruturais da política externa russa, em continuidade com práticas de manipulação e corrupção do ecossistema informacional, já enraizadas no período soviético (Applebaum, 2022; Serviço Europeu para a Ação Externa, 2024; Intrisec, 2025; Fernandes, 2025a, 2025b). Ao situar a Ucrânia, os Estados Bálticos e o Corredor de Suwałki como espaços-charneira entre a *Heartland* e a *Rimland*, a análise evidencia a centralidade destas fronteiras na atual disputa hegemónica e na vulnerabilidade estrutural da ordem liberal euro-atlântica (Spykman, 1944, 2017; Colibășanu, 2023; Rodríguez Cobos, 2024).

Do ponto de vista normativo e estratégico, a investigação sugere que a resposta das democracias liberais não pode limitar-se à gestão episódica de crises, exigindo antes uma combinação de *hard power* credível, resiliência societal e capacidade de contra narrativa estratégica, capaz de disputar a legitimidade, a memória histórica e a autoridade interpretativa no espaço informacional global. A recorrência de violações de tratados revela um padrão de desrespeito russo por normas basilares da ordem internacional (Bowett, 2009; Wood, 2013; Pifer, 2016; Canton, 2021; Parlamento Europeu, 2025). Neste quadro, iniciativas como a *ProtectEU* e o reforço da cooperação UE–OTAN apontam no sentido de uma maior autonomia estratégico-militar europeia, mas permanecem manifestamente insuficientes face à escala e sofisticação do "dominacionismo" neo-eurasiano (Cabral, 2009; Nações Unidas, 2024; Simola & Leppänen, 2025). A proteção de infraestruturas críticas, em especial no Mar Báltico e no Corredor de Suwałki, bem como o investimento em literacia mediática, cibersegurança e mecanismos robustos de verificação de factos, constituem condições necessárias para mitigar os efeitos

desestabilizadores da guerra de informação russa (Lin, 2019; Virág & Tancsa, 2023; Hernández-Benito, 2024; Simola & Leppänen, 2025; Intrisec, 2025).

A retração política dos EUA, num contexto de crescente pressão isolacionista, acentua a necessidade da UE repensar, à luz da *realpolitik*, a sua estratégia pan-europeia e reinventar a sua autonomia estratégica. A "coligação das vontades" permanece indispensável ao apoio militar e económico à Ucrânia, mas a dependência estrutural do "guarda-chuva" de segurança norte-americano tornou-se um fator de risco acrescido num cenário em que "apenas poder pode limitar poder" (John Randolph of Roanoke *apud* Kaplan, 2022, p. 51). O investimento coordenado em capacidades de defesa, nucleares e convencionais, articulado com uma política externa verdadeiramente estruturada, poderá permitir à UE aproximar-se do estatuto de "super-estado" regional, dotado de forças armadas e política externa únicas, capaz de influenciar decisivamente a configuração de poder no hemisfério ocidental (Spykman, 1944, 2017; Kaplan, 2022; Verdú, 2025). A atual janela estratégica oferece à Europa continental uma oportunidade para desenvolver capacidades autónomas de dissuasão híbrida e estratégica, reduzindo a dependência da garantia de segurança externa e fortalecendo a resiliência societal face às operações de influência. Nesta perspetiva, a defesa da ordem liberal não é apenas um imperativo normativo, mas uma necessidade geoestratégica e existencial.

Em termos de agenda de investigação, o estudo abre três linhas de aprofundamento que decorrem diretamente dos resultados obtidos. Em primeiro lugar, a análise comparativa entre o neo-eurasianismo russo e outros projetos civilizacionais – como o "sonho chinês", o "mundo russo", em sentido estrito, ou variantes de nacional-populismo ocidental – poderá clarificar padrões comuns de contestação à ordem liberal e de articulação entre a ideologia, geografia e tecnologia (Brzezinski, 1997; Hurrell, 2015; Lake, Martin & Risse, 2021). Em segundo lugar, a incorporação sistemática de dados quantitativos sobre ciberincidentes, fluxos energéticos, investimentos em defesa e perceções públicas permitirá testar, com maior robustez, a relação entre o discurso ideológico e as práticas geoestratégicas, bem como aferir empiricamente o impacto das estratégias de FIMI em diferentes contextos nacionais (Simola & Leppänen, 2025; Gouliev, 2025). Em terceiro lugar, a investigação sobre a recetividade societal às narrativas neo-eurasianas, tanto na Europa como no espaço transatlântico, é crucial para compreender os limites e as potencialidades da resiliência democrática num contexto de multipolaridade emergente e de proliferação de "realidades alternativas", magnificadas pela IA generativa (Zarocostas, 2020; Fernandes, 2022, 2024b; Allen & Nehrin, 2025).

Os próximos meses serão decisivos para o desfecho deste duelo entre autocratismo e democracia, sob o olhar atento de Pequim e de outras potências revisionistas. Apesar da gravidade da conjuntura geopolítica, a reflexão de Mikhail Gorbatchov oferece uma nota de esperança: "(…) mais cedo ou mais tarde, os nossos esforços comuns darão frutos: os nossos povos viverão numa sociedade próspera e democrática" (Gorbatchov, 2024). Do mesmo modo, Ronald Reagan lembrava que, "(…) hoje em dia, é difícil ser-se otimista, não só porque a democracia é menos vigorosa, mas também porque os inimigos da democracia refinaram os seus instrumentos de repressão. Mas deve-se ser otimista porque a democracia revela, dia após dia, não ser, de modo nenhum, uma frágil flor" (Reagan, 2024, p. 215). Se a ordem internacional liberal enfrenta, hoje, uma contestação estrutural estimulada pelo neo-eurasianismo, a sua sobrevivência dependerá menos da



inércia das instituições e mais da capacidade das democracias em articular poder, prudência e memória histórica contra a "roleta-russa" da desinformação e da violência.

## *Omnes Omnibus*

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# THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS IN TIMES OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC: FRAGMENTATION VS. SOLIDARITY

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## Abstract

The article analyzes the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the European integration process, particularly focusing on its economic component. The pandemic effects were particularly severe in the Tourism and Hospitality and Aviation sectors, most affected by measures to combat the SARS-CoV-2 virus, such as confinement and border closures. Some of the main consequences caused by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis on European countries are explained according to a critical assessment of the success of some public intervention measures implemented by policy makers to address it. The research carried out highlighted important lessons: i) solidarity between the different EU Member States was fundamental to the success of the vaccination process; ii) better health increased labor supply and productivity, contributing decisively to economic growth in the EU; iii) neither the tourism nor aviation sectors were prepared to deal with major health-related crises, and iv) economic recovery will take several years.

**Keywords**

Enlargement, macroeconomic impacts, European integration, COVID-19 pandemic, solidarity.

**Resumo**

O artigo analisa o impacto da pandemia da COVID-19 no processo de integração europeia, centrando-se particularmente na sua vertente económica. Os efeitos da pandemia foram especialmente graves nos setores do turismo, hotelaria e aviação, os mais afetados pelas medidas de combate ao vírus SARS-CoV-2, tais como o confinamento e o encerramento das fronteiras. Algumas das principais consequências causadas pela crise da pandemia da COVID-19 nos países europeus são explicadas com base numa avaliação crítica do sucesso de algumas medidas de intervenção pública implementadas pelos decisores políticos para a enfrentar. A investigação realizada destacou lições importantes: i) a solidariedade entre os diferentes Estados-Membros da UE foi fundamental para o sucesso do processo de vacinação; ii) a melhoria da saúde aumentou a oferta de mão de obra e a produtividade, contribuindo decisivamente para o crescimento económico na UE; iii) nem o setor do turismo nem o da aviação estavam preparados para lidar com grandes crises relacionadas com a saúde; e iv) a recuperação económica levará vários anos.

**Palavras-chave**

Alargamento, impactos macroeconómicos, integração europeia, pandemia de COVID-19, solidariedade.

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# THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS IN TIMES OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC: FRAGMENTATION VS. SOLIDARITY[1,2]

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**LICÍNIA SIMÃO**

## Introduction

On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of COVID-19, caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. Shortly thereafter, on March 11, 2020, COVID-19 was declared a pandemic.

With greater or lesser intensity, all Member States of the European Union (EU) were affected by this pandemic. Its effects were particularly severe in the Tourism and Hospitality and Aviation sectors. Faced with the need to provide emergency response against the negative socio-economic impact of COVID-19 and the need to support countries' recovery, the EU and its Member States, implemented a series of measures to protect the health and well-being of its citizens, to strengthen national health systems and to limit the spread of the virus. The development, production and availability of vaccines and the implementation of public intervention policies to support employment, businesses and the economy became priorities.

The first measures taken by States to combat and control the COVID-19 pandemic were essentially measures to impose confinements, ban travel and close borders. These were political decisions that went against the common principles and values that guided the creation of the EU, as they limited the free movement of people, goods, services and capital within the European space (Duarte & Sol Murta, 2024). The limitation of fundamental rights during this period has been documented and research on this topic

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[2] This work has been funded by national Portuguese funds through FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., Project UIDB/05037/2020 with DOI 10.54499/UIDB/05037/2020, as well as through FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., Project LA/P/0047/2020 with DOI 10.54499/LA/P/0047/2020.

has highlighted how the assessment of impacts needs to account for the existing contexts and variations across the EU (Grogan, 2022).

Given this reality, this work aims to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the European integration process, particularly on the budgetary management of crises (Musiałkowska & Idczak, 2021). The methodology employed in this study is based on a descriptive statistical analysis of the macroeconomic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on a geographically diverse set of EU Member States (Germany, Spain, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Sweden) selected to capture different economic structures, political contexts and levels of exposure to the vaccination process. The empirical approach is used to infer the main macroeconomic consequences of the pandemic in these Member States of the EU and, more particularly, its impact on both the Tourism and Hospitality and Aviation sectors. Our purpose will also be to ascertain whether, following the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and the implementation of measures to mitigate and combat it, the budgetary effort carried out increased the risk of fragmentation of the EU or, on the contrary, opened doors for a new phase of European integration, supported by a basis of greater institutional and financial solidarity between the so-called "frugal" countries and the countries most indebted and affected by the pandemic.

The contribution of this work to the literature results not only from the fact that it enables a better understanding of the behavior of the Member States of the European Union in a crisis context, but also by allowing some lessons to be drawn for the future, namely about the way in which countries must coordinate and respond in pandemic situations.

The work is structured into five sections. In addition to this introduction, in section 2, the literature review is carried out. In section 3, the macroeconomic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on European integration are analyzed. Its general impact on some Member States and, more particularly, on their Tourism, Hospitality and Aviation sectors is investigated. In section 4, a critical assessment of the policies implemented to combat the pandemic crisis is made and some lessons for the future are drawn. Finally, in section 5, the main conclusions of this research are presented.

## Literature review

The economy of the COVID-19 pandemic, "Coronanomics" as it is called by Eichengreen (2020), marked the year 2020 and beyond in a very significant way, and it is therefore pertinent to analyze its impact on the European integration process.

Given that this is a global public health problem, which has unexpectedly affected all countries, most of the initial work carried out on the topic focused fundamentally on the immediate and most visible impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, i.e., on the number of contagions, deaths and hospital capacity to provide health care in response to the disease (see, e.g., Altig et al., 2020, for the USA and the United Kingdom; Ataguba, 2020, for countries in the African continent or Chan, 2022, in the case of China), leaving the analysis of its macroeconomic effects largely unaddressed, namely in terms of product growth, public and private consumption, investment, exports and unemployment rate.

Even so, it is possible to find in the literature some important works that sought to investigate the macroeconomic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis in the European integration process[3].

Starting from a counterfactual analysis developed from an ARIMA (Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average) prediction model, Duarte et al. (2022) examine the behavior of a set of macroeconomic variables (Gross Domestic Product (GDP), public debt, inflation rate, public deficit and unemployment rate) in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic against a hypothetical situation without a pandemic in the EU-27 countries and, in particular, in four of its Member States – Germany, Spain, Italy and Portugal. As expected, the results point to significantly better performance of all variables in the four countries and the EU, had the COVID-19 pandemic crisis not existed. In a scenario without the pandemic, all countries would have higher levels of output, however, presenting relatively weaker economic growth rates when compared to the pandemic situation, namely in 2021 and 2022. The results also point to the occurrence of budget surpluses in Germany and Portugal, in 2020, 2021 and 2022, as well as a sharp reduction in Spanish public debt if the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak had not occurred. In 2021 and 2022, there would still be a lower inflation rate for the EU-27, Germany, Spain and Italy, after a very sharp rise in prices in 2020. With regard to the labor market, with the exception of Germany and the EU-27, where the unemployment rate would be relatively higher, especially in 2022, the other countries would record lower unemployment rates if, hypothetically, the pandemic context had not occurred.

Similar results were also found in studies carried out for other EU economies, as is the case, e.g., by Albu et al. (2020) and Radulescu et al. (2020), on the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Romania; Sanfelici (2020), for a socioeconomic analysis of the Italian response to the pandemic crisis; Pedauga et al. (2021), on the macroeconomic effects of the disease on the Spanish economy; and Silva and Duarte (2021), for the case of Portugal and the rest of the euro area, when they analyzed the macroeconomic consequences of a shock to the labor supply in the context of the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak.

Dukić et al. (2021) investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on GDP, unemployment and public debt of the EU, concluding that there is a strong correlation between these variables. However, they go further, stating that in addition to the economic crisis, there is a crisis in the EU's national health systems, which require significant investments. In this context, the authors consider that it is difficult to expect a more prominent economic recovery until the global pandemic is over. Their results also suggest that a few more years are needed for European countries to compensate for the economic losses caused by the pandemic, so that without greater cooperation and financial solidarity between Member States, it will be difficult for new advances to be made in the process of European integration.

Based on a set of interviews with public health experts from several EU Member States and officials from the European Commission, carried out between May 2020 and August 2020, Gontariuk et al. (2021) largely share the previous assessment, demonstrating that the EU's limited mandate in the field of health makes it difficult to take appropriate actions to prevent and combat outbreaks of infectious diseases, such as the COVID-19

[3] A review of this literature can be found in Duarte & Sol Murta (2024), which we follow closely in this work.

pandemic. In the authors' view, the European Commission fulfilled its role of coordinating and supporting Member States, facilitating networks and information exchange. However, they point out that the political challenges underlying EU decision-making on health emergencies still make it difficult to have an aligned response. In fact, the expansion of EU institutions' powers on health governance, as a result of the pandemic, have been singled out as an ad-hoc deepening of European integration, beyond what is stated in the founding treaties (Books and Geyer, 2020).

Sapir (2020) investigates why the economies of southern EU countries have been more affected by the COVID-19 crisis than some northern European countries. For the author, the severity of confinement measures, the percentage of tourist activity in the economy and the quality of governance play a significant role in explaining differences in economic losses in different EU countries. Depending on the country groupings used for comparison, Sapir (2020) concluded that differences in GDP losses were between 30 and 50 percent due to the strictness of the lockdown, between 35 and 45 percent due to the quality of governance, and between 15 and 25 percent due to the weight of tourism in the economy. However, public debt did not play a relevant role, nevertheless suggesting that the European Central Bank's (ECB) pandemic emergency purchasing program was effective.

Sapir's (2020) conclusions are particularly important as they may have implications for the allocation of the so-called Recovery and Resilience Fund (FRR) between recovery and resilience expenditure. For the author, supporting recovery through a combination of demand and supply initiatives is important to ensure that countries recover as quickly as possible from the COVID-19 crisis, without causing too much damage to their economies. However, in many countries, especially in the Southern EU, hardest hit by the COVID-19 crisis, the poor quality of their governments has had a negative impact on their economic resilience, as demonstrated by the relatively large size of their GDP shocks. In this sense, it is crucial that FRR programs also devote sufficient attention (and naturally resources) to improving the quality of governance in these countries. This approach is not new, if we consider the support the EU grants to candidate countries to improve governance systems, and also if we consider the application of governance-related conditionality in the EU's external relations, namely on the Development Assistance. Internal conditionality, nevertheless, is politically harder to impose.

More recently, Duarte et al. (2023) coordinated an investigation carried out by a vast group of academics belonging to universities and research centers from several European countries, and also from other continents, where they sought to study, from different dimensions (political, social, economic, philosophical) the process of European integration in its double aspect of crisis and resilience in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The main objective of this research was to bring together in a single work four different perspectives for European integration in a post-pandemic context: i) the perspective of Euro Zone countries; ii) the perspective of candidate countries to the Euro Zone; iii) the "vision" to the East of the candidate countries to the European Union, and iv) the view of the rest of the world. Most contributions pointed to a shift in the European integration process in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, based on greater solidarity and economic and institutional cooperation between the different Member States, rather than a possible fragmentation of the European community space.

## Consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis on European Integration

The COVID-19 pandemic that hit Europe and the world at the beginning of 2020 led European countries to close their borders, preventing the normal flows of goods, services, people and capital. In doing so, member states risked common principles and values that guided the creation of the EU, namely the functioning of the common market. Created by the Treaty of Rome in 1958, the EU common market aimed to liberalize trade between member states with the purpose of increasing economic prosperity and contributing to "an ever-closer union between the peoples of Europe"[4]. The COVID-19 pandemic crisis has brought back some obstacles to the four freedoms (free movement of goods, services, people and capital). Companies temporarily closed, causing huge endogenous negative shocks, both in supply and demand, with devastating macroeconomic effects, firstly in the production and consumption of countries, particularly from the European Community.

The methodology employed in this study is based on a descriptive statistical analysis of the macroeconomic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on a geographically diverse set of EU Member States (Germany, Spain, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Sweden) selected to capture different economic structures, political contexts and levels of exposure to the vaccination process. Using harmonized data from Eurostat and from European Center for Disease Prevention and Control, the analysis examines key macroeconomic indicators as well as sector-specific metrics. We construct and present figures that illustrate the behavior of macroeconomic variables and tourism and the performance of the tourism and aviation sectors over the period 2015-2024, thereby covering several years before, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. By comparing these trends, the study identifies cross-country differences in the magnitude of the shock and the subsequent recovery.

The empirical approach is used to infer the main macroeconomic consequences of the pandemic in these Member States of the EU and, more particularly, its impact on both the Tourism and Hospitality and Aviation sectors. A critical analysis is then deployed to place these economic results on the literature on European integration and the expected results in terms of potential fragmentation of the political and economic landscape of the European Union.

## General Impact

To better understand the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis on European integration, let us start by analyzing the real GDP evolution (at constant prices), of some European countries in comparison with the set of twenty-seven EU countries (EU- 27) and the Euro Zone.

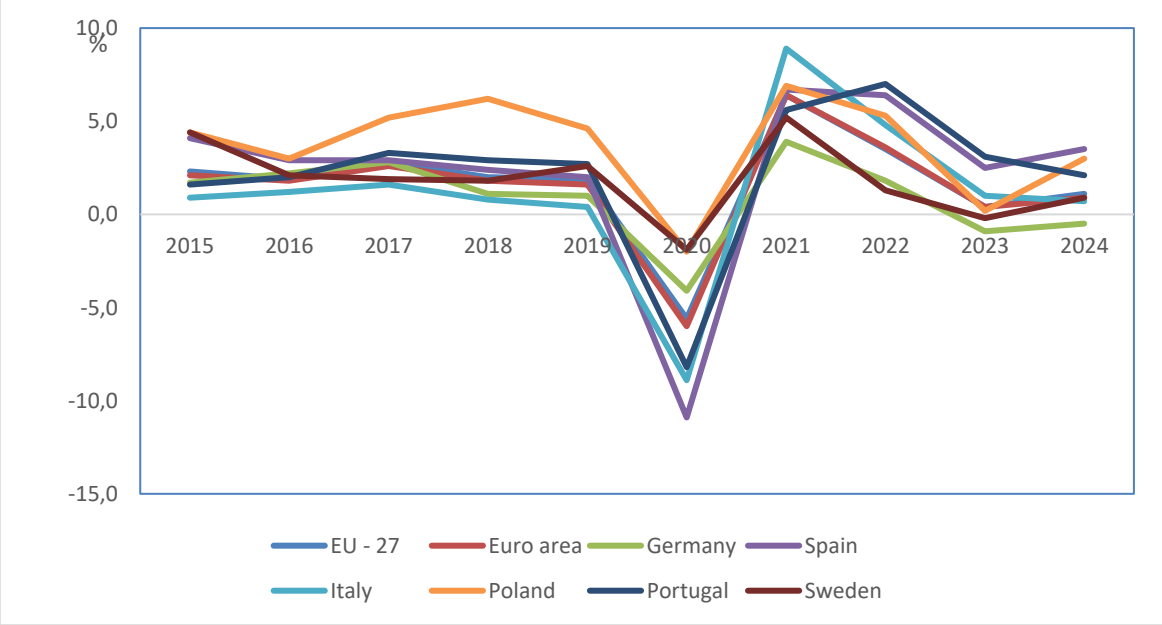
The countries were chosen considering their geographic diversity, but also political and economic specificities. It was therefore decided to include countries from Southern Europe (Portugal, Italy and Spain), Central Europe (Germany), Eastern Europe (Poland) and Northern Europe (Sweden) in the analysis. In addition to Portugal, which was the Southern European country with the highest vaccination rate against COVID-19 in 2021,

[4] For more details, see Duarte & Sol Murta (2024).

we included Italy and Spain because these were the countries that first suffered the impact of the disease and had the highest number of registered cases in the first three waves of the pandemic. The choice of Germany was due to the fact that it is the economy with the greatest capacity and financial availability to carry out economic policy measures to mitigate the negative effects caused by the pandemic. A somewhat similar decision guided the choice of Sweden, and this country was included in the sample also because the Swedish welfare state is traditionally characterized by a high level of social protection, based on universal coverage and solidarity, by a vast public sector, a labor market largely supported by collective agreements and by recording relatively high rates of economic growth. We therefore sought to determine whether these structures were strongly affected by the pandemic crisis or, on the contrary, demonstrated great resilience in the face of the pandemic situation. Poland, on the other hand, was included in the analysis as an Eastern European country where recent political divisions have created major obstacles to the vaccination process against the SARS-CoV-2 virus. As a comparative reference, we also included the EU-27 and the Euro Zone in the analysis.

Figure 1 shows the evolution of the real GDP growth rate for this group of countries between 2015 and 2024. Table A.1 in the appendix shows the corresponding real GDP growth rates.

**Figure 1.** GDP – real growth rate (%)



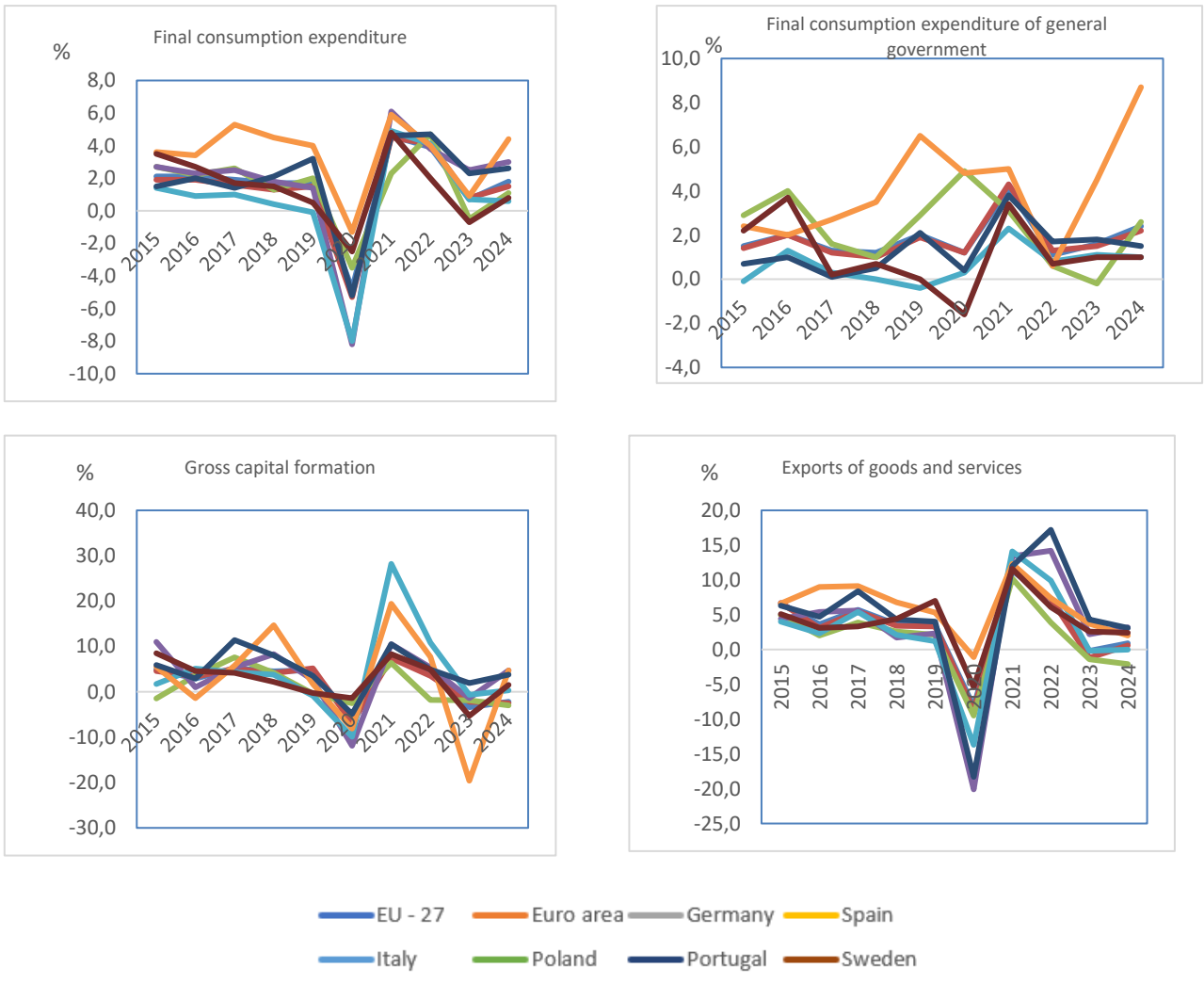

Source: *Eurostat* (DOI: 10.2908/nama_10_gdp).

Looking at Figure 1, it is clear that the year 2020, corresponding to the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, was marked by a sharp decline in real GDP, and consequently in living standards, across all the countries analyzed. Spain recorded the steepest contraction, with real GDP falling by 11.2 percent followed by Italy (-9 percent) and Portugal (-8.3 percent). In 2021, all countries returned to a positive growth trajectory,

with Italy showing the strongest performance, registering an 8.3 percent increase in real GDP compared with the previous year. In 2022, although all countries continued to grow, Portugal was the only one to accelerate, posting a real GDP growth rate of 6. percent. By 2024, GDP growth has stabilized across countries, with Germany experiencing a decline, while Spain, Poland and Portugal recorded the highest growth rates, although data from that period reflects other structural and geopolitical conditionalities impacting the European economies, including the war in Ukraine.

For a more detailed analysis of all countries covered, Figure 2 shows the evolution of the various components of real GDP (private consumption, public consumption, investment/gross capital formation, exports), excluding imports. Again, the corresponding annual rates of change are shown in the appendix, in Tables A.2 to A.5.

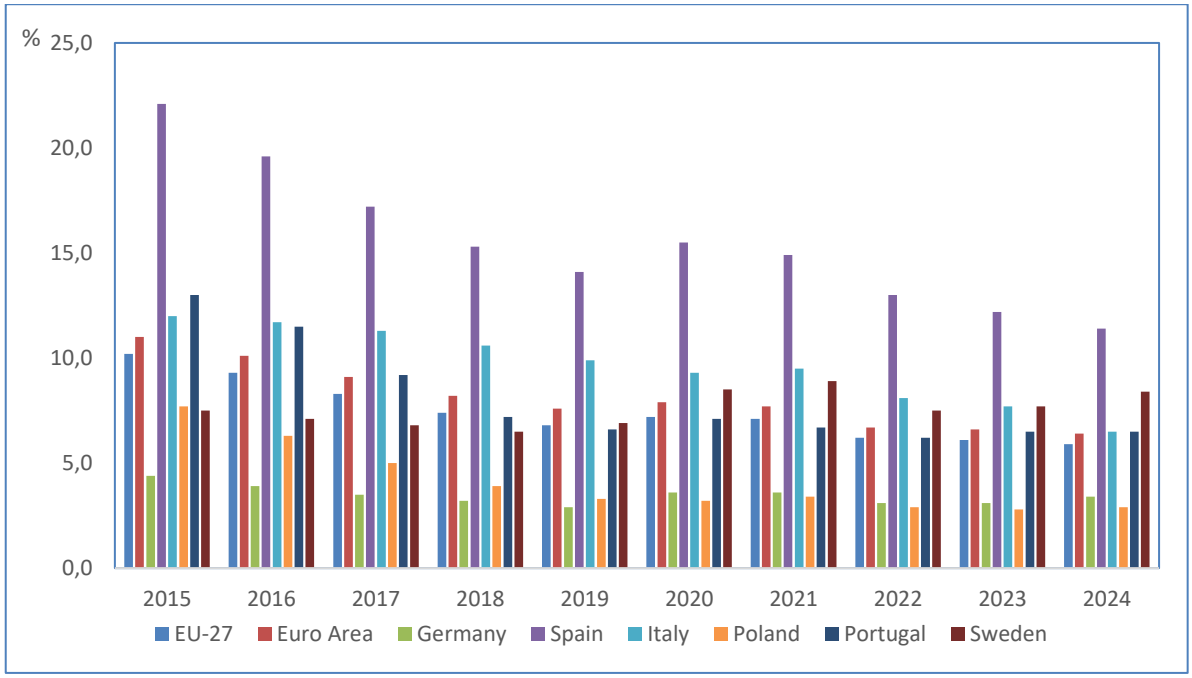
**Figure 2.** GDP main components – real growth rate (%)




Source: *Eurostat* (DOI: 10.2908/nama_10_gdp).

As can be seen, in general and for the different countries presented, the components of real GDP fell sharply in 2020. The strongest declines were observed in the exports of Spain (-20.1 percent), Portugal (-18.6 percent) and Italy (-13.5 percent). This behavior can be explained by the fact that these countries are highly dependent on tourism. The lockdowns, travel bans and other measures taken in the face of the pandemic have dramatically affected all tourism and travel activities and contributed to this negative impact on exports. The only component of real GDP that did not decline (with the exception of Sweden) was government consumption. The economic policies adopted to support households and the economy naturally led to a substantial increase in real public consumption in most countries. It should be noted that in Germany and Poland, public consumption even grew by more than 4 percent in both 2020 and 2021. In Poland, public consumption also increased in 2023 and 2024, at a level higher than in the other countries, possibly due to its proximity to the war in Ukraine. Finally, Figure 3 shows the evolution of the unemployment rate in the countries mentioned. Table A.6 in the appendix documents the figures for this variable.

**Figure 3.** Unemployment rate (%)




Source: *Eurostat* (DOI: 10.2908/une_rt_a).

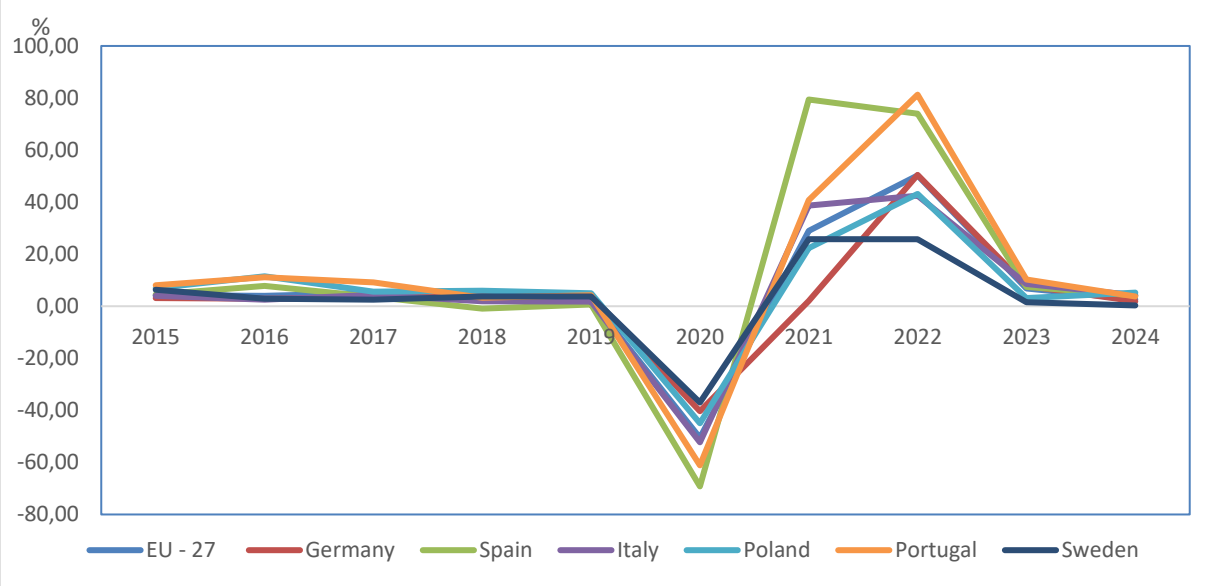
As expected, the unemployment rate (number of unemployed/labor force) increased across the board in 2020, but still only slightly, considering the brutality of the negative shock caused by the pandemic situation. Once again, one of the strongest effects was recorded in Sweden (150 basis points). Given the 'protective' nature of the Swedish state, this result is not surprising. It could possibly be explained by the degree of severity and surprise of the shock caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which caught even public decision-makers 'off guard' in countries that are traditionally considered to have more of

a welfare state. Sweden is seen as the model where the welfare state has taken the most sophisticated form (Bernitz, 2007), and it was therefore expected that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labor market in this country would be minimized, which in fact and unexpectedly did not happen.

## Impact on the tourism, hospitality and aviation sector

As we noted in the previous section, the real GDP of the various European countries analyzed fell significantly in 2020, especially the exports component. This was largely due to the lockdowns and border closures that hampered tourism activities, both domestically and abroad. Among the various countries analyzed, Portugal, Spain and Italy, the southern European countries where tourism is predominant were the most affected, as can be seen in Figure 4 (and corresponding Table A.7 in the appendix) through the analysis of the number of nights spent in tourist establishments. As might be expected, after the measures taken to alleviate the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it was also in these countries that tourist activity grew most, in the years that followed.

**Figure 4.** Nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments

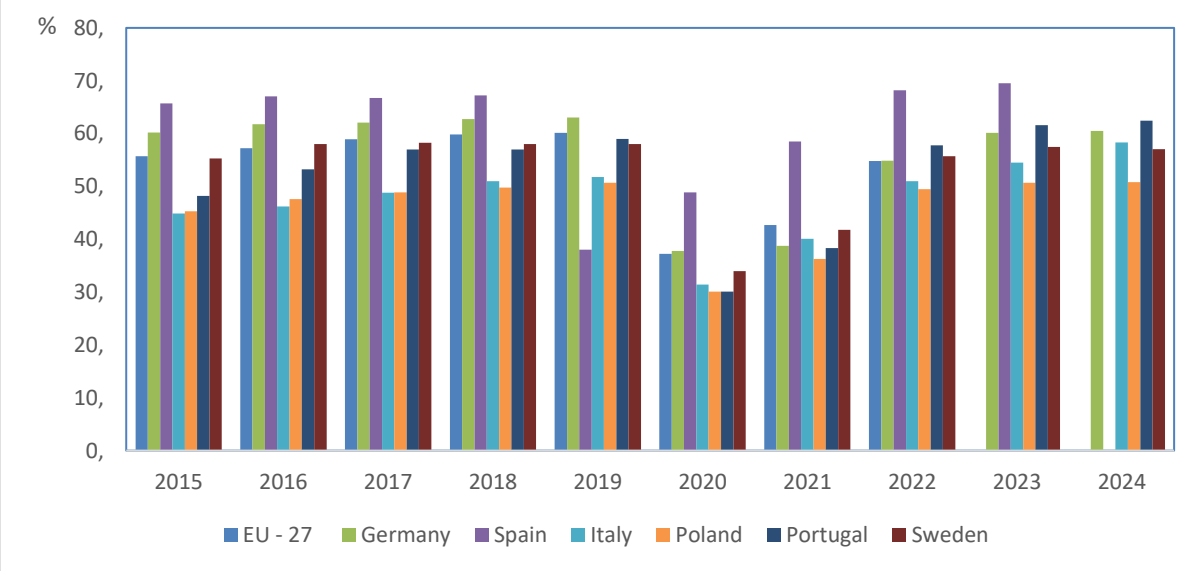



Source: *Eurostat* (DOI: 10.2908/tour_occ_ninat).

In line with this behavior, the occupancy rate of tourist establishments also fell sharply in 2020, as can be seen in Figure 5 (and Table A.8 in the appendix). On the other hand, 2021 and 2022 were years of recovery for tourism in most of the countries analyzed, but there is no doubt that the new growth trend in this sector of activity was more pronounced in the three southern European countries, where the vaccination rates and the set of measures to mitigate the pandemic crisis were also more successful. In fact, this seems to suggest that part of the reasons why vaccination was such a priority in

some countries is due to human health improvement, but also to economic performance, as vaccination schemes would allow for a more structured reopening of tourist-related economic activities.

**Figure 5.** Net occupancy rate of bed-places and bedrooms in hotels and similar accommodation




Source: *Eurostat* (DOI: 10.2908/tin00180).

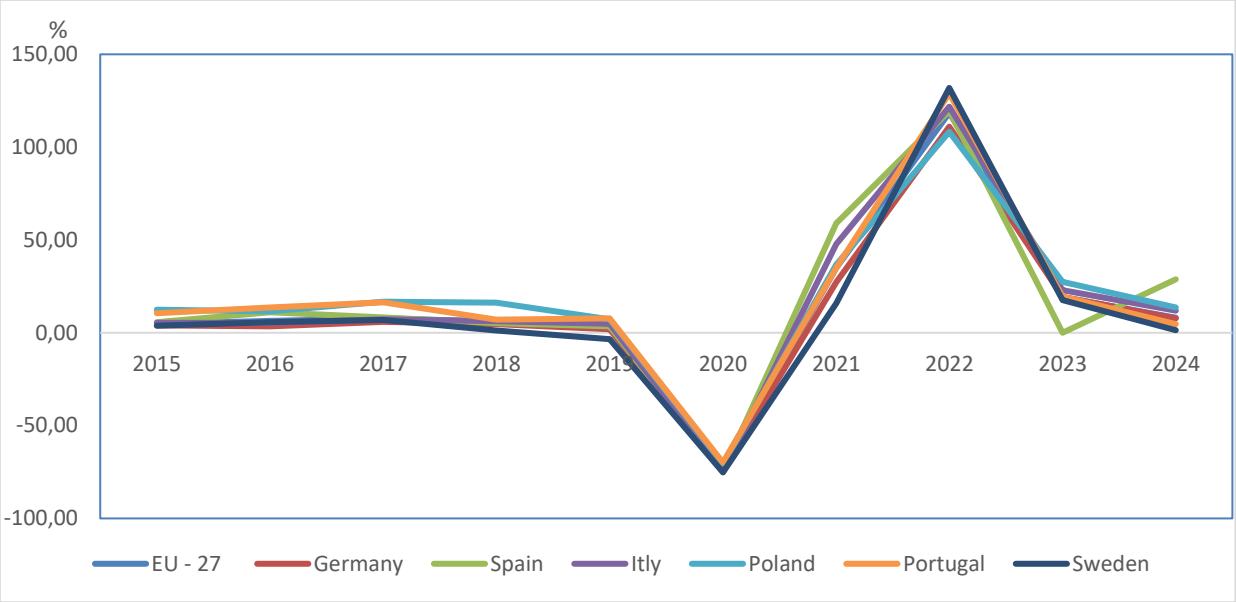
As far as the aviation sector is concerned, the measures initially implemented to deal with the SARS-CoV-2 virus, namely lockdowns and border closures, have had disastrous consequences, at least in the first phase (2020), as can be easily seen by analyzing Figure 6 (and Table A.9 in the appendix), which shows the rate of change in reported air passenger traffic by country.

Air passenger transport fell sharply in 2020 (consider that there was still no pandemic in the first months of 2020), with some recovery in 2021 and spectacular growth in 2022. Of all the countries analyzed, Portugal was the country with the smallest decrease in the number of passengers in 2020, possibly due to its peripheral geographical position in Europe and its strong links with emigrant communities and African Portuguese-speaking countries (PALOP).

In 2022, Portugal was also the country with the highest growth in passenger numbers, a clear reflection of the strong growth in tourism and the brand image that "Portugal is in fashion". In recent years, tourism in Portugal has expanded beyond the traditional offer known as the three "S" tourism (Sun, Sea and Sand), attracting the interest of a wider range of tourists who visit the country not only for its long white sandy beaches and sunshine, but also for its gastronomy, history and urban heritage, culture, leisure, religious activities, outdoor activities and adventure in perfect harmony with nature (Duarte, 2015; Duarte et al., 2024). Therefore, it is not surprising that once the pandemic was over and Portugal had the highest vaccination rate in Europe, this was seen as a sign of safety for visitors. The impact was evident as these measures made Portugal one of

the most sought-after destinations in Europe for many people from all corners of the world, with a very positive direct impact on the number of flights landing at Portuguese airports, but also on the number of overnight stays and stays in the various types of tourist accommodation offered by Portugal.

**Figure 6.** Air Passenger Transport Growth Rate, by Reporting Country




Source: Authors' own work using data from Eurostat (DOI: 10.2908/avia_paoc).

## Public Intervention Measures Implemented by the European Union

All EU Member States have been affected by the brutal negative shock caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, following the WHO declaration on January 30, 2020, of the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, and shortly thereafter, on March 11, 2020, of COVID-19 as a pandemic, the EU and its Member States implemented a package of measures to protect the health and well-being of its citizens, strengthen national healthcare systems, and limit the spread of the virus. Simultaneously, public intervention strategies were defined to support employment, businesses and the economy and work was being done on future recovery (Duarte & Sol Murta, 2024).

## Public Policies to Combat the Pandemic

The first measures taken by States to combat and control the COVID-19 pandemic were essentially measures to impose confinements, ban travel, and close borders[5]. The development, production and availability of vaccines against COVID-19 has also become a priority. In this sense, on June 18, 2020, the European Commission was mandated by

[5] For this and other European Union responses to COVID-19, see Duarte and Sol Murta (2024).

Member States to begin talks for the joint acquisition of vaccines. It was clearly a new phase of European cooperation and integration, more based on solidarity than on a fragmentation of the EU between the so-called "frugal" countries and the most affected and indebted countries. Initially defending a hard line in the negotiations of the Economic Recovery Fund and the community budget, the "frugal" countries (Netherlands, Austria, Denmark and Sweden) would have a lot to lose with a possible fragmentation of the European single market, or if eventually free circulation of goods, services, people and capital within the community space would (definitely) cease to exist. Although these countries are net contributors to the community budget, they are also among the main beneficiaries of the internal market. In these circumstances, in the discussions on what should European aid for post-pandemic reconstruction be, accounts of these benefits were rarely considered (Gandra, 2020). In turn, helping the most indebted countries affected by the pandemic such as Portugal, Spain and Italy became imperative and necessary, since countries with greater budgetary capacity could inject massive stimulus into their economies and state aid to their companies, thus accentuating asymmetries and the risk of fragmentation in the EU.

Linking economic policies with public health and regional and global solidarity issues, the management of the COVID-19 pandemic evidenced the pressures bearing on national and European governance systems alike. At the end of December 2020, the vaccination process began in Europe. By June 2022, eighteen months later, nine in ten adults (86 percent) of the EU population were fully vaccinated against COVID-19. However, as it was a voluntary process, adherence by the population was not the same in all countries. In Table 1, it can be seen for the set of countries in our analysis and EU-27 what percentage of the population was vaccinated with at least one dose or with complete vaccination (available) at the end of 2021, one year after the start of the process[6].

**Table 1.** Vaccination process - % of the population vaccinated at the end of 2021

| Vaccination | EU-27 | Germany | Spain | Italy | Poland | Portugal | Swede |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| % of population with at least one dose | 73.0 | 75.4 | 84.3 | 81.3 | 57.6 | 91.8 | 70.7 |
| % of population fully vaccinated | 68.4 | 71.1 | 75.1 | 75.0 | 55.8 | 83.5 | 68.4 |

Source: *European Center for Disease Prevention and Control*.

As can be seen, Portugal is the country where the population most adheres to vaccination, followed by Spain and Italy. Of this group of countries, Poland and Sweden are those with the lowest vaccination rate.

In March 2021, the European Health Union Program was created, an investment of 5.3 billion euros with the aim of creating stronger and more accessible health systems and paving the way for a European Health Union. Post-COVID health integration policies have been spearheading the establishment of the necessary regulatory and inspection bodies

[6] More details about the vaccination process in some of these countries, at earlier stages, can be found in Duarte & Sol Murta (2022).

and creating the financial incentives through programmatic funding. This evidences the well-studied trend in the EU to use crises as drivers of European integration (Dinan, Nugent and Paterson, 2017), with member states mandating the Commission to propose common measure to ensure the political and economic integrity of European policies.

On July 1, 2021, the EU also created the so-called "common European digital certificate for COVID". This certificate was in force until June 2023 and was intended to facilitate the free and safe movement of the population between countries. To support families and companies, on April 9, 2020, the EU created an instrument (540 billion euros) of temporary support to mitigate the risks of unemployment in an emergency situation (SURE) and thus help workers, companies and Member States. On 21 July 2020, Member States reached an agreement on Next Generation EU, a €750 billion recovery package, to help the EU face the crisis caused by the pandemic. They also agreed on a long-term EU budget for 2021-2027 of €1074.3 billion to support investment in digital and green transitions and resilience[7]. Portugal's first Recovery and Resilience Plan (PRR) was presented in April 2021. The PRR is expected to boast significantly the economic recovery of Europe, in the short term, but most significantly in the medium to long-term, as these projects aimed at renovating infrastructure and preparing the European for the digital and green challenges.

The ECB began, in March 2020, the pandemic emergency asset purchase program (PEPP), totaling 1850 billion euros, with the aim of reducing loan costs and increasing the granting of credit in the euro area. These net asset purchases ended in April 2022. In 2021, the ECB also carried out four emergency extended-term refinancing operations to support the liquidity of the euro area banking system and preserve the smooth functioning of the money market, among other measures. These measures contributed to stabilizing the European financial system, creating sustainable bases for the future recovery of confidence and investment, two fundamental variables for the resumption of economic growth in the EU.

## Critical Assessment of Policy Success: some lessons for the future

A critical assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on some European countries and the set of public intervention measures implemented in the meantime to mitigate and combat its negative effects and, in this way, allow the resumption of economic growth and the process of European integration allows us to draw some important lessons for the future. Specifically, on the common principles and values that guided the creation of the EU, namely on the free movement of people, goods, services and capital, and also on guaranteeing freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law, and promoting peace and stability.

Firstly, the political-economic solidarity achieved between the various EU Member States following the COVID-19 pandemic was fundamental for the success of the vaccination process and for helping the most affected and indebted countries. Solidarity without which it would have been very difficult to overcome the existing public health problem and combat the negative economic effects caused by the widespread spread of the SARS-

[7] For more details, see, e.g., Fernández et al. (2023), Camisão & Vila Maior (2023) and Sebastião (2023).

CoV-2 virus. This solidarity contrasted sharply with the post-2008 financial crisis measures of austerity imposed on the most indebted countries at the time, and reinvigorated the commitment to EU integration across Europe and reinforced the international standing of the EU.

Secondly, better health and the promotion of digitalization as a basis for recovery and exit from the crisis within the scope of the European plan Next Generation EU has made it possible to increase the supply of labor and productivity, thus contributing decisively to the maintenance of employment levels in the EU, particularly, in the Member States initially most affected by the pandemic. Digitalization was a key issue in the first von der Leyen Commission, set to push the Union's economic recovery and to reposition the Union in a age of great power competition driven by innovation in the digital field and its supporting infrastructures.

Third, neither the aviation sector nor the European hospitality and tourism industry in general were prepared to deal with major health-related crises, so public intervention measures implemented jointly by the EU and Member States were extremely important for these sectors to be able to maintain their jobs, resume their activity and, in some cases, restructure the form and mode of business they had carried out until then.

Finally, although as of 2021 there were already signs of resumption of growth in some Member States, the widespread economic recovery will still take several years and will be gradual. Given the context of war currently occurring in Ukraine and in the Middle East, and in the event of the emergence of new variants of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, it is essential to maintain solidarity, cooperation and coordination of economic and social policies between the various Member States and quickly advance the EU enlargement process to the East.

## Conclusion

All countries in the world have been affected, to a greater or lesser extent, by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Member States of the European Union were no exception. It was effectively a negative shock of global dimension, both on the supply and demand sides, with macroeconomic impacts on all countries and sectors of activity. However, its effects were particularly intense in the Tourism and Hospitality and Aviation sectors, which were most affected by globally accepted public intervention measures to mitigate and combat the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which included confinement, travel bans and border closures.These political decisions were, however, contrary to the common principles and values that guided the creation of the EU, namely the free movement of people, goods, services and capital, but also the guarantee of freedom, equality, rule of law and promotion of stability.

Based on this "political-institutional dilemma", this work's main objective was to analyze the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis on the European integration process. To this end, a descriptive statistical analysis was carried out for a geographically distinct set of EU Member States (Germany, Spain, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Sweden). The analysis revealed that, coinciding with the first wave of the pandemic, the year 2020 was particularly critical in terms of the behavior of macroeconomic variables. Most countries

experienced negative real growth rates, sharp reductions in private consumption, investment and exports, as well as strong disturbances in the functioning of the labor market and an increase in the unemployment rate.

As would be expected, the negative effects of the pandemic were felt more intensely in the sectors of activity where the public health measures taken had a direct and immediate impact on their functioning. Specifically, the Tourism and Hospitality and Aviation sectors. Among the Member States analyzed, the most affected were the countries of Southern Europe, whose specialization and economy are heavily dependent on these sectors, thus increasing the risks of greater asymmetries and fragmentation in the EU. Still, everything seems to indicate that the institutional and financial solidarity implemented by the various EU Member States to face the pandemic shock have eliminated this destabilizing potential of the European integration process.

From the research carried out, it was also possible to draw four important lessons for the future of European integration: i) cooperation between the various EU Member States was fundamental to the success of the vaccination process for the majority of the population, cooperation without which it would have been very difficult to mitigate the negative human and economic effects caused by the pandemic crisis; ii) better health increased labor supply and productivity, contributing decisively to economic growth within the EU; iii) neither the European hotel and tourism industry in general, nor the aviation sector were prepared to deal with major public health crises, and iv) economic recovery may take a few years and will certainly be gradual, so that before the context of war in Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas armed conflict, or the possible emergence of new variants of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, it is essential to maintain solidarity and cooperation between the various Member States and move quickly towards EU enlargement process to the East.

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## Appendix

**Table A.1.** GDP – real growth rate (%)

| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EU - 27 | 2,3 | 1,9 | 2,8 | 2,0 | 1,9 | -5,6 | 6,4 | 3,5 | 0,4 | 1,1 |
| Euro Area | 2,1 | 1,8 | 2,6 | 1,8 | 1,6 | -6,0 | 6,4 | 3,6 | 0,4 | 0,9 |
| Germany | 1,7 | 2,2 | 2,8 | 1,1 | 1,0 | -4,1 | 3,9 | 1,8p | -0,9p | -0,5p |
| Spain | 4,1 | 2,9 | 2,9 | 2,4 | 2,0 | -10,9 | 6,7 | 6,4 | 2,5p | 3,5p |
| Italy | 0,9 | 1,2 | 1,6 | 0,8 | 0,4 | -8,9 | 8,9 | 4,8 | 1,0 | 0,7 |
| Poland | 4,4 | 3,0 | 5,2 | 6,2 | 4,6 | -2,0 | 6,9 | 5,3 | 0,2 | 3,0 |
| Portugal | 1,6 | 2,0 | 3,3 | 2,9 | 2,7 | -8,2 | 5,6 | 7,0 | 3,1 | 2,1p |
| Sweden | 4,4 | 2,1 | 1,9 | 1,8 | 2,6 | -1,9 | 5,2 | 1,3 | -0,2 | 0,9 |

Note: p - provisional.

Source: Eurostat (DOI: 10.2908/nama_10_gdp).

**Table A.2.** Final consumption expenditure – real growth rate (%)

| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EU - 27 | 2,1 | 2,1 | 1,9 | 1,7 | 1,7 | -4,8 | 4,6 | 3,9 | 0,7 | 1,8 |
| Euro Area | 1,9 | 1,9 | 1,6 | 1,3 | 1,5 | -5,3 | 4,5 | 4,1 | 0,8 | 1,5 |
| Germany | 2,7 | 2,2 | 2,6 | 1,3 | 2,0 | -3,5 | 2,3 | 4,7p | -0,5p | 1,1 p |
| Spain | 2,7 | 2,3 | 2,5 | 1,8 | 1,4 | -8,2 | 6,1 | 3,8 | 2,5 p | 3,0 p |
| Italy | 1,4 | 0,9 | 1,0 | 0,4 | -0,1 | -8,0 | 4,9 | 4,1 | 0,7 | 0,6 |
| Poland | 3,6 | 3,4 | 5,3 | 4,5 | 4,0 | -1,3 | 5,9 | 4,0 | 0,9 | 4,4 |
| Portugal | 1,5 | 2,0 | 1,4 | 2,1 | 3,2 | -5,2 | 4,6 | 4,7 | 2,3 | 2,6 p |
| Sweden | 3,5 | 2,7 | 1,7 | 1,5 | 0,5 | -2,5 | 4,8 | 2,0 | -0,7 | 0,8 |

Note: p - provisional.
Source: Eurostat.

**Table A.3.** Final consumption expenditure of general government -- real growth rate **(%)**

| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EU - 27 | 1,5 | 2,0 | 1,3 | 1,2 | 2,0 | 1,2 | 4,1 | 1,1 | 1,6 | 2,4 |
| Euro Area | 1,4 | 2,0 | 1,2 | 1,0 | 1,9 | 1,2 | 4,3 | 1,3 | 1,5 | 2,2 |
| Germany | 2,9 | 4,0 | 1,6 | 1,0 | 2,9 | 4,9 | 3,1 | 0,6 p | -0,2 p | 2,6 p |
| Spain | 1,9 | 0,9 | 1,0 | 2,1 | 2,2 | 3,5 | 3,6 | 0,8 | 4,5 p | 2,9 p |
| Italy | -0,1 | 1,3 | 0,3 | 0,0 | -0,4 | 0,3 | 2,3 | 0,8 | 1,1 | 1,0 |
| Poland | 2,4 | 2,0 | 2,7 | 3,5 | 6,5 | 4,8 | 5,0 | 0,6 | 4,5 | 8,7 |
| Portugal | 0,7 | 1,0 | 0,1 | 0,5 | 2,1 | 0,4 | 3,8 | 1,7 | 1,8 | 1,5 p |
| Sweden | 2,2 | 3,7 | 0,2 | 0,7 | 0,0 | -1,6 | 3,4 | 0,7 | 1,0 | 1,0 |

Note: p - provisional.
Source: Eurostat (DOI: 10.2908/nama_10_gdp).

**Table A.4.** Gross capital formation – real growth rate (%)

| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EU - 27 | 4,9 | 2,9 | 5,2 | 4,5 | 4,8 | -6,4 | 8,3 | 3,9 | -3,4 | -2,2 |
| Euro Area | 4,6 | 3,3 | 5,1 | 4,1 | 5,2 | -6,9 | 7,4 | 3,5 | -2,2 | -2,5 |
| Germany | -1,5 | 3,6 | 7,6 | 4,2 | -0,4 | -2,5 | 6,4 | -1,8 p | -1,9 p | -3,0 p |
| Spain | 11,0 | 1,0 | 5,4 | 8,3 | 2,6 | -11,9 | 10,5 | 5,4 | -1,4 p | 4,7 p |
| Italy | 1,7 | 5,1 | 4,3 | 3,8 | -0,9 | -9,9 | 28,2 | 10,8 | -0,7 | 0,3 |
| Poland | 5,5 | -1,4 | 5,8 | 14,7 | 1,7 | -8,1 | 19,4 | 7,7 | -19,6 | 4,7 |
| Portugal | 5,9 | 2,9 | 11,4 | 8,0 | 3,5 | -4,9 | 10,5 | 4,9 | 1,9 | 3,8 p |
| Sweden | 8,5 | 4,6 | 4,2 | 2,2 | -0,3 | -1,4 | 8,3 | 4,9 | -5,3 | 1,5 |

Note: p - provisional.

Source: Eurostat (DOI: 10.2908/nama_10_gdp).

**Table A.5.** Exports of goods and services --- real growth rate (%)

| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EU - 27 | 6,6 | 3,6 | 5,7 | 3,6 | 3,5 | -8,2 | 11,3 | 7,3 | -0,2 | 0,9 |
| Euro Area | 6,7 | 3,1 | 5,5 | 3,4 | 3,3 | -8,7 | 11,5 | 7,3 | -1,2 | 0,6 |
| Germany | 4,9 | 2,0 | 3,9 | 2,6 | 2,1 | -9,5 | 10,2 | 3,9 p | -1,4 p | -2,1 p |
| Spain | 4,4 | 5,4 | 5,6 | 1,7 | 2,3 | -20,1 | 13,4 | 14,2 | 2,2 p | 3,2 p |
| Italy | 4,0 | 2,3 | 5,4 | 2,1 | 1,2 | -13,7 | 14,1 | 9,9 | -0,2 | 0,0 |
| Poland | 6,6 | 9,0 | 9,1 | 6,8 | 5,3 | -1,1 | 12,3 | 7,4 | 3,7 | 2,0 |
| Portugal | 6,3 | 4,7 | 8,4 | 4,3 | 4,0 | -18,3 | 12,0 | 17,2 | 4,3 | 3,1 p |
| Sweden | 5,1 | 3,1 | 3,3 | 4,4 | 7,0 | -5,4 | 11,6 | 6,1 | 2,6 | 2,4 |

Note: p - provisional.

Source: Eurostat (DOI: 10.2908/nama_10_gdp).

**Table A.6.** Unemployment rate (% of population in the labour force)

| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EU - 27 | 10,2 | 9,3 | 8,3 | 7,4 | 6,8 | 7,2 | 7,1 | 6,2 | 6,1 | 5,9 |
| Euro Area | 11,0 | 10,1 | 9,1 | 8,2 | 7,6 | 7,9 | 7,7 | 6,7 | 6,6 | 6,4 |
| Germany | 4,4 | 3,9 | 3,5 | 3,2 | 2,9 | 3,6 | 3,6 | 3,1 | 3,1 | 3,4 |
| Spain | 22,1 | 19,6 | 17,2 | 15,3 | 14,1 | 15,5 | 14,9 | 13,0 | 12,2 | 11,4 |
| Italy | 12,0 | 11,7 | 11,3 | 10,6 | 9,9 | 9,3 | 9,5 | 8,1 | 7,7 | 6,5 |
| Poland | 7,7 | 6,3 | 5,0 | 3,9 | 3,3 | 3,2 | 3,4 | 2,9 | 2,8 | 2,9 |
| Portugal | 13,0 | 11,5 | 9,2 | 7,2 | 6,6 | 7,1 | 6,7 | 6,2 | 6,5 | 6,5 |
| Sweden | 7,5 | 7,1 | 6,8 | 6,5 | 6,9 | 8,5 | 8,9 | 7,5 | 7,7 | 8,4 |

Source: Eurostat (DOI: 10.2908/une_rt_a).

**Table A.7.** Nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments - growth rate (%)

| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EU - 27 | 4,22 | 4,01 | 5,14 | 3,39 | 2,28 | - | 28,94 | 50,24 | 6,84 | 2,67 |
| Euro Area | nd | nd | nd | nd | nd | nd | nd | nd | 7,09 | 2,61 |
| Germany | 3,14 | 2,86 | 3,17 | 4,58 | 4,15 | - | 2,05 | 50,47 | 7,75 | 1,90 |
| Spain | 4,52 | 7,75 | 3,57 | -0,90 | 0,62 | - | 79,42 | 73,98 | 7,39 | 4,16 |
| Italy | 4,00 | 2,57 | 4,38 | 1,95 | 1,84 | - | 38,73 | 42,48 | 8,53 | 4,25 |
| Poland | 6,99 | 11,45 | 5,65 | 5,94 | 5,04 | - | 22,31 | 43,15 | 3,16 | 5,23 |
| Portugal | 8,08 | 11,10 | 9,12 | 3,29 | 4,28 | - | 40,74 | 81,29 | 10,32 | 3,75 |
| Sweden | 6,37 | 2,92 | 2,53 | 3,70 | 3,81 | - | 25,73 | 25,74 | 1,54 | 0,34 |

Note: nd – not available.

Source: Eurostat (DOI: 10.2908/tour_occ_ninat).

**Table A.8.** Net occupancy rate of bed-places and bedrooms in hotels and similar accommodation (%)

| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EU - 27 | 55,72 | 57,22 | 58,93 | 59,86 | 60,11 | 37,26 | 42,69 | 54,78 | 59,22 | 59,92 |
| Euro Area | nd | nd | nd | nd | nd | nd | nd | 55,76 | 60,61 | 61,41 |
| Germany | 60,23 | 61,80 | 62,07 | 62,72 | 63,04 | 37,80 | 38,78 | 54,89 | 60,17 | 60,52 |
| Spain | 61,97 | 65,72 | 67,07 | 66,77 | 67,22 | 38,00 | 48,86 | 58,52 | 68,17 | 69,52 |
| Italy | 44,90 | 46,20 | 48,80 | 51,00 | 51,80 | 31,40 | 40,10 | 51,00 | 54,50 | 58,30 |
| Poland | 45,30 | 47,60 | 48,90 | 49,80 | 50,70 | 30,10 | 36,30 | 49,50 | 50,70 | 50,80 |
| Portugal | 48,20 | 53,24 | 56,98 | 56,98 | 58,98 | 30,11 | 38,33 | 57,76 | 61,60 | 62,46 |
| Sweden | 55,27 | 58,00 | 58,27 | 58,00 | 58,00 | 34,00 | 41,81 | 55,71 | 57,47 | 57,08 |

Note: nd – not available.

Source: Eurostat (DOI: 10.2908/tin00180).

**Table A.9.** Air Passenger Transport Growth Rate, by Reporting Country (%)

| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EU - 27 | 4,93 | 6,34 | 7,70 | 6,12 | 3,90 | - | 35,07 | 118,48 | 19,13 | 8,16 |
| Euro Area | nd | nd | nd | nd | nd | nd | nd | nd | nd | nd |
| Germany | 4,02 | 3,48 | 5,83 | 4,72 | 1,95 | - | 27,34 | 111,02 | 19,30 | 7,71 |
| Spain | 5,62 | 11,00 | 8,23 | 5,14 | 3,47 | - | 59,00 | 119,51 | 0,00 | 28,76 |
| Italy | 5,37 | 5,34 | 7,31 | 6,27 | 4,77 | - | 47,78 | 121,78 | 22,98 | 11,98 |
| Poland | 12,42 | 11,62 | 16,79 | 16,14 | 7,25 | - | 36,66 | 108,26 | 27,50 | 13,71 |
| Portugal | 10,58 | 13,68 | 16,47 | 7,02 | 7,82 | - | 35,04 | 128,95 | 19,43 | 4,73 |

Note: nd – not available.

Source: Authors' own work using data from Eurostat (DOI: 10.2908/avia_paoc).

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# THE SINO AVIATION DIPLOMACY ACROSS ASIA

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## Abstract

The Commercial Aircraft Corp of China (COMAC), a state-owned enterprise, has strategically positioned itself within the global aviation sector through the introduction of the ARJ21 regional jet and the C919 narrow-body aircraft. The inaugural commercial flight of the C919 in May 2023 positioned it in direct competition with the Boeing 737 Max and the Airbus A320. The utilization of aviation diplomacy by China, exemplified through COMAC's promotional activities in Asia, seeks to enhance its economic and diplomatic influence via collaboration in civil aviation. The qualitative study, employing a single case and documentary evidence, suggests that COMAC's initiatives extend beyond mere marketing efforts. The participation in the 2024 Singapore Air Show, along with subsequent demonstration visits to Laos and Malaysia, has resulted in significant international attention for its advertising campaign, leading to initial orders. The sales encompass the inaugural foreign delivery of the ARJ21 to TransNusa Airlines in Indonesia, as well as a significant agreement with GallopAir, based in Brunei, for the acquisition of 30 aircraft, which includes the first overseas purchase of the C919. The study indicates that the Civil Aviation Administration of China is actively participating in aviation diplomacy. This involves bilateral aviation safety arrangements, such as the Working Arrangement with Indonesia, as well as regulatory modifications in Brunei and Vietnam aimed at recognizing and adopting airworthiness standards. The diplomatic and regulatory initiatives are essential to address structural challenges, such as the market dominance of the Boeing-Airbus duopoly, the reliance of the C919's supply chain on Western suppliers for critical components, and the certification obstacles posed by the FAA and EASA. China is utilizing the aircraft produced by COMAC as instruments of diplomacy and commerce, thereby demonstrating its technological aspirations and reinforcing connections within Asia.

## Keywords

Aviation Diplomacy, Sino Aviation, Diplomacy, COMAC.

## Resumo

A Commercial Aircraft Corp of China (COMAC), uma empresa estatal, posicionou-se estrategicamente no setor da aviação global através do lançamento do jato regional ARJ21 e do avião de fuselagem estreita C919. O voo comercial inaugural do C919, em maio de 2023, colocou-o em concorrência direta com o Boeing 737 Max e o Airbus A320. A utilização da diplomacia aeronáutica pela China, exemplificada pelas atividades promocionais da COMAC na Ásia, visa reforçar a sua influência económica e diplomática através da colaboração na aviação civil. O estudo qualitativo, recorrendo a um caso único e a provas documentais, sugere que as iniciativas da COMAC vão além de meros esforços de marketing. A participação no Singapore Air Show de 2024, juntamente com visitas de demonstração subsequentes ao Laos

e à Malásia, resultou numa atenção internacional significativa para a sua campanha publicitária, conduzindo a encomendas iniciais. As vendas abrangem a entrega internacional inaugural do ARJ21 à TransNusa Airlines na Indonésia, bem como um acordo significativo com a GallopAir, sediada no Brunei, para a aquisição de 30 aeronaves, o que inclui a primeira compra no estrangeiro do C919. O estudo indica que a Administração da Aviação Civil da China está a participar ativamente na diplomacia aeronáutica. Isto envolve acordos bilaterais de segurança da aviação, tais como o Acordo de Trabalho com a Indonésia, bem como alterações regulamentares no Brunei e no Vietname destinadas a reconhecer e adotar normas de aeronavegabilidade. As iniciativas diplomáticas e regulamentares são essenciais para enfrentar desafios estruturais, tais como o domínio de mercado do duopólio Boeing-Airbus, a dependência da cadeia de abastecimento do C919 em fornecedores ocidentais para componentes críticos e os obstáculos de certificação impostos pela FAA e pela EASA. A China está a utilizar as aeronaves produzidas pela COMAC como instrumentos de diplomacia e comércio, demonstrando assim as suas aspirações tecnológicas e reforçando as ligações dentro da Ásia.

**Palavras-chave**

Diplomacia da Aviação, Aviação Chinesa, Diplomacia, COMAC.

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# THE SINO AVIATION DIPLOMACY ACROSS ASIA

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## Introduction

Aviation and diplomacy have had a certain degree of linked relationship. Aviation allows people to travel long distances swiftly, drastically altering the nature of diplomacy in the 20th century (Kobierecki, 2020). The aviation domain encompasses all elements related to flight and the aircraft industry. It has revolutionized global travel and transportation by making long-distance journeys that were once deemed impossible now achievable. Continuous advancements in aircraft technology are consistently pushing the limits of air travel and impacting a variety of industries around the globe.

The advancement of the aviation industry is not exclusively propelled by private businesses but also encompasses state-owned enterprises. Numerous states have founded national airlines and provided funding to local aircraft manufacturers to stimulate their economies and showcase their technological capabilities. The aviation sector experiences more government intervention than any other industry, which creates a significant burden despite the competitive nature of the global market. The combination of competition and government interference leads to a fragmented aviation industry (Chattopadhyay, 2015).

China serves as a prime illustration of state intervention within the aviation sector. Among emerging and newly industrialized nations, China boasts the largest aircraft industry in employment, heavily focused on military aircraft production. The majority of these aircraft are intended for domestic use. However, in the early 21st century, the Chinese government made a significant commitment to invest in the advancement of commercial jet aircraft (Eriksson, 2017).

Despite the dominance of foreign aviation manufacturers in the market, China aims to make a mark in the industry by pursuing the goal of producing its own aircraft. Since 2008, the state-owned Commercial Aircraft Corp of China (COMAC) has been working on developing the C919 jetliner, which is designed to compete with popular models like Boeing's 737 and the Airbus A320 (Bowerman, 2014). China is determined to retain its profitable large commercial airplane market and not allow foreign companies like Boeing and Airbus to dominate it, especially considering that China's own demand accounts for a significant portion of the global market. Similar to Airbus, China's entry into the industry will be facilitated by government support, and this development is anticipated to have significant consequences for both the United States and Europe (Levine, 2015).

Other than the C919 narrow-body jet, COMAC is also developing the ARJ21 regional jet.[1] The ARJ21 is China's first turbofan aircraft with fully autonomous intellectual property, accommodating 70-110 seats. It aims to connect central cities with neighboring mid-sized and small-sized cities through air routes (Xu, 2015). Since June 2016, COMAC has delivered a total of 117 ARJ21 aircraft to different airlines. A significant achievement was reached on 24 November 2023, as the regional jet ARJ21 exceeded 10 million passenger trips (Luo et al., 2024).

COMAC continues to face ongoing challenges with its ARJ21 and C919 aircraft. Chinese aircraft manufacturers have encountered significant challenges in obtaining certification for their commercial planes from both the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of the United States and the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). The absence of certification from these esteemed regulatory bodies poses a formidable obstacle for COMAC in its endeavor to market its aircraft internationally (Francis, 2016). Despite facing challenges, COMAC continues to promote the C919 and ARJ21 aircraft. The ARJ21 has attracted attention from countries outside of China, making it the first Chinese-made airliner to be used in international commercial flights (Bitzinger, 2010).

This paper focuses on China's aviation diplomacy through COMAC across Asia. China has been utilizing its state-owned aircraft manufacturer, COMAC, to strengthen ties with other Asian countries through partnerships and sales of civilian aircraft and regulatory framework. The aviation diplomacy demonstrated by COMAC also demonstrated how China is breaking through the challenges faced by its homegrown aircraft manufacturers.

## Literature Review

Previous research on how aviation diplomacy is used in terms of international relations and trade policy illustrates a multifaceted approach where air transport agreements serve as instruments for fostering bilateral and multilateral ties. Kobierecki (2020) provides a comprehensive article that offers a conceptual framework for analyzing the relationship between aviation and international relations. The importance of aviation in diplomacy is underscored by the substantial increase in air travel popularity over the past decades. Additionally, it is argued that aviation diplomacy warrants further exploration by scholars in the fields of diplomacy, international relations, and political science (Kobierecki, 2020). In terms of aviation diplomacy in Asia, Indriani (2021) posits that aviation diplomacy is instrumental in promoting ASEAN identity through the strategic use of air assets and infrastructure as mechanisms of soft power, manifesting in three distinct approaches. Initially, airlines acted as emblems of both national and regional identities. Secondly, air operations are employed to forge political connections, particularly in scenarios involving humanitarian efforts. Lastly, the establishment of air transportation networks and airports is crucial for facilitating cross-border mobility and enhancing regional connectivity.

Yang (2024) examines the significance of aviation diplomacy in the relationship between Belarus and China, highlighting its role in key agreements such as the Joint Statement on enhancing the comprehensive strategic partnership in the new era. Additionally, the

[1]In 2024, COMAC announced that the ARJ21 was renamed to C909 as the commercial name of the aircraft. In this paper, the aircraft will be referred to as the ARJ21.

creation of air routes connecting Belarus, China, and Russia is seen as a pivotal development. This interconnectivity not only represents active governmental collaboration within multilateral and bilateral contexts but also facilitates economic growth, tourism, and humanitarian efforts across these nations. Listianto (2024) explores the interconnection between aviation and tourism diplomacy, exemplified by AirAsia Indonesia's approach to what is termed "beyond state interactions." This strategy involves the use of special liveries on aircraft to advertise different tourist destinations within Indonesia. These liveries facilitate interactions that occur directly between AirAsia Indonesia and its customers, thereby promoting tourism through an innovative form of diplomatic engagement.

There is a lack of literature addressing aviation diplomacy concerning state-owned firms like COMAC, which promotes Chinese-manufactured aircraft. This gap underscores a substantial avenue for research on how state-sponsored enterprises such as COMAC utilize their products as instruments of diplomatic involvement via aviation.

## Aviation Diplomacy

Aviation diplomacy is used to bridge international relations and aviation. More accurately, it emerged as a field of study when scholars began observing the political aspects of the aviation industry. International aviation is more than just a mere challenge within a dynamic global economic framework; it represents a significant concern in the realm of international diplomacy. It influences governments' perceptions towards each other, shapes the perspectives of individuals regarding their own and foreign nations, and has far-reaching implications on the security measures that govern our lives (Lowenfeld, 1975). Aviation serves as a significant tool for nations to exert soft power. One illustration of this is how efficiently managed national airlines can enhance the international image of their respective countries. Moreover, aviation plays a pivotal role in enhancing soft power by bridging geographical gaps and fostering connections among individuals, societies, businesses, concepts, advancements, and prospects (McClory, 2014).

The concept of aviation diplomacy entails using commercial and general aviation activities to foster global collaboration and enhance relationships between nations. Aviation diplomacy plays a vital role in breaking down barriers and fostering greater unity among diverse populations and communities by facilitating air travel and cargo transportation along established flight routes. Aviation diplomacy is also known by various terms like "air diplomacy" or "aero diplomacy."

Aviation diplomacy represents the outcome and illustration of the diversification and democratization of diplomatic practices. It symbolizes a specific domain of diplomatic interaction – the sphere of global aviation, whose importance has been on the rise in recent years due to the expanding population of travelers. Additionally, it involves the participation of new diplomatic entities, specifically international aviation organizations or airlines (Kobierecki, 2020). Another term for aviation diplomacy, "air diplomacy," refers to the strategic utilization of airpower in nonviolent operations to prevent conflicts and bolster a nation's influence (Lowther, 2010). Another explanation about air diplomacy involves using elements of air power to strengthen foreign policy goals (Wijetunge & Wanasinghe, 2021). Countries utilize aviation diplomacy to establish a positive image globally through different diplomatic strategies. This can be accomplished

by leveraging national airlines, airports, and air shows. In essence, aviation diplomacy is intertwined with public diplomacy, utilizing soft power mechanisms to wield influence internationally (Kobierecki, 2020).

According to Kobierecki (2020), key indicators of aviation diplomacy include several strategic elements. Firstly, aviation serves as a foreign policy tool where governments leverage aviation agreements and logistical arrangements to influence diplomatic strategies. This includes negotiating bilateral air service agreements and manipulating flight routes to foster or strain international relationships. Secondly, aviation acts as a means of promoting national image. Airlines and airports are utilized to symbolize national identity and prestige, showcasing a nation's technological progress and cultural appeal. Lastly, aviation subjects such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Air Transport Association (IATA), and individual airlines engage as diplomatic actors. They participate in negotiations, set international standards, and embody quasi-diplomatic agents, thus extending their influence beyond commercial interests to broader political and diplomatic realms.

## Methods

This study utilized a qualitative methodology, employing a single case study approach to specifically examine China's aviation diplomacy through COMAC, the Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China. Qualitative research design, as outlined by Creswell and Creswell (2018), is used to deliver a thorough and in-depth analysis of social phenomena through meticulously examined qualitative data. The findings are presented as thorough and reliable narrative accounts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study examines documentary evidence, aligning with the assertion by Creswell and Creswell that qualitative inquiry requires the collection of various data types, including documents, to develop a thorough understanding of the subject.

A single case study approach was selected, as it allows an in-depth examination of a single instance to test theoretical explanations or identify causal factors within a specific real-world context. A single case could provide highly valid conceptual insights by accounting for the nuanced intricacies of various situational elements. Though only analyzing one case, meaningful conclusions may still be drawn about wider phenomena by retaining a comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics involved through an immersive investigation of that single instance. This approach holds the potential to offer rich conceptual backing alongside broader implications through a focused evaluation of one case's unique context (Curini & Franzese, 2020).

The case study focuses on COMAC's C919 narrow-body airliner and ARJ-21 program, examining how these initiatives may be leveraged to enhance China's diplomatic engagements and promote its aviation industry on the global stage. Data is gathered through a comprehensive documentary analysis of industry reports, news articles, and documents related to COMAC's efforts in international cooperation and the overseas marketing of the C919 and ARJ21. This approach aims to provide a thorough understanding of the strategic use of these aircraft programs in furthering China's diplomacy, highlighting its potential impact on international relations.

## Results and Discussions

### Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China (COMAC)

Around 2000, China began developing its commercial aircraft industry, driven by the rapidly growing civil aviation sector. Projections showed Chinese airlines would need about 8,700 aircraft between 2020 and 2040, making China the largest aircraft market globally. This led to a focus on domestic aircraft projects, financed and managed by Chinese entities. However, the lack of technological expertise and experience posed significant challenges, requiring substantial investment in knowledge and resources. Consequently, private enterprises were deterred, leaving State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) as the primary means to build an indigenous commercial aircraft industry (Chen et al., 2024). In 2008, the Chinese government initiated the establishment of COMAC as an autonomous entity by segregating the China subsidiaries from the Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC) and transferring the intellectual property related to China's regional jet, the ARJ-21. AVIC continues to hold a significant role in China's aerospace industry, serving as the country's primary military aircraft producer and a key supplier to COMAC (Zenglein & Sebastian, 2023).

### ARJ21 and C919

Initially revealed in 2002, the Advanced Regional Jet for the 21st Century (ARJ-21) represents a significant milestone in the State Council’s grander plan. This aircraft marks the first instance of China producing a passenger plane entirely of its own design, development, and manufacture (Stokes, 2009). As of November 24, 2023, the regional jet ARJ21 has surpassed 10 million passenger trips since June 2016, marking a significant milestone. COMAC has delivered 117 ARJ21 aircraft to various airlines, allowing them to operate on over 400 domestic and international routes spanning more than 140 cities. With nearly 1800 flights per week, the ARJ21 has become a prominent player in the aviation sector (Luo et al., 2024).

The ARJ21, a 90-seat regional jet, is a collaborative effort between COMAC and Bombardier, with its design based on the McDonnell-Douglas MD-90. The major subsystems of the ARJ21 were procured from suppliers in North America and Europe. Despite facing several delays, the delivery schedule was pushed from 2010 to 2011. Originally initiated by AVIC, the project was later handed over to COMAC when the latter took charge of commercial aircraft development. The future focus of COMAC on regional jets remains uncertain, as projections indicate limited growth in the Chinese regional jet market (Harrison, 2011). The ARJ21 has proven to be a successful aircraft, achieving several noteworthy milestones from 2022 to 2024. On December 18, 2022, the ARJ21-700 aircraft was delivered to TransNusa Airlines, an Indonesian carrier, as reported by China Daily. This delivery marked the inaugural entry of China's jet airliner into the international market (Wenqian, 2022). On April 18, 2023, as announced in a press release by China Aircraft Leasing Group Holdings Limited (CALC), TransNusa Airlines successfully commenced commercial operations with its first ARJ21 aircraft after meeting rigorous air operator certification requirements from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation of Indonesia (DGCA), and the inaugural flight from Jakarta to Bali has been

successfully completed (CALC, 2023). TransNusa Airlines received its second ARJ21 aircraft on June 10, 2023, per the COMAC agreement (Wu, 2023).

On September 22, 2023, Reuters reported that GallopAir, a newly established Brunei-based airline, plans to purchase 30 aircraft from COMAC. This deal includes the first overseas acquisitions of the C919 jet. The agreement comprises 15 orders for ARJ21 aircraft, including its freighter and business jet variants, as well as 15 orders for the C919 (Reuters, 2023). GallopAir is aiming to commence operations by the end of 2024, pending approval from Brunei's aviation regulator for the regional jet manufactured by COMAC, as per a separate report (Barrington et al., 2024).

The C919, a passenger aircraft developed by China as part of a national project, was created and manufactured by COMAC. Originally planned for completion in 2012, its inaugural flight was set for 2016. Despite these setbacks, COMAC is poised to become a formidable contender in the civil aviation market, challenging the dominance of Boeing and Airbus in the future. The C919, designed to accommodate between 150 and 170 passengers, is set to compete with the Boeing 737 and Airbus A320 in the aviation industry (Victoria & Petrescu, 2019). The C919 aircraft project is closely linked to the establishment of COMAC on May 11, 2008. The corporation was created with the primary objective of overseeing and managing the development of the C919. This initiative aimed to meet the anticipated demand for large passenger aircraft in China over the next twenty years (Levine, 2015).

These aircraft projects highlight China's progress in aerospace technology and its aspirations to compete globally. The ARJ21's success in domestic and limited international operations and the C919's potential to challenge established aircraft underscore China's strategic intent.

## COMAC's Into Global Competitive Landscape and Structural Challenges

The landscape of the global aviation market is promptly dominated by the duopoly of Boeing and Airbus. According to BOCO et al. (2025), Airbus and Boeing have maintained a lucrative duopoly in the commercial aircraft manufacturing industry for decades, together possessing around 99% of the global market share, as reported by the International Air Transport Association. The current stance is supported by significant fixed costs, rigorous regulatory barriers, and substantial market power, which together hinder new entrants such as COMAC, whose ability to compete internationally is limited by certification constraints (BOCO et al., 2025). Scholars have argued that the duopoly of these companies is reinforced by governmental assistance/subsidies, which Chasmar (2020) describes as aid. The substantial assistance provided to both Airbus and Boeing exemplifies the approaches employed by the United States and Europe in formulating industrial policy. In contrast to the direct and overt aid offered to Airbus by participating European governments, the aid provided to Boeing is marked by a multifaceted array of tax incentives, export assistance, procurement strategies, and various other forms of encouragement from different levels of government. Moreover, Truxal (2024) argued that state subsidies in the aircraft manufacturing sector have historically been a significant cause for international trade disputes, notably leading to allegations of support for Airbus and Boeing and resulting in prolonged proceedings before the World Trade Organization (WTO) Dispute Settlement Body. The dispute between the EU and the USA

over these aircraft subsidies was the longest-running in WTO history, lasting 17 years before an agreement was called in 2021. These state subsidies profoundly impact competition among aircraft manufacturers by enabling new entrants to challenge established market leaders, as demonstrated by Airbus's initial rise against Boeing's previously de facto monopoly during the 90s (Truxal, 2024).

Scholars also contend that the emergence of COMAC as a competitor to the duopoly of Airbus and Boeing signifies a new phase in the global aircraft manufacturing industry. Reshetnikova et al. (2024) argue that COMAC was specifically established by the Chinese government to develop domestic large passenger aircraft and directly challenge the long-standing duopoly of Airbus and Boeing. Its flagship C919 airliner, designed to compete with the Boeing 737 and Airbus A320 in the narrow-body market, along with the CR929 wide-body project, exemplifies China's ambition to secure a significant share of the global commercial aircraft market (Reshetnikova et al., 2024). Olienyk and Carbaugh (2011) similarly argued that, in the near future, the most significant threat to the Boeing-Airbus duopoly in the large aircraft sector, as well as the dominance of Bombardier and Embraer in the regional jet market, is likely to arise from China. The substantial rise in per capita income stemming from the swift economic growth in China is generating considerable demand for air travel domestically. In response, the Chinese government aims to satisfy a significant portion of this demand through the development and production of new regional jets and large commercial aircraft within the country (Olienyk & Carbaugh, 2011).

However, the entrance of COMAC into the global aircraft manufacturing industry also faced challenges. Verduyn (2021) argued that, given the substantial experience and scale advantages possessed by Airbus and Boeing in the production of commercial jets, it is unlikely that China will be able to manufacture an aircraft at a lower cost in the near future. There could be other political reasons behind this, like wanting to be free of foreign companies and a strong sense of national pride. This feeling is clear in the company's seemingly endless supply of money, but the fact that foreign suppliers are hesitant to give COMAC parts is likely to be a big problem. A related challenge to that faced by COMAC is also impacting its supply chain. Li (2018) asserts that the supply chain of COMAC is essential for surmounting the current blockade on core technologies imposed by Western nations, which limits access to vital components and expertise. At the same time, as a newcomer in the global aircraft industry, COMAC faces the challenging task of refining and developing its emerging supply chain systems to improve operational efficiency and reliability (Li, 2018).

According to Eriksson (2017), the commercial aircraft industry in China faces three primary challenges. Initially, there is a deficiency in indigenous technology and the pace of development. This is evidenced by the reliance on foreign technology and suppliers for critical systems, the presence of limited design capabilities, and project delays exemplified by the ARJ21's 14-year development period, which can be attributed to errors and a lack of experience. Furthermore, significant challenges exist regarding regulations and a deficiency of acceptance within the international market. The ARJ21 and C919, both designed in China, face significant challenges in obtaining international airworthiness certification from organizations such as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) or European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). This limitation implies that they can exclusively be marketed within China, thereby undermining their global credibility.

Ultimately, the industry is plagued by operational inefficiencies and inadequate management practices. This includes issues such as low productivity levels, an excessive workforce resulting from antiquated management styles, a deficiency in contemporary management and marketing skills, and elevated production costs attributed to taxes on imported components.

Zenglein and Sebastian (2023) also cite the Boeing-Airbus duopoly as a problem. In this scenario, China cannot encourage foreign enterprises to compete for technology. Export controls apply to many commercial aerospace technologies that can be used for civilian and military purposes. The C919's engine requires a US license, and other crucial systems may have similar requirements. This dilemma is exacerbated by US-China geopolitical competitiveness. Thus, foreign aerospace businesses are becoming more cautious about knowledge sharing and collaboration. Concerns about intellectual property threats and technology transfer costs drive this concern.

The C919's supply chain is predominantly dependent on Western technology (illustrated in table 1), as critical components such as the Leading Edge Aviation Propulsion (LEAP-1C) engine, fly-by-wire flight controls, and sophisticated avionics are sourced from American and European firms. Although Chinese companies primarily manufacture the aircraft structure and fuselage, they must collaborate or procure directly from established Western aerospace firms such as General Electric (GE), Honeywell, and Safran to acquire essential propulsion and navigation technology. This architectural reliance exposes the program to significant geopolitical risk, as potential export restrictions or sanctions could hinder access to the specialized components required for aircraft operation. The production feasibility of the C919 poses a challenge to China's strategic objective of attaining complete autonomy in the commercial aviation sector. The C919's ongoing production in China renders it less competitive on the worldwide market.

**Table 1.** Major Systems and Foreign Supplier Origins of the COMAC C919

| Component Category | Component Name | Main Supplier(s) | Country/Region of Origin |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Airframe** | Fly-by-wire Flight Control System | Honeywell Aerospace | US |
| | Fly-by-wire Actuation System | Parker Aerospace | US |
| | Landing Gear | Liebherr LAMC Aviation (JV: Liebherr & AVIC) | Europe and China |
| | Hydraulic Systems | Parker Aerospace; NEIAS Parker Aero Systems (JV) | US and China |
| | Wheels, Tires & Brakes | Honeywell Aerospace; Michelin | US |
| | Fuselage & Empennage | AVIC SAC; Jiangxi Hongdu; Chengdu Aircraft | China |
| **Avionics** | Cockpit Control Systems | Eaton Corporation | US |
| | Navigation & Display Systems | GE Aviation; Honeywell Aerospace | US |
| | Weather Radar & Sensors | Collins Aerospace | US |
| | Flight Recorders | GE Aviation Systems | US |
| **Power & Propulsion** | LEAP-1C Engine | CFM International (JV: GE and Safran) | US and Europe |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | FADEC (Engine Controls) | JV: GE and FADEC International | US and Europe |
| | Auxiliary Power Units (APU) | Honeywell Aerospace | US |
| | Thrust Reversers & Nacelles | Nexcelle (JV: Safran & ST Engineering) | Europe and Asia Pacific |
| | Fuel Systems | Parker Aerospace | US |
| **Materials** | Carbon-Reinforced Composites | Hexcel Composites | US |
| | Aluminum Plate | Aleris Rolled Products | Europe |
| | Titanium Aluminide Alloy | Alcoa Corporation | US |

Source: Airframer (www.airframer.com), compiled by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2020. https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/201203_Kennedy_Fig2B_Suppliers_List_v2.pdf

## COMAC's Promotion

In 2024, COMAC commenced its international promotional campaign for the ARJ21 and C919 aircraft, signifying a pivotal advancement in its efforts to penetrate the global commercial aviation industry. This ambitious campaign commenced with presentations at notable international airshows, including the 2024 Singapore Airshow. Two C919 and three ARJ21 aircraft manufactured by COMAC participated in the Singapore Airshow held at the Changi Exhibition Centre from February 20 to 25, 2024. COMAC indicated its intention to leverage the event for promotional activities aimed at expanding its client and partner network (Shine, 2024). During the Airshow, COMAC also garnered significant attention with the acquisition of new orders for its aircraft models. Reuters reported that Tibet Airlines and Henan Civil Aviation Development and Investment Group placed substantial orders for COMAC aircraft. Tibet Airlines finalized a purchase agreement for forty C919 single-aisle planes and ten ARJ21 regional jets, while Henan Civil Aviation secured an order for six ARJ21 aircraft (Barrington et al., 2024). Prior to the Singapore Airshow, the C919 made its inaugural flight outside of mainland China during a media event. COMAC has positioned the C919 as a direct competitor to the industry-leading A320 and 737 MAX models produced by Airbus and Boeing, respectively (Al Jazeera, 2024).

Following their debut at the Singapore Airshow 2024, the C919 and ARJ21 aircraft embarked on a regional demonstration tour. The aircraft arrived in Laos on March 4, 2024, for static displays and flight demonstrations. Prior to their arrival in Laos, the jetliners had made a stopover in Vietnam after departing Singapore (Xinhua, 2024). On March 13, 2024, COMAC conducted static displays and demonstration flights of the C919 and ARJ21 aircraft at Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Selangor, Malaysia. This event served as a platform for COMAC to showcase its aircraft and engage with potential customers (CGTN, 2024).

COMAC's participation in various airshows held in several countries, including Singapore, Laos, and Malaysia, serves as a promotional effort to introduce its two products. This strategic involvement in international events underscores COMAC's commitment to expanding its market presence and showcasing its technological advancements to a global audience market. By engaging in these airshows, COMAC aims to enhance its brand recognition and establish itself as a competitive player in the international

aerospace industry. These events provide a platform for the company to demonstrate the capabilities and innovations of its aircraft, fostering potential partnerships and customer interest. Furthermore, such activities align with COMAC's broader objectives of penetrating new markets and reinforcing its reputation as a leading aircraft manufacturer.

Through COMAC's engagement with various countries in Asia via partnership agreements and flight programs, such as flight demonstrations at Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Selangor, Malaysia, and Laos, as well as marketing campaigns at the Singapore Airshow, the company effectively promotes its C919 and ARJ21 aircraft. The use of these aircraft as aerial displays, including a C919 test flight on the first day of the Airshow, highlights COMAC's commitment to showcasing its technological advancements and expanding its market presence. TransNusa is the first airline to operate the ARJ21 outside of China, and this also demonstrates COMAC's active engagement with Asian countries. Such collaborations not only enhance COMAC's presence in the regional aviation market but also demonstrate the company's ability to forge significant international partnerships.

Therefore, all efforts undertaken by COMAC related to its two aircraft products, the C919 and ARJ21, represent a form of aviation cooperation aimed at expanding its economic reach. These initiatives, including participation in international airshows, partnership agreements, and flight demonstrations, are strategic moves to enhance COMAC's visibility and credibility in the global aerospace market. By promoting its aircraft through these channels, COMAC not only strengthens its market presence but also fosters international collaborations that contribute to its economic growth. This approach highlights the company's commitment to leveraging aviation cooperation as a vital tool for achieving broader economic objectives and establishing itself as a key player in the global aviation industry.

## China Aviation Diplomacy through COMAC and Bilateral Agreement

In addition to its economic objectives, COMAC's participation in various airshows held in the aforementioned countries can be examined from the perspective of diplomacy, specifically aviation diplomacy. By engaging in these international events, COMAC not only aims to promote its aircraft but also seeks to strengthen diplomatic ties and foster cooperative relationships with other nations. This form of aviation diplomacy enables COMAC to showcase its technological advancements and manufacturing capabilities, thereby enhancing its reputation and influence in the global aerospace sector. Moreover, this participation highlights the strategic significance of utilizing aviation platforms to attain wider diplomatic objectives, reinforcing COMAC's position as a pivotal entity in global aviation relations.

The role of aviation is vital in strengthening soft power, as it facilitates the overcoming of geographical barriers and promotes interactions among people, communities, and enterprises. concepts, innovations, and prospects (McClory, 2014). COMAC capitalizes on this capability by participating in international airshows and forming strategic alliances. Participation in these airshows allows COMAC to overcome geographical barriers and promote interactions among people, communities, enterprises, ideas, innovations, and opportunities.

Aviation diplomacy encompasses the engagement of emerging diplomatic actors, particularly international aviation organizations and airlines (Kobierecki, 2020). As airlines become crucial actors in aviation diplomacy, the inclusion of the ARJ21 in TransNusa's fleet is particularly significant, as it demonstrates COMAC's growing international recognition. Furthermore, orders from Tibet Airlines and Henan Civil Aviation Development and Investment Group during the Singapore Airshow 2024 underscore COMAC's expanding influence in the global aviation market. These developments reflect the company's strategic efforts to establish itself as a leading player in the international aerospace industry, enhancing diplomatic relations through aviation.

COMAC's involvement in the Singapore Airshow 2024 underscores its strategic focus on aviation diplomacy. Aviation diplomacy involves the use of diplomatic tactics by nations to cultivate a favorable global reputation, often through the utilization of national airlines, airports, and airshows. Through the display of its aircraft at major international gatherings, COMAC not only boosts its brand visibility but also showcases its technological progress to a worldwide audience, a crucial aspect of public diplomacy within the realm of aviation diplomacy.

As a result of aviation diplomacy efforts through airshows and demonstration flights across Asian nations, notable achievements have been made. For instance, in Vietnam, COMAC has established a successful partnership with VietJet, resulting in the signing of contracts for a wet lease (both the aircraft and their crews) of two C909 jets from Chengdu Airlines, effective from January 15, 2025 (Tu, 2024). Following this agreement, a report by Reuters in January 2025 indicated that the Vietnamese government announced its intention to eliminate regulatory barriers to facilitate the operation of aircraft manufactured by the Chinese state-owned planemaker COMAC within the country. Deputy Prime Minister Tran Hong Ha tasked the Ministry of Transport with reviewing and amending existing regulations to allow for the operation of COMAC’s aircraft. This directive was issued subsequent to a meeting in Hanoi between Deputy Prime Minister Ha and COMAC Board Director Tan Wangeng, as stated in a government release (Reuters, 2025).

Beyond the efforts of COMAC to expand the operational footprint of its aircraft, China has simultaneously advanced a parallel regulatory diplomacy strategy through the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC). To facilitate the entry and sustained operation of Chinese-manufactured aircraft in partner states such as Vietnam, Brunei, and Indonesia, the CAAC has pursued bilateral aviation safety arrangements centered on mutual recognition, validation, and acceptance of airworthiness standards.

An examination of the recent regional aviation regulations presented in Table 2 indicates that the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) is gradually being integrated into foreign legal frameworks. This indicates a significant acknowledgment by regulatory bodies, facilitating the movement of aircraft across national borders. Bilateral validation mechanisms, exemplified by the Working Arrangement between Indonesia's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC), facilitate the acceptance of aircraft by minimizing redundant certification efforts and designating compliance findings in accordance with a mutually agreed-upon List of Differences. The national airworthiness standards, exemplified by Brunei's BAR 8 Part 21, indicate that the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) is recognized as an

acceptable National Aviation Authority of the State of Design. The aforementioned standards serve to validate Type Certificates and Export Statements of Airworthiness that are issued by the CAAC. The regulations established by customs support these structural airworthiness standards. For instance, Vietnam's Decree 89/2025/ND-CP explicitly permits the importation of aircraft that possess a Type Certificate issued or validated by the CAAC. The implementation of these procedures establishes a unified framework of regulations governing import operations. Their scope encompasses unilateral export airworthiness acceptances, customs updates, and targeted bilateral validations.

**Table 2.** Aviation Regulatory Diplomacy: Mechanisms for COMAC Aircraft Acceptance in Asia

| **Regulation or Agreement** | **Issuing Authority** | **Legal Basis** | **Mechanism of Recognition** | **Implication for Chinese Aircraft** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **BAR 8 Part 21 Certification of Aircraft, Parts and Appliances (Version 02)** | Brunei Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) | Civil Aviation Act and Civil Aviation Regulations (CAP 290) | Type Certificate Acceptance Report: Acceptance of Export Statement of Airworthiness. | Grants Chinese aircraft with CAAC Type Certificates a pathway to obtain a Type Certificate Acceptance Report and Certificate of Airworthiness in Brunei. |
| **Working Arrangement on Type Validation and Continued Airworthiness for ARJ21 Airplane** | Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Indonesia & Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) | Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed May 22, 2000 | Bilateral Type Certificate Validation based on a List of Differences (LOD), delegating compliance findings to the CAAC. | Streamlines the validation of the ARJ21-700 by minimizing duplicative certification efforts, creating a practical framework for the entry of COMAC aircraft into Indonesia. |
| **Decree 89/2025/ND-CP (Legal Updates April 2025)** | Government of Vietnam (Customs) | Decree 89/2025/ND-CP | Customs and trade facilitation measures permitting aircraft importation based on validated type certificates. | Provides a direct regulatory and customs pathway for Chinese-manufactured aircraft (such as the C919) to clear Vietnamese customs legally, facilitating market entry. |

Source: Compiled by Author

China has employed aviation regulatory diplomacy as a means to promote the sale of its commercial aircraft to various nations. Strategic bilateral agreements and sector-specific laws are used in this method. Brunei unilaterally adopting CAAC design guidelines and Vietnam simplifying customs operations demonstrate Chinese aviation's credibility. China uses validation procedures like the Indonesia-CAAC Working Arrangement to bring aircraft like the ARJ21 into international markets to increase its worldwide presence. This anticipated growth allows CAAC's technical compliance results to be used immediately for foreign regulatory approval and export airworthiness acceptance, easing cross-border commercial operations. In conclusion, bilateral technical certification and effective

customs facilitation show that targeted regulatory collaboration boosts China's aerospace sector and market access.

## Strategic Openings for China in a Disrupted Duopoly

For several decades, the global commercial aviation market has been characterized by a stable duopoly between Boeing and Airbus. The narrow-body aircraft produced by these manufacturers, particularly the 737 and A320 families, have constituted the majority of airline fleets across the globe. However, this duopolistic order has recently faced pressures from various sources, calling into question its perceived invulnerability. The Boeing 737 MAX program has faced significant challenges, including the repercussions of two tragic crashes, as well as persistent regulatory and production difficulties. In early 2024, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) took the step of grounding specific 737-9 MAX jets following an incident involving a mid-air panel. This action was accompanied by the implementation of rigorous inspections and limitations on production expansion, reflecting an intensified focus on safety oversight. Consequently, Boeing is required to address quality-control concerns while simultaneously resuming and adjusting production levels under heightened scrutiny. (Federal Aviation Administration, 2024) The occurrence of concurrent labor disruptions, notably a prolonged strike extending into late 2024, has resulted in additional delays in the resumption of production for the best-selling aircraft. This situation highlights the diminishing operational momentum of Boeing (CNBC, 2024). In the interim, Airbus's flagship A320neo, representing the other segment of the duopoly, has encountered significant production and delivery challenges. Ongoing supply-chain bottlenecks, particularly concerning engine and aerostructure shortages, have compelled Airbus to adjust its forecast for deliveries in 2024 downward and to postpone its timeline for achieving target production rates. Additionally, sustained pressures on monthly outputs and continuous quality inspections of A320 panels have contributed to delays and raised concerns within the industry (Meier, 2024; Reid, 2024). The simultaneous challenges encountered by both manufacturers—regulatory and production constraints at Boeing, coupled with supply-chain and quality issues at Airbus—diminish the previously regarded strong duopoly and highlight the fundamental structural weaknesses within the global narrow-body aircraft supply system.

The disruption of the narrow-body market following program-level crises and supply chain constraints produced measurable operational and financial stress within the Airbus–Boeing duopoly. Prolonged groundings, regulatory production caps, and engine-related bottlenecks translated into delivery backlogs, rising costs, and heightened uncertainty for airlines dependent on predictable fleet expansion cycles.

Between late 2018 and early 2019, events involving Boeing 737 MAX airplanes in Ethiopia and Indonesia led to extensive worldwide scrutiny of U.S. aviation supervision. Following these occurrences, a number of foreign governments, including the geopolitical competitor China and the close ally the United Kingdom, immediately halted operations of the American-made aircraft, rerouting flights of the 737 MAX from British airspace. The swift international response contrasted sharply with Boeing's and the FAA's original response, which was perceived as vague and ambivalent, possibly reflecting a reluctance to take on a major U.S. company. Two days later than other nations, the Federal Aviation

Administration finally grounded the world's fleet of 737 MAX airplanes, a startling delay that demonstrated a decline in confidence in the US aviation regulatory system (Almond, 2019).

**Graph 1.** Boeing 737 MAX Total Quantity of Orders (2018 - 2025)




Source: Boeing, Orders and Deliveries. https://www.boeing.com/commercial (compiled by author)

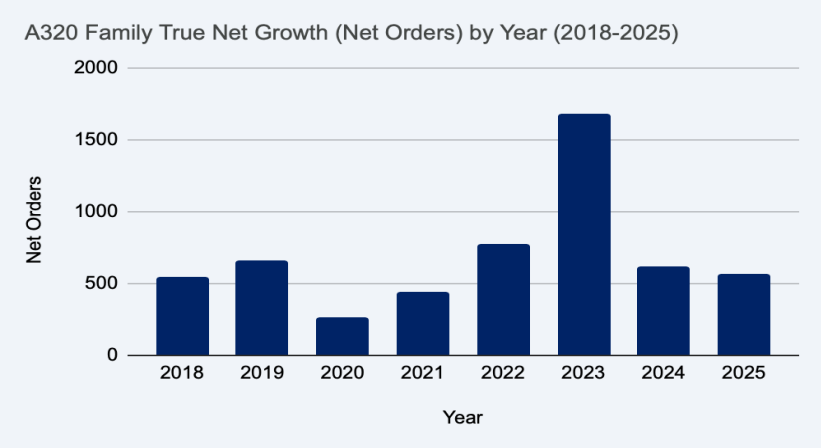
Graph 1 shows how many orders there are for the Boeing 737 MAX in total. The big drop in orders from 2019 to 2020 is a direct result of the loss of trust that followed the two tragic 737 MAX crashes and the grounding of the planes around the world. The big drop in the number of orders shows how much financial and operational stress Boeing is under because of regulatory scrutiny and production delays. Fang (2020) posited that, in this context, a significant window of opportunity has emerged. As Boeing experiences a decline in its market share, it is not solely Airbus that occupies this void; rather, it is non-Western manufacturers with their developing products that are increasingly filling the gap (Fang, 2020).

In contrast, for Airbus, the years 2023 and 2025 presented a set of challenges for the A320 aircraft. In July 2023, RTX Corporation announced a significant manufacturing defect associated with its Pratt & Whitney Geared Turbofan (GTF) engines, particularly the PW1100G-JM model utilized in the Airbus A320neo family. The recall was prompted by the identification of microscopic contaminants in the powder metal utilized in the production of high-pressure turbine disks from 2015 to 2021. This condition has the potential to lead to premature micro-cracking and, ultimately, uncontained engine failure (Walker, 2023). The press release issued by RTX indicates that this uncommon condition in powder metal specifically affects the PW1100 GTF engines, which are utilized in the A320neo aircraft. This situation necessitates expedited inspections and the formulation of a fleet management plan. This plan projects an estimated 600 to 700 additional engine removals for shop visits from 2023 to 2026, predominantly occurring in 2023 and early 2024. This will result in a notable rise in the number of aircraft grounded within the GTF-powered A320 fleet (RTX, 2023).

In the year 2025, Airbus acknowledged a significant challenge related to its A320 Family aircraft, specifically regarding the potential for intense solar radiation to compromise data that is essential for flight control systems. This matter impacts a considerable number of

operational aircraft, leading Airbus to urge operators to undertake immediate precautionary measures. The implementation of available software and/or hardware protection through an Alert Operators Transmission (AOT) is being recommended, which will be further supported by an Emergency Airworthiness Directive from EASA. Airbus recognizes that the implementation of these essential recommendations will result in operational disruptions for both passengers and customers (Airbus, 2025). It has been reported that approximately 6,000 A320 aircraft may be impacted due to this issue (Leggett, 2025).

**Graph 2.** A320 Family Net Orders (2018 - 2025)

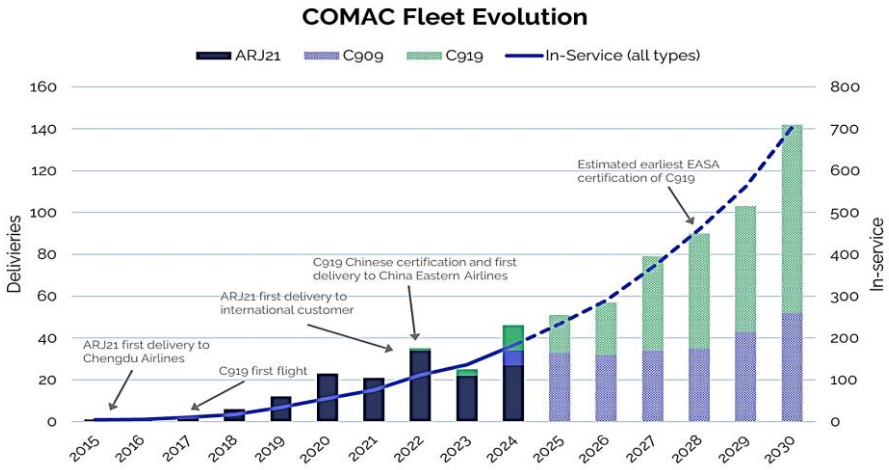



Source: Airbus, Orders and Deliveries https://www.airbus.com/en/products-services/commercial-aircraft/orders-and-deliveries (compiled by author)

Between the years 2023 and 2025, significant and cumulative technical and supply chain challenges impacted the net orders for the Airbus A320 family, as illustrated in Graph 2. The significant decline observed post-2023 can be attributed to RTX Corporation's disclosure in July 2023 regarding a manufacturing flaw in the Pratt & Whitney Geared Turbofan (GTF) engine. The prompt removal and servicing of between 600 and 700 A320neo aircraft engines from 2023 to 2026 resulted in significant groundings and delays in deliveries. In 2025, Airbus recognized a significant concern regarding elevated solar radiation, which heightened operational uncertainty by jeopardizing the data integrity of the A320 Family flight control systems. This situation poses a risk to 6,000 operational aircraft, necessitating immediate precautions and the issuance of an Emergency Airworthiness Directive. The simultaneous occurrence of significant crises concerning engine reliability, flight safety, and regulatory compliance places the company in a position of operational and reputational risk. This led airlines to decrease their new orders, thereby contributing to the decline in the net order total for the years 2023 to 2025. The disruption in the duopoly of Boeing and Airbus concerning narrow-body aircraft presents a strategic opportunity for China to promote its domestically manufactured C919 and ARJ21 jets, thereby positioning COMAC as a viable alternative in the market. The current climate of increased uncertainty, coupled with extended delivery backlogs experienced by industry leaders, presents a pivotal opportunity for the Chinese state-owned enterprise to secure a substantial share of the global market. A report by

International Business Aviation (IBA) indicates that the C919 and C909 are projected to remain particular competitors, constituting approximately 2% of the global fleet by 2030. However, their introduction signifies a notable beginning in contesting the duopoly held by Airbus and Boeing. It is anticipated that, within the domestic market, COMAC's share of new narrow body deliveries to Chinese operators will increase significantly, reaching around 65% by the year 2030. In the short term, COMAC is solidifying its presence within China and is poised to expand judiciously into regional markets, leveraging the C909 as a validated exportable product. Nonetheless, the long-term strategy for the C919 is contingent upon obtaining international certifications such as those from EASA, which are not expected to be achieved before 2028. Should EASA certification be attained and the C929 widebody commence operations as scheduled in the early 2030s, COMAC aspires to evolve into a credible competitor across multiple segments, bolstered by political support and strategic alliances to advance its global objectives (IBA, 2025). According to graph 3, IBA forecasts that COMAC will increase its aircraft delivery rate to 145 per year by 2030, indicating consistent advancement in China's goal to develop an independent commercial aviation industry. IBA's Insight platform indicate that COMAC is projected to deliver 50 aircraft in 2025, increasing to 57 in 2026, 79 in 2027, and approximately 90 in 2028, ultimately reaching 145 by the conclusion of the decade. The C919 narrow body program will predominantly drive deliveries, complemented by the ongoing production of the C909 regional jet and the advancement of the future C929 widebody aircraft (IBA, 2025). The analysis of the forecast and conditions surrounding duopoly disruption indicates that COMAC possesses the potential to secure a substantial share of the global narrow-body market, especially within Asia, by providing an alternative to the problematic Boeing 737 MAX and the supply-constrained Airbus A320 Family. The strategic opportunity enables the Chinese state-owned enterprise to expedite its delivery timeline, with projections indicating an output of 145 aircraft annually by 2030, primarily propelled by the C919 program.

**Graph 3.** COMAC Fleet Evolution




Source: IBA. (2025, September 17). *COMAC Aircraft Programmes - Status & Outlook*. International Business Aviation (IBA) Group. https://www.iba.aero/resources/articles/comac-aircraft-programmes-status-outlook/

## Conclusions

The study findings indicate that the Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China (COMAC), functioning as a state-owned enterprise, is instrumental in China's aviation diplomacy strategy across Asia. This approach utilizes the C919 and ARJ21 aircraft programs as instruments for fostering economic growth in China and enhancing its global influence. The primary method of implementing this plan involves extensive advertising efforts, which encompass participation in significant events such as the Singapore Airshow 2024, as well as conducting demonstration trips in Laos, Vietnam, and Malaysia. The aforementioned initiatives have yielded tangible outcomes, exemplified by TransNusa in Indonesia utilizing the ARJ21 for its inaugural international operation. This marks the inaugural instance of a Chinese-manufactured aircraft being utilized beyond the borders of China. Furthermore, airlines such as GallopAir in Brunei and VietJet in Vietnam have made substantial future orders. The aforementioned results illustrate China's strategic utilization of its expanding aerospace sector to enhance its international relationships and bolster its increasing influence within the global commercial aviation market.

China has employed aviation diplomacy alongside direct sales and marketing initiatives. This is governed by regulations established by the Civil Aviation Administration of China. This entails establishing bilateral aviation safety agreements with Indonesia and Brunei to mutually agree upon and accept standards pertaining to airworthiness. Regulatory diplomacy deals with the structural problem that comes from the fact that the FAA and EASA do not give international certification. In conclusion, the integrated approach that combines COMAC's commercial promotion efforts with the regulatory initiatives of the CAAC establishes civil aviation cooperation as an essential means for China to demonstrate its technological capabilities, soft power, and geopolitical influence in the Asian landscape.

Latecomer powers like COMAC have a strategic opportunity as the Boeing–Airbus duopoly in global commercial aviation faces structural pressure. The Boeing 737 MAX crisis, supply chain interruptions, and certification delays have exposed Western-centered aerospace order weaknesses. China has strategically seen this as a geopolitical turning point, not just a market fluctuation. Beijing is promoting the C919 and ARJ21 through commercial promotion and regulatory diplomacy to present its aircraft sector as an industrial alternative and a normative challenger to certification hierarchies. China is using aviation as a tool of techno-industrial statecraft to reshape global aviation governance, not only for market dominance. COMAC becoming a credible competitor therefore signals more than competitive diversification—it represents a gradual redistribution of technological legitimacy and geopolitical influence within the international civil aviation system.

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# THE CYRUS CYLINDER. A CORNERSTONE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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## Abstract

This research examines the content of the Cyrus Cylinder and its relevance for the development and interpretation of the concept of human rights. Through a parallel analysis, it assesses the relationship between the cylinder and legal instruments embodied in human rights declarations, agreements, and treaties over a period of two and a half millennia, culminating in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. By reviewing academic and scholarly literature on the history of the Achaemenid Empire and the policies that shaped the reign of Cyrus the Great, the study addresses the question of whether human rights can be meaningfully associated with the act of carving a cylinder that once regulated aspects of life within a diverse imperial context. Drawing on historical sources, the analysis suggests that the ideas reflected in the Cyrus Cylinder can be situated within broader Mesopotamian governance traditions, rather than understood as a singular point of origin. An examination of the cylinder's content alongside Cyrus' governance policies further highlights the limitations of these early normative concepts, as well as the political and administrative motivations underlying the creation of this declaration.

## Keywords

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Magna Carta; the Declaration of Independence; the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen; the Bill of Rights.

## Resumo

Esta investigação examina o conteúdo do Cilindro de Ciro e a sua relevância para o desenvolvimento e a interpretação do conceito de direitos humanos. Através de uma análise paralela, avalia a relação entre o cilindro e os instrumentos jurídicos consagrados em declarações, acordos e tratados de direitos humanos ao longo de um período de dois milénios e meio, culminando na Declaração Universal dos Direitos Humanos. Ao analisar a literatura académica e científica sobre a história do Império Aqueménida e as políticas que moldaram o reinado de Ciro, o Grande, o estudo aborda a questão de saber se os direitos humanos podem ser significativamente associados ao ato de esculpir um cilindro que outrora regulava aspetos da vida num contexto imperial diversificado. Com base em fontes históricas, a análise sugere que as ideias refletidas no Cilindro de Ciro podem ser situadas no âmbito de tradições de governação mesopotâmicas mais amplas, em vez de serem entendidas como um ponto de origem singular. Uma análise do conteúdo do cilindro, a par das políticas de governação de Ciro, destaca ainda mais as limitações destes conceitos normativos primitivos, bem como as motivações políticas e administrativas subjacentes à criação desta declaração.

**Palavras-chave**

Declaração Universal dos Direitos Humanos; Magna Carta; Declaração de Independência; Declaração dos Direitos do Homem e do Cidadão; Carta dos Direitos.

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# THE CYRUS CYLINDER. A CORNERSTONE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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## Introduction

Human rights have evolved over thousands of years. Although they were not formally recognised for long periods, they nevertheless existed and, in rare instances, were legally articulated even in ancient times. One of the most notable examples relates to the Cyrus cylinder, which once served as an instrument for the establishment of basic human rights. The practice of these rights, as today, depended to a large extent on the system of governance and political will shaped by existing interests. Nevertheless, we are witnessing that in the 21st century, human rights are a daily struggle for their position as the basic premises of public policy. An important argument for their realization is the reliance on historical heritage, which was recognized by the United Nations system in 1971, by ceremoniously taking overand presenting a copy of the cylinder as a forerunner of human rights.

Opinions about the cylinder as a true forerunner of human rights are divided, taking into account theirexistence in the reigns that preceded Cyrus the Great. The view expressed in this study relies on the thesis that, despite the existence of basic human rights in the pre-Cyrus period, they first gained para- legal force with the spread of the Cyrus' declaration throughout the Achaemenid Empire, carved on a clay cylinder in the 6th century BC. Therefore, the aim of this research is to prove the connection between the cylinder and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, through a parallel analysis of legal instruments. To this end, it seeks to identify the human rights declared in the time of Cyrus theGreat, as well as to provide an overview of the legal foundations of human rights in the interim periodto their global consensus in the 20th and 21st centuries. In more precise terms, this analysis does not seek to provide an exhaustive genealogy of human rights, but rather to highlight selected normative milestones that illustrate the longue durée of human rights thought.

Contemporary scholarship increasingly cautions against treating human rights as a timeless or linear concept. Rather than emerging fully formed, human rights have evolved through historically contingent processes shaped by political power, cultural negotiation, and normative reinterpretation. As Kundal (2023) notes, early articulations of justice, tolerance, and protection, while lacking the legal universality of modern human rights regimes, nevertheless constituted foundational moral frameworks that later traditions could draw upon. From this perspective, ancient texts such as the Cyrus Cylinder should

not be read as modern rights instruments, but as early normative expressions that contributed to the long genealogy of human rights thought.

The subject is examined by conducting qualitative research, using secondary sources and reviewing available literature on the history of Persia and the development of human rights to date. Sources

include scientific papers, declarations, agreements and treaties on human rights, publications of international organizations, as well as documented records of the British Museum, which houses the

Cyrus Cylinder since its discovery in the 19th century. Academic institutions, including the faculties of history in Serbia, Montenegro and Austria, as well as the Cultural Center of the Islamic Republic of Iran, were reached to collect research material, while certain parts of the literature were also found in the US Library of Congress.

In the following, the research is displayed in three parts:

1) Overview of the Persian history and human rights in the era of Cyrus the Great.
2) Parallels between the Cyrus cylinder and the subsequent legislation on human rights.
3) Conclusions based on collected evidence.

## Human rights in the era of Cyrus the Great

Human rights are historically associated with the abolition of slavery, realization of women's rights and fight against racism, as some of the most prominent examples. The development of the concept of human rights however, stretches through thousands of years, and today it includes economic, social, cultural, civil, political and other human rights. Fundamental human rights were globally established by a joint declaration of the member states of the United Nations system in 1948. The declaration is stated as universal, which means that it applies to all countries of this world, *i.e.* that the indicated human rights represent the basic rights of all people, regardless of the system of government, nation or culture to which they belong.

The exact origin of human rights is difficult to determine. It is known that certain rights, today recognized as natural rights, have existed for millennia, notably the rights to life and freedom. However, history records an immeasurable number of examples of violations of these rights, so the cases of their realization were documented as features of the time. The reason for their record often implied the establishment of political power, but over time it acquired a different meaning. Since the exercise of fundamental rights is largely dependent on the system of government, their development has been dynamic. Accordingly, references to the historical existence of such rights have recurrently informed subsequent efforts to secure freedom. On the other hand, the records served the new rulers to gain the support of the people and strengthen their own position, as well as to secure the borders of the empire.

One such example refers to Cyrus the Great, an ancient ruler, whose existence was one of the turning points in the social development of future civilizations. Cyrus the Great was the king of Persia, who ruled in the period from 559-530 BC in the vast territories of

Mesopotamia. Unlike his predecessors, he managed to expand the Persian territories to the size of an imposing multiethnic empire. He cultivated a favourable reputation following the conquest of Babylon in 539 BC, entering the city with his army and consolidating power without open conflict. Even today, the peaceful way of taking over Babylonian territory is portrayed by a divine act. Cyrus the Great himself encouraged such a narrative. Namely, historical records speak of the previous dissatisfaction of the people who lived under Nabonidus, based on religious exclusivity, cultural intolerance and the decline of the general quality of life.

The time of Cyrus' reign is known as a period of relative peace, tolerance and freedom. Wars did exist, predominantly outside their own borders for the purpose of expanding territories, while the goal of suppressing internal unrest was mainly to establish peaceful coexistence of different peoples in the conquered territories. Whether peace was the principle by which Cyrus was morally guided leaves much room for debate. However, it is clear that peace also served a political purpose. The cohesion of different cultures was possible only with mutual respect, since the alternative way of governing under Cyrus' predecessor Nabonidus proved unsuccessful. There is no doubt that the dissatisfaction of the people with the rule of Nabonidus contributed to the peaceful conquest of Babylon, since the people were eager for change, and Cyrus propagated exactly the changes they needed. Yet, in order to maintain rule over the whole empire and establish peaceful coexistence, Cyrus had to spread the principles of his conquests and convince the peoples of the value of the changes he was bringing.

Records were a suitable means of propaganda. In the 6th century BC, carving clay cylinders was a well-known way of recording official texts. They were used to describe rulers and the living conditions created during their existence, serving the rulers as their own homage while securing respect from future generations. They were also used to convey proclamations and stories of war successes. Cyrus used this remedy for both purposes. It is believed that a few years after the conquest of Babylon and the suppression of rebellions in the newly conquered territories, Cyrus declared his power on the cylinder, preaching the story of his success and manner of rule. He stated that the god Marduk was responsible for his success, choosing him to establish a universal empire. From the very beginning, he advocated those values that were threatened during the time of his predecessor. To that end, he abolished slavery and freed the peoples who in turn glorified his name; he returned the gods to the temples and the people to their homelands; he allowed religious freedoms and tolerated cultural differences of the conquered peoples; he rebuilt the destroyed temples and provided the infrastructure for a dignified life.

The declaration was written in 45 lines on a clay cylinder, in Babylonian script. Pretty tactically, it begins by presenting Nabonidus as a person who is unfit to rule Babylonia. The following describes the unfavourable conditions of the previous reign and the wrath of the god Marduk, who led to the removal of Nabonidus and the appointment of Cyrus as universal ruler, thus justifying his military campaigns. Then the enthusiasm of the conquered peoples and the peaceful surrender of the territory to his authority were presented, thus creating the narrative of a moral being, chosen by the deity to save the oppressed peoples. In the following, peace and protection of the well-being of Babylon and its cult centres were guaranteed, thus building its own security and political stability, suppressing the people's fears of a bad future that would incite them to rebellion. Cyrus

then proclaimed the return of the gods and their believers to their dwelling places, thus bringing things back to normal and concluding that everything in the empire was in order. The concluding sentences focus on Cyrus building in Babylon, providing what the United Nations system would define as "human right to adequate housing".

Scholars have rightly pointed out that the Cyrus Cylinder belongs to the broader Mesopotamian tradition of royal inscriptions, which often served legitimising and propagandistic purposes. However, as Sander (2016) argues, what distinguishes the Cyrus Cylinder is not its form, but its content—particularly the explicit emphasis on religious tolerance, the restoration of displaced populations, and the rejection of arbitrary oppression as a governing principle. These elements signal an early articulation of restraint on sovereign power, even if framed within imperial ideology rather than individual rights.

This completed the approach to the conquered peoples and laid the foundation for a multiethnic empire. Building social cohesion through religious freedom and respect for cultural diversity have been associated with more stable forms of governance, an approach often attributed to Cyrus' rule. Although the text of the cylinder sounds quite suitable for achieving political goals, the existence of moral motives for a new system of governance that respects basic human rights, cannot be ruled out.

In addition to the Cyrus Cylinder, there are other sources that speak of its relationship to the conquered population. Gadd, Legrain and Smith (1928: 307) in their work "Royal Inscriptions" point out that Cyrus restored temples of different religious affiliations. The cylinder from the city of Ur, which is also associated with Cyrus, states that the Moon-temple was restored, and that God made it possible to conquer all four corners of the world, which is one of Cyrus' descriptions of authority as unlimited, universal rule. However, this does not lead us to conclusions about Cyrus' personal religious beliefs. The adoption of local customs was an integral part of Cyrus' conquest policy, based on a proven method of maintaining power, but also the culture to which the rulers belonged. The practice of abolishing forced labour by Mesopotamian rulers is well known, and in some cases it is noticeable even in the reign of Babylonia by the Assyrian kings, judging by their royal inscriptions resembling the Cyrus Cylinder (Streck M., 1916: 227).

The cultural aspect and ethics of these rulers are not excluded factors in the design of their policies, however we can draw conclusions based on available materials describing the needs and interests of the time. Saggs (1975: 44) states that Cyrus followed the policies of previous Assyrian rulers in terms of conquering those areas that were strategically relevant. These are regions that have been the international focus of the conflict, with populations often suffering threats to basic living needs. In these communities, Cyrus revitalized the relationship with the population, freeing them from excessive pressure of labour and duties, giving them a basis for a dignified life guaranteed by the central government. The benefits of humane policies are recognized in building the loyalty of the conquered population, as well as establishing control over politically less stable areas. According to Otzen (1979: 251), it is possible to interpret Cyrus' relationship with the Jewish community in a similar way, so that the rebuilding of Jerusalem was potentially part of a policy to establish control and stability near a politically sensitive zone, taking into account Egypt. Another reason was presented by Tadmor (1966), who

recognized the formation of a border with Arab tribes, which had already become a challenge to Cyrus' imperialist structures during the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Regardless of the motives of Cyrus' policies, they primarily created effects on the social development of Mesopotamia, and more broadly on the development of the world. By expanding its territories and creating the world's largest empire of that time, the Achaemenid emperor Cyrus, under the auspices of one government, enabled the life of peoples who differed in language, religion and customs. Every empire came to an end, so the Achaemenid Empire was eventually overtaken by Greek civilization. However, the "first marriage" of East and West was not the result of Alexander the Great's militaristic goals solely, but the result of cultural synergies with the first Cyrus' conquests of Greek cities on the Aegean coast in the mid-6th century BC. In this regard, the creation of a "globalized world" began almost three hundred years before Hellenism, when Persian campaigns laid the foundations for future East-West relations. Oliver Potežica (2007: 9) claimed that in a broader historical perspective it is clear that ancient Persia laid the foundations for the future "building" of Hellenism, which subsequently transferred influences on the development of the Roman Empire, Byzantium, the Arab caliphate and the spread of other great cultures and religions.

Potežica (2007: 16) further states that the Achaemenid Empire helped to create peace by providing relative security to the conflicting peoples. By stopping regional attacks and looting in its territories, it has contributed to the prevention of genocide and the relative stabilization of economic development. Connecting the newly established territories enabled trade and expansion of commodity-cash flows. An additional impetus to progress was given by the development of institutions, which for the first time functioned in such a large and heterogeneous space. In this way, Cyrus laid the foundations for long-term development, but at the same time continued a well-founded policy. Cyaxares, the great grand-father of Cyrus the Great, the ruler of the Iranian Median dynasty, began absorbing different cultures as early as the 7th century BC, and focused on building social cohesion. It also decentralized the management of the newly conquered territories, giving peoples the right to local self-government. For such an idea to work, he had to ensure tolerance of cultural differences by allowing peoples to maintain their religion, culture, customs, language, administration, and even the freedom to elect local officials.

The presented way of governing is important for understanding the real significance of the Cyrus Cylinder, because it is not an unknown way of writing history with false facts, erasing crimes and inventing good deeds. However, Cyrus carried out the works carved on the cylinder throughout the reign. He rebuilt demolished houses, provided humanitarian aid, and made immodest contributions to the maintenance of shrines and temples. Cyrus presented his rule as preferable to that of his predecessor, promising improved governance and greater stability for subject populations. In practice, he curtailed several of the oppressive policies associated with the previous regime and sought to uphold the commitments articulated during his rise to power. While his authority was ultimately imposed, its consolidation unfolded with varying degrees of acceptance and resistance, shaped by regional interests and local attitudes toward changes in existing governing structures. More than two and a half millennia later, the Cyrus Cylinder was recognised by the United Nations as a document of historical

significance that illustrates inclusive approaches to governance, leading to its translation into all official languages of the organisation.

## Human Rights *Anno Domini*

Different patterns of governance have shaped human rights over time. In Mesopotamia, almost three thousand years ago, basic human rights were respected, and their scope depended on the cultural background and interests of the rulers. In Babylon in 539 BC, a kind of declaration was created, which,under the authority of the emperor, guaranteed basic human rights in the greatest empire of that time.From Babylon, the idea of human rights was transferred to India, then spread to Greece and finally adopted in Rome. In Rome, the concept of "natural law" was developed, which is based on the premise that people behave according to unwritten laws that are the embodiment of the nature of things. Over time, the concept of human rights evolved and took concrete form in legislative instruments that would later prove fundamental. Today we are witnessing a daily struggle to respect human rights, from non- governmental organizations, through private companies, to national and multilateral institutions. Certain pieces of legislation have remained particularly important, as they have marked history with the development of what began long ago in Mesopotamia.

The transition from ancient imperial practices to medieval and modern rights instruments should not be understood as a direct historical transmission. As Pasture (2018) demonstrates, European human rights traditions were largely invented through specific political struggles, institutional conflicts, and social transformations unique to their historical context. The relevance of the Cyrus Cylinder, therefore, lies not in genealogical continuity, but in structural analogy: the emergence of norms that sought to limit arbitrary power and recognise the governed as more than mere subjects.

An important intermediary stage in the development of human rights and international legal thought can be identified in the Spanish School of Natural Law during the sixteenth century. Thinkers such as Francisco de Vitoria (1991), Francisco Suárez (2012), and Bartolomé de las Casas (1992) articulated early legal arguments concerning the inherent dignity of all human beings, the moral limits of sovereign power, and the rights of indigenous peoples. Their work challenged the legitimacy of conquest, slavery, and forced conversion, thereby contributing decisively to the emergence of principles such as universal human dignity, just war, and the foundations of modern international law.

While grounded in theological reasoning, these contributions marked a crucial transitional step between ancient normative practices and the later secular legal frameworks that would crystallize in European constitutional and human rights instruments.

In 1215, King John of England was forced to curb his exercise of authority, which was contrary to the "natural laws" of his country and the traditional English system of government. This meant stopping his continuous interference in the affairs of the church and violation of the property rights of citizens. It resulted in the signing of the Magna Carta, the content of which became analogous to the improvement of human rights regulation. It is still an accepted view that the Magna Carta, or "the Great Charter", is one of the most significant early influences on the historical processes that led tothe rule

of constitutional law. Among the human rights guaranteed, stand out the rights of citizens toown and inherit property, and to be protected from excessive taxation. The principle of equality beforethe law was established, which was a significant step towards modern democracy.

Magna Carta did not establish religious freedom in the modern sense of individual freedom of belief or worship. Rather, its provisions concerning the "freedom of the Church" reflected the principle of *libertas ecclesiae*, aimed at limiting royal interference in ecclesiastical affairs and safeguarding the institutional autonomy of the Church (Vincent, 2012). While this concept differs fundamentally from modern notions of religious freedom or tolerance, it nevertheless represents an early attempt to restrain sovereign power through normative principles, a feature that invites cautious structural comparison with earlier governance practices such as those reflected in the Cyrus Cylinder. It should be noted that the legal recognition of religious tolerance in Europe emerged much later, most notably with the Peace of Westphalia (1648), which formalised confessional coexistence within the framework of sovereign states (Moita, 2014).

In this regard, the Great Charter listed religious freedom in the first article:

> *"In the first place we grant to God and confirm by this our present charter for ourselves and our heirs in perpetuity that the English Church is to be free and to have all its rights fully and its liberties entirely. We furthermore grant and give to all the freemen of our realm for ourselves and our heirs in perpetuity the liberties written bellow to have and to hold them and their heirs from us and our heirs in perpetuity." (Vincent N., 2012:1)*

Freedoms have not been limited to religion. Civil liberties were restored to the English population, analogous to the resurrection of the liberties of the conquered peoples by Cyrus the Great. As in Magna Carta, the cylinder did not clearly define the limitations of rights, but they were guaranteed by legal authority, with the cylinder having para-legal effect through state power, while Magna Cartahad clear legal effect and was a prototype of a constitution that limits state power. However, some effects were similar, and this is illustrated by the ninth article of this historical document: "The City of London is to have all its ancient liberties and customs. Moreover, we wish and grant thatall other cities and boroughs and vills and the barons of the Cinque Ports and all ports are to have all their liberties and free customs." (Ibid, 2)

An additional similarity is reflected in the part of the prohibition of exile, which according to the content of the cylinder mainly refers to exile for religious reasons, which served to destroy cults andrestrain religious freedoms. Magna Carta did not limit itself in this way, but generally banned exile, basing its rationality on property rights. Article 29 clearly indicates this: "No freeman is to be taken or imprisoned or disseised of his free tenement or of his liberties or free customs, or outlawed or exiled or in any way ruined, nor will we go against such a man or send againsthim save by lawful judgement of his peers or by the law of the hand." (Ibid, 4)

The differences between the two observed documents are reflected in the existence of property rights, which were not realized under the rule of Cyrus, while being one of the

key elements guaranteed by King John. Cyrus established a caste system, an economic system that in many ways resembled feudalism, where all the property of the empire belonged to one ruler. However, it is necessary to understand that the time difference is enormous, which tells us that the conditions under which these rights were exercised varied greatly. Nevertheless, while no direct historical transmission can be established, the Magna Carta may be understood as reflecting governance principles structurally analogous to those articulated in the Cyrus Cylinder, particularly with regard to restraints on sovereign power and the protection of certain fundamental liberties. Similar normative ideas continued to reappear in European legal and constitutional thought in the centuries that followed.

About five centuries later, in 1776, the United States Declaration of Independence was enacted. Its primary author, Thomas Jefferson, wrote the declaration as an act of gaining independence from Great Britain. The Declaration of Independence basically guaranteed individual rights, which is one of the features of Cyrus' rule, if we look at individual rights to freedom of religion and cultural identity. What is particularly interesting is that Jefferson used the Cyrus' mode of government for the establishment and organization of the United States. The principle of religious tolerance in a state of diverse cultures has become a model for the founding fathers. During the Enlightenment period, Herodotus' book "Cyropaedia" became popular literature among European and American political thinkers. Cyropaedia is now part of not only the Library of the US Congress, but a copy is on display at the Freer and Sackler Galleries at the National Museum of Asian Art in Washington, D.C., as a tribute to Jefferson's devotion to the book. According to Massumeh Farhad, Freer and Sackler's chief curator, Jefferson researched in detail the teachings of Cyrus the Great and the principles of his reign, and was so attracted to his philosophy of government that he advised his family to read it. (Dabashi Hamid, 2015: 13)

Twelve years later, in 1788, the Constitution of the United States was ratified. It is a fundamental law that regulates the federal system of government, defines the jurisdiction of the principal organs of government. In this respect, it is the oldest national constitution still in use. Unlike Cyrus, who had absolute power, the Constitution clearly defines the scope of power of all branches of government. Both documents guaranteed the basic rights of citizens, with the Constitution granting significantly greater rights in a democratic system, while Cyrus had the power to change the scope of civil rights depending on the current interest. Despite his autocratic rule, Cyrus formed institutions that stabilized the legal, economic, and social life of diverse cultures in the common territory. The system of governance included a judicial council, and regional governors, satraps, which resembled the governors of the United States. Both countries had one leader, with Cyrus being above the other branches of government, to which he himself gave authority.

A year later, in 1789, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen was adopted in France. It was the first step towards the preparation of the constitution of the newly established French Republic. It guaranteed fundamental freedoms that were considered natural and therefore universal, thus ensuring the equality of people in fundamental rights. This is the first parallel with the cylinder, which Cyrus used to propagate the universal principles of his rule as king of the "four quarters of the world". Parallels are further found in the provision of fundamental rights: "No man ought to be molested on

account of his opinions, not even on account of his religious opinions, provided his avowal of them does not disturb the public order established by law." (Warman Caroline, 2016)

Three years after the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, in 1791, the Bill of Rights was ratified, which protects the basic freedoms of US citizens. It represents the first ten amendments to the Constitution, which sought to limit the power of the federal government and protect citizens from the state. In this respect Cyrus had no similar intentions, for he did not limit his power nor share it. But the concept is similar, as it refers to the protection of religious freedom, with the fact that the Bill of Rights also included the freedom of speech, carrying weapons, the freedom of assembly and the freedom to petition. The similarity is evident in the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." (US Congress, 1791)

Additional consistency is evident in the Thirteenth Amendment, which was ratified in 1865. It refers to the abolition of slavery and forced labour: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." (US Congress, 1865)

Less than a hundred years later, on December 10, 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To prevent the atrocities of the World War Two from repeating, the international community decided to complement the UN Charter with a roadmap that would guarantee the rights of every individual in the world. The reliance of human rights legislation on historical strongholds was shown by the Assembly, which transmitted the draft to the Economic and Social Council for "reference to the Commission on Human Rights for consideration... in its preparation of an international bill of rights". The Commission was made up of 18 delegates of different political, cultural and religious identities, the first symbol of the universality of human rights advocated by world leaders.

Eleanor Roosevelt, chairman of the Human Rights Commission which drafted the document, referred to the declaration as the international Magna Carta for all mankind. The Declaration reflects governance principles that, in a different historical context, echo certain normative concerns also present in the text engraved on the Cyrus Cylinder. They refer to the human sufferings of the Babylonians and other peoples under the rule of Nabonidus, and to the sufferings of the people in World War Two.

In its preamble and in Article 1, the Declaration unequivocally proclaims the inherent rights of all human beings: "Disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people…All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." (Draft Committee, 1949:2)

At this point, a clear conceptual distinction must be drawn. The universality proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights refers to individual rights grounded in legal equality and applicability beyond political or imperial membership. In contrast, in ancient imperial contexts, such as the Babylonian, Achaemenid, or Roman empires, recognition of certain protections was typically embedded in the status of subjects within an imperial

order rather than grounded in individual legal equality. While the Achaemenid system displayed moderately inclusive and pluralistic governance practices, these protections nevertheless remained contingent on imperial authority and did not constitute universal rights in the modern legal sense. Accordingly, the term "human rights" is not used here in the same legal sense as in the 1948 Universal Declaration, but as a historically qualified analytical category that reflects earlier, context-bound approaches to limiting power and regulating governance.

While the Cyrus Cylinder should not be understood as a universal declaration in legal terms, it represents an imperial proclamation issued under the authority of a single ruler and addressed to a diverse population. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on the other hand, was at the time written and adopted by 58 members of the world organization. To date, all 192 members of the UN system have adopted this historic document.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights itself was not the product of moral consensus alone, but of intense political negotiation. As Justo (2025) illustrates, the language of universality embedded in the Declaration emerged through compromises between competing ideological, cultural, and geopolitical interests. This reinforces the argument that human rights are historically constructed rather than naturally given—an insight that further legitimises examining ancient texts like the Cyrus Cylinder as part of a broader, evolving normative landscape rather than as isolated anomalies.

Similarities with the Cyrus Cylinder are evident in numerous articles of the declaration. The second article already mentions the universality of human rights, making them independent of religious affiliation or cultural identity.

"Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status." (Ibid)

The following article sets out the right to life, liberty and security. Considering that Cyrus pursued policies aimed at integrating diverse populations and reducing certain forms of coercion, it is possible to identify broadly comparable themes in these declarations.

"Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person." (Ibid) Slavery is specifically mentioned in the UN Declaration, in Article 4: "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms." (Ibid)

Exile is also explicitly prohibited, in Article 9, which reminds us of the ban on forced migration of Jews and other peoples from their homelands: "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile." (Ibid, 3)

Not all articles in these declarations are analogous. Cyrus allowed diverse cultural identities, but all peoples belonged to one state, the Persian Empire. In contrast, the UN Declaration guarantees the right to nationality: "Everyone has the right to a nationality. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality." (Ibid, 4)

The differences are also obvious in terms of property rights. While this right was jeopardized under Cyrus' rule, the UN Declaration cites it as one of the basic human

rights: "Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property." (Ibid, 5)

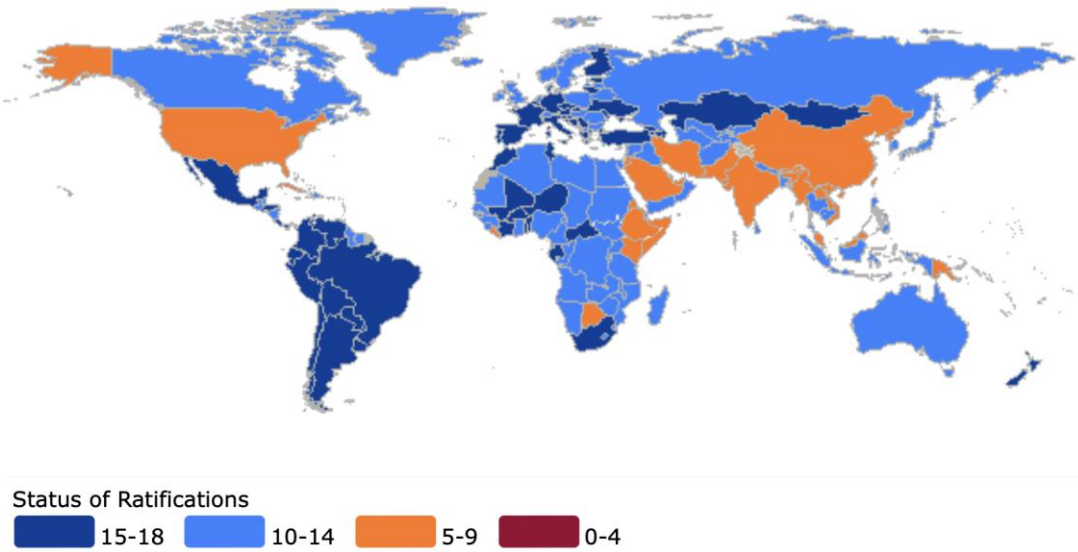
The right to religious affiliation is also part of Article 18. The analogy of this article is that it explicitly states the right to religious practice and worship, which in the 6th century BC was one of the greatest advances in the development of human rights: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance." (Ibid, 5)

Lastly, common elements are evident in the governance model. Although Cyrus centralized power, he decentralized governance. He appointed satraps, local and regional rulers, who were elected by the residents. In a similar way, this right is defined in Article 21: "Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives." (Ibid, 5)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has influenced the development of new international legislation governing human rights worldwide. Today, there are eighteen major international human rights treaties, which are recognized as "The Core International Human Rights Instruments and their monitoring bodies". The status of their ratification in 2026 is presented in the following figure.

The creation of this map was a process two and a half thousand years long. It used to look moremodest on a global scale. However, at the national level, the size of the Persian Empire was impressive, which is why the Cyrus Cylinder was once also a "universal" declaration, as it can be inferred from the figure below.

**Figure 1.** Ratification of 18 International Human Rights Treaties




Source: UNOHCHR (2026), *Status of ratification*, UNOHCHR

In the 21st century, the development of human rights remains a map whose borders continue to shift. In the face of ongoing human rights violations, the significance of the Cyrus Cylinder persists as a historical reference point illustrating early normative ideas about human dignity and freedom. While Cyrus' rule should not be idealized and warrants careful critical assessment, the Cyrus Cylinder can be understood as a relevant historical declaration that, within its specific context, reflected an early approach to governance focused on administrative order and the regulation of power within a multiethnic empire.

**Figure 2.** Achaemenid Empire during the reign of Cyrus the Great, 559-530 BC




Source: Van der Crabben (2012), *Empire of Cyrus the Great*, World History Encyclopedia

## Conclusions

The results of the research suggest the existence of thematic and conceptual parallels between the Cyrus Cylinder and later human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A common objection to framing the Cyrus Cylinder as a cornerstone of human rights is that it lacks the legal universality, enforceability, and individual focus characteristic of modern rights regimes. This objection is valid. Yet, as this analysis has shown, the significance of the Cyrus Cylinder does not lie in its conformity to modern standards, but in its early articulation of governance principles based on tolerance, restraint, and respect for human dignity. In this sense, it represents not the origin of human rights law, but an enduring reference point in the long historical process through which the idea of human rights was constructed. This interpretation reflects an ongoing scholarly debate and does not presume a direct or linear historical influence between ancient imperial practices and modern human rights law.

Research demonstrates that human rights are not a social innovation of Cyrus the Great, but are a continuation of the well-founded practice of the Achaemenid imperialism. Cyrus's policies reflected established Achaemenid approaches to imperial governance, which sought to accommodate religious plurality, cultural diversity, and local customs,

albeit without constituting rights in the modern democratic or legal sense. Their founding through the Declaration in the Old Age, as well as their legal empowerment through agreements and treaties in the coming millennia, highlights the importance of historical heritage in the fight for basic human rights. While Cyrus's policies clearly reflect political pragmatism aimed at maintaining peace and stability among diverse peoples, they also reveal a moral vision in his approach to governance. By balancing practical governance with a philosophy of respect and tolerance, Cyrus articulated governance principles that resonate with later human rights discourses, both political and ethical.

The conclusions drawn from the research indicate that even in the 21st century, the Cyrus Cylinder continues to function as a symbolic reference point in contemporary human rights discourse, used by national governments, international organizations, academic institutions, and citizens. In this way, the declaration engraved in a cylinder from the 6th century BC came to inform later interpretations of human rights concepts, through which the ancient Achaemenid Empire influenced the development of future civilizations. The Cyrus Cylinder acted as a declaration that spread to all regions of the empire, propagating a philosophy of rights that transcended individual cultures and laid the groundwork for a shared understanding of human rights across diverse peoples. For these reasons, it is understandable why the United Nations system has interpreted the Cyrus Cylinder as a symbolic cornerstone in the historical development of human rights, situating it within a broader and evolving normative tradition that culminated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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# POLYAMORY: LEGAL REFLECTIONS ON PUBLIC POLICIES DUE TO THE PREVENTION OF FORMALIZATION OF MORALLY STIGMATIZED RELATIONSHIPS BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JUSTICE

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## Abstract

This article explores the legal and social implications of polyamorous relationships in the context of Brazilian public policies, particularly focusing on the National Council of Justice's (CNJ) role in preventing the formalization of morally stigmatized relationships. Polyamory, defined as the practice of engaging in multiple romantic relationships with the consent of all parties involved, challenges traditional notions of family and marriage. This study examines the legal barriers faced by polyamorous individuals, the moral stigmas associated with such relationships, and the potential need for legal reforms to ensure inclusiveness and protection for all forms of consensual relationships. The analysis is supported by a review of existing literature, legal precedents, and sociological studies, offering a comprehensive reflection on the intersection of law, morality, and public policy.

## Keywords

Polyamory, National Council of Justice, Public Policies, Legal Formalization, Moral Stigma.

## Resumo

Este artigo explora as implicações jurídicas e sociais das relações poliamorosas no contexto das políticas públicas brasileiras, com especial destaque para o papel do Conselho Nacional de Justiça (CNJ) na prevenção da formalização de relações moralmente estigmatizadas. O poliamor, definido como a prática de manter múltiplas relações românticas com o consentimento de todas as partes envolvidas, desafia as noções tradicionais de família e casamento. Este estudo examina as barreiras jurídicas enfrentadas por indivíduos poliamorosos, os estigmas morais associados a tais relações e a potencial necessidade de reformas jurídicas para garantir a inclusão e a proteção de todas as formas de relações consensuais. A análise é apoiada por uma revisão da literatura existente, precedentes jurídicos e estudos sociológicos, oferecendo uma reflexão abrangente sobre a interseção entre direito, moralidade e políticas públicas.

**Palavras-chave**

Poliamor, Conselho Nacional de Justiça, Políticas Públicas, Formalização Legal, Estigma Moral.

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## Introduction

In contemporary society, family structures and romantic relationships are evolving beyond traditional norms, with new forms of love and connection emerging. Among these evolving relationship dynamics is polyamory, a consensual, ethical, and responsible practice of engaging in multiple romantic and/or sexual relationships simultaneously. Despite its increasing visibility and acceptance in certain social circles, polyamory remains largely unrecognized and unsupported by legal systems in many countries, including Brazil. This exclusion is heavily influenced by moral stigma, rooted in deep-seated societal norms and religious values, which often prioritize monogamy as the only legitimate form of intimate relationship. As a result, individuals in polyamorous relationships face significant legal barriers, from lack of recognition in family law to being denied access to key legal protections typically afforded to monogamous unions.

This article seeks to explore the legal implications of polyamory within the Brazilian context, focusing on the role of public policies in shaping the recognition of such relationships. The central question is whether the National Justice Council (CNJ), as an influential body in shaping judicial policies in Brazil, can lead the way in the recognition and protection of polyamorous unions. To address this issue, the article is organized into several sections. First, it attempts to develop a theoretical understanding of love, drawing upon various philosophical, sociological, and psychological perspectives. By understanding the concept of love in its multifaceted forms, including romantic love, familial love, and platonic love, the article aims to broaden the discussion about what constitutes legitimate and meaningful human relationships. This theoretical framework sets the stage for a more nuanced analysis of polyamory and its place within the larger context of family law.

The second section delves into the legal landscape of polyamory in Brazil. Despite the country's progressive legal reforms in many areas of family law, such as the recognition of same-sex marriage, polyamory remains largely invisible in the legal system. Brazil's civil code and family law frameworks are predominantly designed around monogamous relationships, with little to no consideration given to the needs or rights of polyamorous individuals. The absence of legal recognition means that polyamorous families are excluded from fundamental rights, such as inheritance rights, healthcare decision-making, and access to joint benefits. As a result, polyamorous individuals often face the legal and social consequences of being treated as though their relationships do not exist or are less valid than traditional family units.

Moral stigma plays a significant role in shaping the legal and social exclusion of polyamory. In the third section of this article, the focus shifts to the moral stigma associated with non-monogamous relationships. The moral judgment of polyamory often stems from deeply ingrained religious and cultural values that promote the idea of monogamy as the only "moral" or "correct" relationship structure. These values are reinforced through various societal institutions, including education, media, and religious organizations. As a result, polyamorous individuals frequently experience social marginalization, discrimination, and even legal repercussions due to their relationship choices. The stigma surrounding polyamory not only affects the personal lives of those involved but also influences the public policies and laws that govern their lives.

The fourth section of the article addresses the pressing need for legal reforms to address the rights and needs of polyamorous individuals. Legal systems that continue to uphold the primacy of monogamy fail to reflect the diversity of modern family structures and the realities of contemporary relationships. The absence of legal recognition for polyamorous unions perpetuates inequality, denying individuals in these relationships access to the same protections afforded to monogamous families. Legal reforms should include the recognition of polyamorous unions, the extension of legal protection to all individuals involved, and the development of public policies that promote inclusivity, fairness, and equality.

Finally, the article explores the role of the CNJ in advancing these legal reforms. As a key body within Brazil's judiciary, the CNJ holds significant power to influence the development of family law and public policy. By issuing resolutions that acknowledge and protect polyamorous relationships, the CNJ can lead the way in ensuring that polyamorous individuals are afforded the same legal rights and protections as those in monogamous unions. The CNJ's potential to shape judicial policy presents an opportunity for progress in the ongoing struggle for recognition and equality for polyamorous families.

In conclusion, the legal exclusion of polyamorous relationships in Brazil, compounded by moral stigma, reflects outdated norms and values that do not fully accommodate the diversity of human relationships. By advocating for legal reforms and the recognition of polyamory, this article calls for a shift towards more inclusive public policies that respect and protect all family structures, regardless of their form. The CNJ's leadership in this area could be pivotal in ensuring that polyamorous individuals and families are recognized and supported within the legal system, promoting equality and social inclusion for all.

## An attempt at a theoretical understanding of love

Defining love is a challenging task. However, it is certainly not the role of the law to define, conceptualize, or outline its contours. The law is merely a normative framework designed to protect consensual romantic relationships between competent adults. Its role is to regulate the patrimonial effects in matters such as inheritance, divorce, alimony, business, legal proceedings, and filiation, but not to determine the gender or number of individuals involved in each relationship. Its task is limited to recognition.

In an attempt at a theoretical apprehension of love, some theoretical references will be compiled and presented below.

From sexual desire, love is born—a desire that arises spontaneously in human beings, without limits, rules, knowledge, or direction, urging to be fully expressed. Love is openness to others, stemming from a desire without a specific recipient.

According to Foucault (2017), morality has interdicted desire and, consequently, restricted the freedom to exercise love. It has dictated the correct way to use pleasures, removing them from the realm of desire and placing them within the realm of culture, creating an artificiality in their practice, which served only the interests of capital: bodies useful for labor and consumption.

Through the appropriation of desire by morality, erotic love was framed: sex for procreative purposes and love arising in the relationship between man and woman, as the only biologically capable of producing offspring. In this sense, all other forms of sexual desire were interdicted and delegitimized, as evidenced in the decision of the National Council of Justice, which prohibited Brazilian notaries from registering polyamorous marriages.

For Foucault, in the constitution of the ethical subject, knowledge about one's desire was not considered, constituting one of the ailments of reason: its limitation, as evidenced in Antiquity and Christianity through the concept of sexual temperance. On the other hand, nature intended that the act of sex be associated with pleasure, guided by desire. This desire arises from lack, that is, it emerges from longing for what is missing in a person, for if nothing is lacking, desire cannot exist.

According to Greek philosophy, it is in the realm of sexuality that humans reconcile their animal instincts with the rationality bestowed upon them by the gods, an interaction that reflects in psychology, society, law, and other sciences. In all species, sex is restricted to procreation, which should not apply to beings endowed with intelligence, who use it as a source of pleasure and elevation.

In the Freudian conception, for biology, the existence of sexual needs in human beings is expressed in the assumption of a sexual instinct, much like in animals, through libido. On the other hand, popular opinion (common sense) holds well-defined ideas about the nature and characteristics of this sexual instinct, believing it to be absent in childhood and emerging during puberty with the maturation of the body, manifesting as the irresistible attraction one sex exerts over the other. According to Freud (2016): "But we have reasons to regard these notions as a misleading picture of reality; upon closer examination, they prove to be full of errors, inaccuracies, and hasty conclusions."

The sexual object is the person from whom sexual attraction emanates, and the sexual aim is the action toward which the instinct drives. Freud (2016) identifies several deviations concerning both the object and the aim, as well as the relationship between them and the supposed norm.

Moreover, there are relationships in which the object of desire is not limited to just one person but extends to two or more. What this research project advocates is desire and consent, and it does not endorse unions of one man with multiple submissive women as a result of machismo and patriarchy.

It can be preliminarily concluded that the "overarching principle" of human dignity, in its dimension of safeguarding happiness and personal fulfillment based on individuals' own existential configurations, requires the legal system to recognize ways of exercising love that differ from traditional conceptions. In this line of thought, the individual cannot be reduced to a mere instrument for fulfilling the will of those in power. Therefore, the right to pursue happiness protects human beings against attempts by the State to fit their romantic desires into pre-conceived models established by legislation.

## The Legal Landscape of Polyamory in Brazil

Polyamory, as a form of consensual non-monogamy, is not explicitly addressed in Brazilian legislation. The country's legal system is primarily designed to accommodate monogamous relationships, with marriage and stable unions recognized under the Civil Code. This lack of legal recognition creates significant challenges for polyamorous individuals, particularly in areas such as inheritance, child custody, and healthcare decisions. The CNJ, as the body responsible for overseeing the judiciary and ensuring the efficiency of judicial services, has the authority to issue resolutions that influence the formalization of relationships. However, its resolutions have historically favored traditional family structures, often marginalizing alternative forms of relationships.

**Chart 1.** Table of Statistics on the Acceptance of Polyamory in Brazil

| ***Category*** | **Acceptance Percentage** | **Observations** |
|---|---|---|
| *Young People (18-30 years)* | 45% | Greater openness to non-traditional relationships. |
| *Adults (31-50 years)* | 30% | Moderate acceptance, influenced by traditional values. |
| *Elderly (over 50 years)* | 15% | Low acceptance due to conservative values. |
| *LGBTQIA+ Population* | 60% | Greater acceptance due to experience with diversity. |
| *General Population* | 35% | National average, with regional variations |

Source: Data collected from Johnson (2018)

The statistics reveal varying levels of acceptance of polyamory across different demographic groups in Brazil. Here's a breakdown of the key findings:

- Young People (18-30 years): This group shows the highest acceptance rate at 45%. The greater openness to non-traditional relationships among young people can be attributed to their exposure to diverse perspectives and evolving social norms.
- Adults (31-50 years): Acceptance drops to 30% in this age group. This moderate acceptance is influenced by traditional values that are more prevalent among adults.
- Elderly (over 50 years): The acceptance rate is the lowest among the elderly, at 15%. This low acceptance is due to conservative values that are deeply ingrained in this demographic.
- LGBTQIA+ Population: This group has the highest acceptance rate at 60%. The greater acceptance can be linked to their experience with diversity and non-traditional relationship structures.
- General Population: The national average acceptance rate is 35%, with regional variations. This indicates a mixed level of acceptance across the country.

These results highlight the influence of age, traditional values, and exposure to diversity on the acceptance of polyamory in Brazil. The higher acceptance among younger people and the LGBTQIA+ population suggests a shift towards more inclusive attitudes, while the lower acceptance among adults and the elderly reflects the persistence of traditional values.

## Constitutional and Civil Law Reflections on Polyamory: Equality, Legal Certainty, and Institutional Competence in Brazilian Public Policies

A proper legal analysis of polyamory within the Brazilian context necessarily requires a shift from a merely descriptive or sociological approach to a structured constitutional and civil law framework. But when we talk about law reflections such reflections must engage with core juridical categories, including equality, legal certainty, family law protections, and institutional competence. These elements are indispensable to assess whether the current resistance to the formalization of polyamorous relationships—particularly through administrative acts affecting notarial practice—can be justified within the Brazilian constitutional order.

From a constitutional perspective, polyamory raises fundamental questions related to the principle of equality (art. 5º of the Federal Constitution) and the prohibition of discrimination based on personal choices in affective and family arrangements. The Brazilian Constitution adopts an open and pluralistic concept of family, historically expanded through judicial interpretation to include stable unions and same-sex relationships. In this sense, excluding polyamorous unions from legal recognition may represent a form of indirect discrimination, especially when grounded in moral stigma rather than objective legal criteria. Therefore, the debate should not be reduced to moral acceptability but must be framed in terms of equal protection of diverse family entities.

From a civil law standpoint, the absence of legal recognition for polyamorous relationships generates significant legal insecurity. Issues such as inheritance rights, social security benefits, property regimes, and contractual autonomy remain unresolved. The Brazilian Civil Code operates on a monogamous paradigm, which creates structural barriers to recognizing multi-partner unions. However, the increasing social visibility of such relationships suggests the need for legal mechanisms capable of addressing plural affective arrangements, whether through legislative reform or interpretative evolution. Legal certainty, as a foundational principle, requires that individuals have predictable legal consequences for their private relationships, something currently denied to polyamorous families.

In this context, the role attributed to the National Council of Justice (CNJ) must be carefully reconsidered. The CNJ is constitutionally defined as an organ of the Judiciary responsible for administrative and financial oversight, as well as the control of judicial conduct and efficiency, rather than a primary policymaking institution. Its mission is to improve the functioning of the Judiciary, ensuring transparency and administrative accountability, not to legislate or establish broad public policies concerning family law. (CNJ, 2026)

Although the CNJ has demonstrated normative capacity in specific contexts—such as issuing resolutions that standardize judicial or notarial practices, its actions are limited to the scope of judicial administration and cannot replace the legislative function. (CNJ, 2019) Therefore, attributing to the CNJ a "crucial role in the formulation of public policies" concerning the recognition of polyamorous relationships lacks constitutional grounding. Public policy formulation in Brazil is structurally distributed among the Executive and Legislative branches, with the Judiciary playing a reactive and interpretative role, rather than a proactive normative one.

This institutional misplacement weakens the analytical coherence of the argument. If the prevention of formalization of polyamorous unions is being challenged, the appropriate focus should be on legislative inertia, constitutional interpretation, and judicial precedents, rather than on the CNJ as a central policymaker. The CNJ may influence procedural or administrative aspects—such as regulating notarial conduct—but it does not possess the democratic legitimacy or constitutional competence to redefine family law structures.

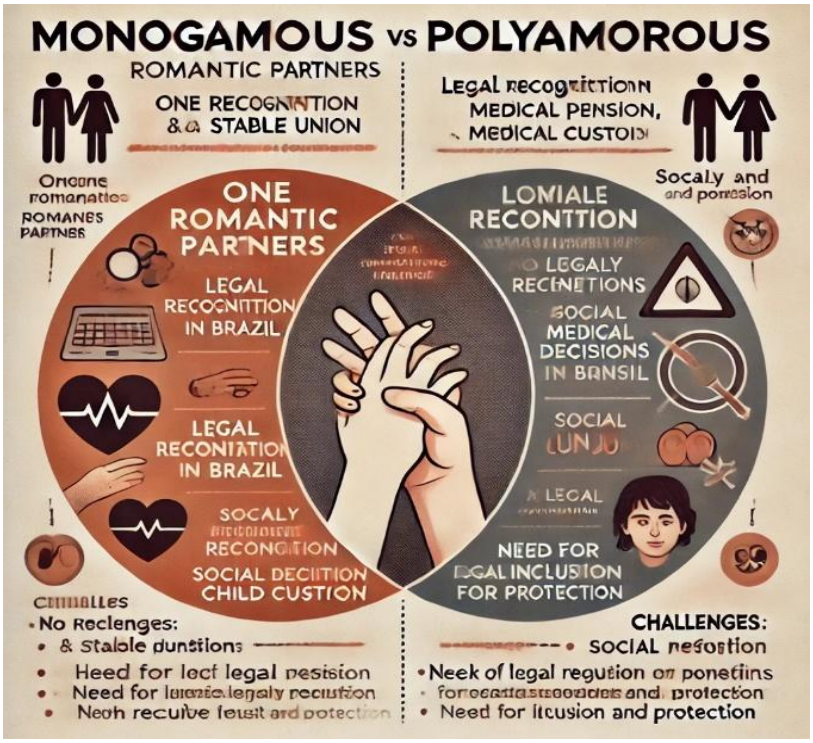
In due course, a consistent legal reflection on polyamory must integrate: a) constitutional principles of equality and dignity; b) civil law concerns regarding legal certainty and patrimonial effects; and c) a precise understanding of institutional roles within the Brazilian separation of powers. Only by articulating these dimensions can the debate move beyond moral stigmatization and toward a coherent legal framework capable of addressing contemporary forms of affective life.

## Moral Stigma and Its Impact on Public Policies

The moral stigma surrounding polyamory is deeply entrenched in societal norms and religious values, which often emphasize monogamy as the ideal relationship structure. These traditional values have shaped public perceptions, leading to a general disregard

for polyamorous relationships. This societal bias is evident in public policies, where monogamous unions are prioritized, and polyamorous partnerships are frequently excluded from legal recognition and protection. As a result, individuals in polyamorous relationships often face legal and social marginalization. The lack of legal recognition can prevent polyamorous families from accessing important rights such as inheritance, healthcare decision-making, and child custody arrangements, all of which are typically granted to monogamous unions. Furthermore, the exclusion of polyamory from public policy perpetuates the idea that such relationships are invalid or inferior. This creates significant barriers for individuals who wish to have their relationships legally acknowledged and protected. Overcoming this moral stigma requires challenging traditional norms and advocating for inclusive policies that recognize the diverse forms of relationships present in contemporary society. Legal recognition of polyamorous unions would not only affirm the rights of individuals in these relationships but also contribute to broader efforts to promote equality and reduce discrimination based on relationship structures.

**Infographic 1.** Comparative Diagram of Monogamous and Polyamorous Relationships




Source: Own elaboration, based on Smith (2015).

The infographic effectively presents a comparative analysis of monogamous and polyamorous relationships using a clear and structured Venn diagram. Here are some key points of evaluation: The information intends to make it easy to distinguish between monogamous and polyamorous relationships while also highlighting common aspects.

Each category presents key legal, social, and structural characteristics without excessive detail, ensuring accessibility for different audiences. The infographic maintains an objective tone, focusing on legal recognition, societal acceptance, and challenges rather than personal or moral perspectives. A brief reading of the infographic reveals that:

**Monogamous Relationships:**

- One romantic partnership.
- Legal recognition in Brazil (marriage and stable union).
- Legal benefits: inheritance, pension, medical decisions, child custody.
- Traditionally accepted structure by society and the National Council of Justice (CNJ).

**Polyamorous Relationships:**

- Multiple romantic partnerships with consent.
- No legal recognition in Brazil.

**Challenges:**

- Lack of legal protection, social stigma, exclusion from benefits.
- Need for reforms for inclusion and legal protection.

**Intersection:**

- Both involve consensual and emotional relationships.
- Both can include children and complex family structures.
- Both require trust and communication among those involved.
-

The CNJ's resolutions, while aimed at promoting justice and equality, often inadvertently reinforce these stigmas by failing to address the needs of polyamorous individuals. This exclusion not only perpetuates discrimination but also denies polyamorous individuals access to legal protections and benefits that are available to monogamous couples.

It is important to remark that legal status of polyamorous relationships varies significantly across jurisdictions, reflecting different cultural, religious, and legal traditions. While most legal systems do not formally recognize polyamorous unions, some countries and regions have taken steps toward granting certain legal protections.

Canada: In 2011, a Canadian court ruled that polyamory is legal as long as it does not involve polygamous marriage, which remains prohibited. Some polyamorous families have successfully obtained legal recognition for parental rights and cohabitation agreements.

United States: While no federal recognition exists, some local governments have granted legal protections. For instance, in cities like Somerville and Cambridge (Massachusetts), domestic partnership laws have been expanded to include polyamorous relationships, allowing multiple partners to access legal benefits such as health insurance and hospital visitation rights.

Colombia: In 2017, Colombia legally recognized a "trieja" (a three-person romantic partnership) for inheritance and social security purposes, marking a rare instance of official recognition of polyamorous unions.

The Netherlands: There is no official recognition of polyamorous relationships, but the legal framework allows for cohabitation agreements and multiple-parent recognition in some cases, particularly for child-rearing.

Globally, the legal landscape for polyamorous relationships is evolving, with some jurisdictions offering partial recognition through domestic partnerships or parental rights. These developments highlight the need for further legal discussions on family diversity and the protection of individuals in non-traditional relationships.

## The Need for Legal Reforms

The increasing recognition of diverse family structures calls for urgent legal reforms that address the rights and needs of polyamorous individuals. Polyamory, as a relational model, involves consensual romantic and/or sexual relationships among multiple partners and has gained more visibility in recent years (Conley, Moors, Matsick, & Ziegler, 2013). Despite this growing visibility, polyamorous individuals often face legal and social challenges, particularly when it comes to recognition of their unions, access to family-related legal protections, and the implementation of public policies that safeguard their rights (Mitchell, Bartholomew, & Cobb, 2014).

One area where legal reform is crucial is the formal recognition of polyamorous unions. While monogamous marriages are granted legal status in many jurisdictions, polyamorous relationships typically lack such recognition, which can leave individuals in these unions without access to important legal protections, such as inheritance rights, healthcare decisions, and child custody arrangements (Green, 2021). Extending legal recognition to polyamorous relationships would ensure that individuals in these unions are afforded the same rights as those in monogamous relationships, helping to reduce legal and social inequality.

In addition to legal recognition, it is vital to extend legal protection to all individuals involved in polyamorous relationships. These protections should address issues such as domestic violence, property rights, and access to spousal benefits, which are often denied to polyamorous individuals due to the lack of legal recognition. Recent studies have indicated that the absence of legal protections for polyamorous individuals may contribute to discrimination and hardship for these groups, further exacerbating their marginalization (Barker & Langdridge, 2010). By including polyamorous relationships in legal frameworks, policymakers can promote equity and fairness within family law systems.

Furthermore, public policies that foster inclusiveness and equality are essential for the protection of polyamorous families. These policies should reflect the reality that family structures are increasingly diverse and that non-monogamous relationships deserve the same legal consideration and protection as traditional family units. The promotion of polyamory-friendly policies at the societal level would contribute to the normalization and

acceptance of these relationships, leading to a reduction in stigma and an increase in social acceptance.

The National Justice Council (CNJ), as a significant body influencing judicial policies in Brazil, has a key role to play in advancing these reforms. The CNJ has the authority to issue resolutions that shape the judicial treatment of family matters. By issuing resolutions that acknowledge and protect polyamorous relationships, the CNJ could catalyze a shift towards greater legal recognition and protection for polyamorous individuals and their families. This would be a significant step in aligning Brazilian family law with the principles of equality and non-discrimination, ensuring that all families, regardless of their structure, are afforded the rights and protections they deserve.

## Public Policies and Polyamory: Addressing the Gap in Legal Recognition and Social Inclusion

The title of this essay highlights a critical issue at the intersection of law, morality, and public policy. It underscores the challenges faced by polyamorous relationships in gaining legal recognition and social acceptance, particularly in the context of public policies shaped by institutions like Brazil's National Council of Justice (CNJ). This topic invites a deeper exploration of how public policies can either perpetuate exclusion or foster inclusivity for non-traditional relationships.

Public policies are instrumental in shaping societal norms and values. They reflect the priorities of a government and its institutions, often reinforcing dominant cultural and moral frameworks. In the case of polyamory, public policies have largely ignored or actively prevented the formalization of such relationships, reflecting a broader societal stigma against non-monogamous partnerships. The CNJ, as a regulatory body overseeing the judiciary, plays a pivotal role in this process by issuing resolutions that influence the legal recognition of relationships. However, its policies have historically favored traditional, monogamous family structures, leaving polyamorous individuals without legal protections or social validation.

The lack of legal recognition for polyamorous relationships has far-reaching consequences. Without formal acknowledgment, individuals in polyamorous partnerships face significant challenges in areas such as inheritance, healthcare decision-making, child custody, and taxation. These gaps in legal protection not only marginalize polyamorous individuals but also perpetuate systemic inequality. Furthermore, the moral stigma embedded in public policies reinforces societal prejudices, making it difficult for polyamorous individuals to live openly and authentically.

To address these issues, public policies must evolve to reflect the diversity of modern relationships. This requires a shift in perspective, from viewing polyamory as a moral deviation to recognizing it as a legitimate form of consensual, loving partnership. Inclusive public policies could include:

First, a legal recognition of polyamorous unions. Extending the legal framework to recognize polyamorous relationships, like marriage or civil unions, with appropriate protections and benefits for all parties involved. Second, anti-discrimination measures, because it is needed implementing policies that protect polyamorous individuals from

discrimination in housing, employment, and healthcare. Third, education and awareness campaigns, to promote public understanding of polyamory through educational initiatives that challenge stereotypes and reduce stigma. Finally, yet not solely, research and data collection: Supporting studies on polyamorous relationships to inform evidence-based policymaking and better understand the needs of this community.

## Conclusion

Considering the growing diversity in family structures and relationship dynamics, legal systems must evolve to reflect these changes. Polyamory, as a legitimate and consensual form of relationship, has long been marginalized within legal and social frameworks, primarily due to the moral stigma associated with non-monogamous relationships. This exclusion has serious consequences, depriving polyamorous individuals and families of basic rights and protections typically afforded to monogamous unions, such as inheritance, healthcare decision-making, and child custody arrangements.

The lack of legal recognition for polyamorous relationships in Brazil is a glaring gap in the country's family law system. Despite the progressive strides made in the recognition of same-sex marriage and the promotion of gender equality, polyamory remains on the periphery of legal and social acceptance. As this article has explored, overcoming the moral stigma surrounding polyamory is essential for ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their relationship choices, are treated with dignity and respect in the eyes of the law.

Legal reforms are urgently needed to address the rights and needs of polyamorous individuals. These reforms should include the recognition of polyamorous unions, the extension of legal protections to all parties involved, and the development of public policies that prioritize inclusivity and social equality. The National Justice Council (CNJ), as a key body within Brazil's judiciary, is uniquely positioned to lead these efforts. By issuing resolutions that acknowledge polyamory and extend legal protections to polyamorous families, the CNJ could play a transformative role in advancing the rights of polyamorous individuals and fostering a more inclusive society.

Ultimately, the recognition of polyamory in legal and public policy frameworks is not only a matter of fairness and equality, but also a reflection of the evolving nature of love and family. The time has come for legal systems to move beyond outdated norms and embrace a more inclusive vision of relationships that reflects the diversity of human experiences. By advocating for the legal recognition of polyamory and the protection of polyamorous families, this article underscores the importance of fostering a legal and social environment that values all forms of love and family, ensuring that no one is left behind due to their relationship choices.

Polyamory represents a significant challenge to traditional notions of family and marriage, necessitating a reevaluation of existing legal frameworks. The CNJ's role in shaping public policies is crucial in ensuring that all forms of consensual relationships are recognized and protected. By addressing the moral stigmas associated with polyamory and promoting legal reforms, the CNJ can contribute to a more inclusive and equitable society.

The CNJ has the potential to lead this transformation by revising its resolutions to accommodate polyamorous relationships. By doing so, it can set a precedent for other institutions and encourage a broader cultural shift toward inclusivity. This would not only align with the constitutional principle of human dignity but also demonstrate a commitment to protecting the rights of all individuals, regardless of their relationship structures.

It is important to demark that public policies play a crucial role in determining which relationships are valued and protected by society. By excluding polyamorous relationships, current policies perpetuate inequality and reinforce outdated moral stigmas. However, through inclusive reforms, public policies can become a tool for social progress, ensuring that all individuals can live authentically and access the legal protections they deserve. The CNJ, as a key player in this process, could champion these changes and pave the way for a more equitable future.

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# HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN THE EUROPEAN AND COAST GUARD AGENCY [(EBCGA)-FRONTEX]. AN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK.THE CASE OF THE STANDING CORPS

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## Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to critically examine the human resources management of the specific body in this European organization and specifically as it emerges from the legal framework of its formation-organization and operation in combination with other legal texts, directives, recommendations, etc. that have been issued in the context of its administrative function, as well as the added value this brings to the overall security of the European Union (EU).

## Keywords

European Border and Coast Guard [EBCGA -Frontex)], human resources management, standing corps, rapid border intervention teams (RABITs).

## Resumo

O objetivo do presente artigo é analisar criticamente a gestão de recursos humanos deste órgão específico da referida organização europeia, nomeadamente tal como decorre do quadro jurídico da sua constituição, organização e funcionamento, em conjugação com outros textos jurídicos, diretivas, recomendações, etc., que foram emitidos no contexto da sua função

administrativa, bem como o valor acrescentado que tal traz para a segurança global da União Europeia (UE).

**Palavras-chave**

Guarda Europeia de Fronteiras e Costeira [EBCGA - Frontex], gestão de recursos humanos, corpo permanente, equipas de intervenção rápida nas fronteiras (RABITs).

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# HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN THE EUROPEAN AND COAST GUARD AGENCY [(EBCGA)-FRONTEX]. AN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK.THE CASE OF THE STANDING CORPS[1]

**TRYFON KORONTZIS**

## Introduction

The integrated management of the EU borders has long been a core focus of European policy. This approach aims to create a comprehensive system for managing external borders, ensuring effective control and surveillance of land and sea borders. These objectives are key to maintaining the area of Peace, Security, and Justice, driven by the need for free movement within the EU without internal border checks between Member States (MS). To achieve this, common rules have been established, detailing the procedures and controls to be applied at external borders.

In response to growing challenges, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA), originally established as Frontex in 2004, was created to provide expertise and coordinate operational cooperation among EU MS in managing external borders, stepping in where improvements were needed.

As part of the revised institutional framework of Frontex, a permanent body called the Standing Corps was established to strengthen border management, asylum procedures, the return of illegal immigrants, and efforts to combat cross-border crime. The Standing Corps, set to reach a capacity of 10.000 officers as defined in Regulation (EU) 1896/2019, will possess executive powers and participate in external border operations. Additionally, they will aid in the return of individuals without legal residence status in the EU and address cross-border crime.

Furthermore, officers from the Standing Corps, along with members of the Rapid Border Intervention Teams (RABITs) established to handle border emergencies, are authorized to carry weapons, make arrests, and perform other duties under the supervision of the host Member State's competent authorities.

[1] This paper presented at I.CO.D.ECON 2024, 6th International Conference of Development and Economy, Kalamata Greece, 11-13 October 2024 organized by the University of Peloponnese, University of Western Macedonia (International and European Economic Studies), University of National and Word Economy (Sofia), Alexandrou Ioan Cuza (University of Iasi).

## Human Resources Management in the European Border and Coast Guard Agency [(EBCGA)-Frontex]

The integrated management of the EU external borders has always been a key objective of European policy. This initiative seeks to establish a comprehensive framework for managing these borders, emphasizing uniform controls and effective surveillance of land and sea borders.

These objectives are central to the Area of Freedom, Security, and Justice (AFSJ) and are part of the broader policy framework designed to facilitate free movement within the EU without internal border checks among MS. To achieve this, common rules have been created to outline the specifications and control procedures implemented at the external borders (Korontzis, a.b,c).

In response to emerging challenges, a European organization was founded in 2004 to provide essential expertise for coordinating operational cooperation among EU MS authorities in managing external borders, intervening and enhancing processes as necessary. This organization is known as Frontex[2].

To fulfil its assigned tasks and mission as outlined in relevant legal texts, Frontex collaborates with various entities, including Europol, Eurojust, OLAF (European Anti-Fraud Office), EFCA (European Fisheries Control Agency), EMSA (European Maritime Safety Agency), the United Kingdom (UK), as well as other European and international organizations, and competent national authorities (Korontzis, 2014, a). Additionally, it works with third countries in accordance with the legal framework governing its activities[3].

A central aspect of the policy implemented by this European organization, within the framework of the EU external relations policy, is its role in promoting operational cooperation between EU MSs and third countries.

Frontex now EBCGA is based in Warsaw (Poland)[4] and its main tasks were and are operational[5].

[2] Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 November 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1052/2013 and (EU) 2016/1624 (L 295), p. 1.
Council Regulation (EU) 2022/922 of 9 June 2022 on the establishment and operation of an evaluation and monitoring mechanism to verify the application of the Schengen acquis, and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1053/2013 9L 160).
Regulation (EU) 2018/1862 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the establishment, operation and use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the field of police cooperation and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, amending and repealing Council Decision 2007/533/JHA, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1986/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Decision 2010/261/EU (L 312), p.56.
Regulation (EU) 2018/1861 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the establishment, operation and use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the field of border checks, and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement, and amending and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1987/2006, (L 312), p.14.
[3] Articles 68, 69, 72, 73,74, Reg. (EU) 2019/1896.
[4] 2005/358/EC: Council Decision of 26 April 2005 designating the seat of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (214).
[5] Articles 10, 36-42, 48-50, 54-59, 82, 85, Reg. (EU) 2019/1896.

It should be noted again that the staff of the RABITs[6,7] as also the staff of the Standing Corps, established within the framework of the aforementioned organization to respond to emergency situations, are authorized to carry weapons, make arrests, and take other actions in the presence of personnel from the local national authorities of the host EU MS.

Before the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896, which transformed Frontex into the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA), Frontex exercised the following competencies under Regulation (EU) 1052/2013 and Regulation (EU) 2016/1624:

a) Coordinated operational cooperation among EU MS in managing the external borders.

b) Assisted MS in training national border guards by establishing common training standards.

c) Conducted and utilized risk analyses.

d) Monitored developments in investigations related to the control and surveillance procedures at the external borders, keeping MS informed.

e) Provided assistance to MS when increased technical and operational support was needed at the EU's external borders.

f) Supported MS in organizing joint border operations, g) Maintained RABIT intervention teams in MS as provided in Regulation (EC) 863/2007 and Regulation (EU) 1168/2011 (Korontzis, 2022, c).

From its establishment until the issuance of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896, Frontex undertook significant actions and initiatives, including:

A. Implementing joint European operations at sea and land borders (Korontzis, 2024, b).

B. Creating a European network of patrols[8].

C. Creation and monitoring of a central equipment register that was made available.

D. Deployment of RABITs at the external borders when necessary.

E. Provision of subsidies for the training and development of border guards by establishing common training specifications (Deleixhe, M., & Duez, D., 2019).

To successfully and significantly manage migration flows, it is essential to be created, finalized, and implemented a coherent policy for the integrated management of external borders at both national and European levels. The development, execution, and monitoring of this policy will play a crucial role in tackling illegal immigration and different

[6] European Commission, FRONTEX and RABITS: the European Union is stepping up its operational efforts combating illegal immigration, available at https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_07_142, Frontex and the Rabit Operation at the Greek –Turkish border, available at https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_11_130, Frontex, Frontex launches rapid border intervention on Greek land border available at https://frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/frontex-launches-rapid-border-intervention-on-greek-land-border-J7k21h.
[7] Article 82 of Reg (EU) 2019/1896.
[8] Since its launch on 1 May 2005, it has successfully assisted Member States in implementing the operational aspects of external border management with joint operations and rapid border interventions, risk analyses, information exchange, liaison with third countries and returns.

types of cross-border crime, thus improving security across EU MS. Ultimately, all policies and actions should be developed and carried out with full respect for individuals' fundamental rights and the freedom of movement for everyone within the EU[9].

It is important to note that free movement within the EU, achieved through the abolition of border controls, relies on the implementation of high-quality external border controls to combat all forms of crime. This ensures a balance in the removal of border controls between EU MS.

The European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders, originally known as Frontex, was renamed the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA) in response to the migration crisis of 2015 and the subsequent increase in migration flows. This change led to the establishment of a new institutional framework, expanding the agency's mission and tasks to enhance the effectiveness of external border management.

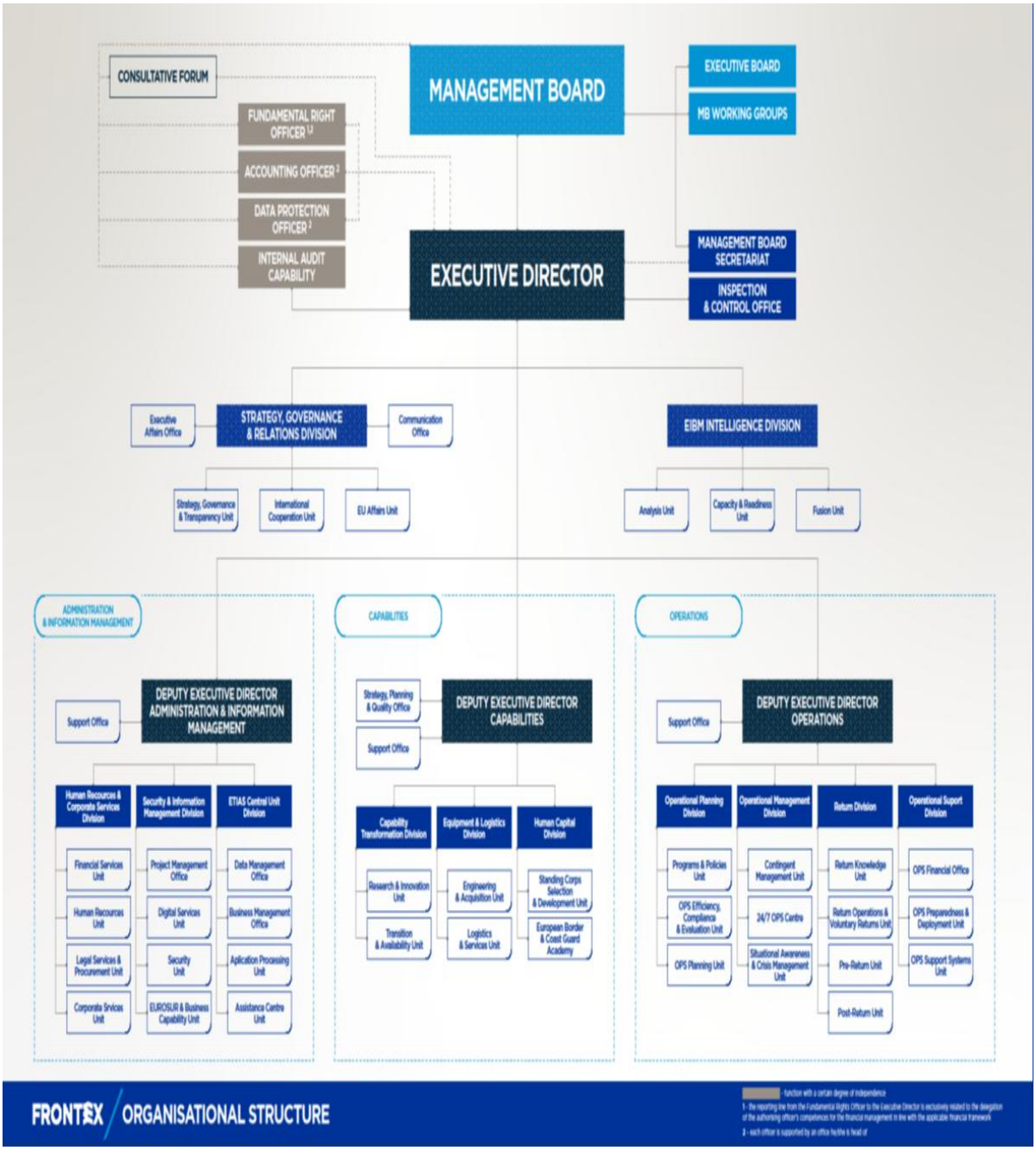
The EBCGA is composed of the competent authorities of the MS involved in managing external borders, specifically focusing on border control, as well as national authorities responsible for returns and the EBCGA itself.

The organization’s primary actions include:

- Developing an operational and technical strategy to achieve integrated management of the EU external borders within the context of the multi-annual strategic political cycle.
- Conducting risk analyses and assessments to effectively manage external borders (Regime, 2017; Satoko, 2016).
- Providing increased operational and technical assistance to MS and third countries, in accordance with the organization's legal framework, by conducting joint operations and interventions at external borders when necessary.
- Offering technical and operational support to MS in addressing emergencies at external borders.
- Assisting in maritime search and rescue (SAR) operations by providing technical and operational assistance [See Template 1 regarding the structure of the EBCGA and Template 2 regarding illegal migration routes to EU Member States].
- Organizing, coordinating and conducting return operations (Baër, S., & Beeres, R. & Bollen, M., 2020).

[9] «The Visa Information System (VIS) allows Schengen States to exchange visa data. It consists of a central IT system and of a communication infrastructure that links this central system to national systems. VIS connects consulates in non-EU countries and all external border crossing points of Schengen States. It processes data and decisions relating to applications for short-stay visas to visit, or to transit through, the Schengen Area. The system can perform biometric matching, primarily of fingerprints, for identification and verification purposes», available on https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/schengen-borders-and-visa/visa-information-system_en.
SIS II [Schengen Information System] became operational on 09/04/2013 and replaced SIS1. SIS II is the largest public safety information application in Europe, available on the website available at https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/dataset/ds00009_en.
Regulation (EU) 2018/1862 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the establishment, operation and use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the field of police cooperation and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, amending and repealing Council Decision 2007/533/JHA, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1986/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Decision 2010/261/EU (L 312), p.56.

**Template 1.** FRONTEX - Organizational Structure




Source: https://www.frontex.europa.eu/assets/About_Frontex/Frontex_Organisational_Structure_Apr_2024.pdf

The Management Board of the EBCGA is composed of representatives from EU MS, along with Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland, which are associated with the Schengen Agreement but are not EU members. Additionally, two members from the European Commission participate. The Board's responsibilities include appointing the

Executive Director and Deputy Directors, approving the annual budget, work program, organizational structure, and overseeing other related matters.

**Template 2.** Routes of Illegal Immigration to EU




Source: Hellenic Coast Guard Headquarter, 07/2024

In its conclusions of 28 June 2018, the European Council committed to strengthening cooperation between the Agency and third countries by allocating additional resources, improving border control measures, and facilitating the return of illegal immigrants [refer to Template 3 for details on joint operations conducted by the EBCGA].

The European Integrated Border Management Policy is organized as follows:[10]:

1. cooperation with third countries and taking measures in them as well as common visa policy,

2. external border control measures,

3. risk analyses,

4. the measures within the Schengen area and

5. returns.

It is necessary to carry out:

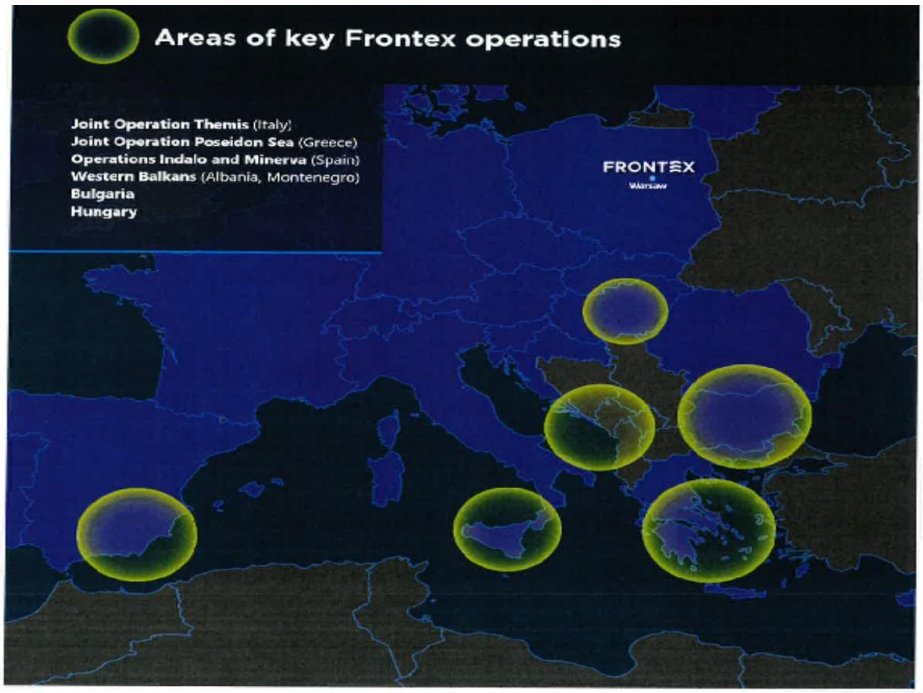
1. general and specific risk analyses based on a common integrated risk analysis model monitored by both EBCGA and the MS,

2. providing information to the MS based on the information provided by the competent authorities of the MS but also based on its activity, regarding border control, returns, movements of third country nationals within the EU, trafficking of human beings (THB), terrorism, dealing with cross-border crime, the situation in third countries, with the ultimate aim of taking measures to deal with threats and risks and improving the integrated management of the external borders and in cooperation with other European organizations such as Europol when there are serious forms of crime affecting two or more MS.

[10] According to article 3 of the Reg. (EU) 1896/2019, European integrated border management is:
«1. European integrated border management shall consist of the following components:
(a) border control, including measures to facilitate legitimate border crossings and, where appropriate: measures related to the prevention and detection of cross-border crime at the external borders, in particular migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings, and terrorism; and mechanisms and procedures for the identification of vulnerable persons and unaccompanied minors, and for the identification of persons who are in need of international protection or wish to apply for such protection, the provision of information to such persons, and the referral of such persons;
(b) search and rescue operations for persons in distress at sea launched and carried out in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 656/2014 and with international law, taking place in situations which may arise during border surveillance operations at sea;
(c) analysis of the risks for internal security and analysis of the threats that may affect the functioning or security of the external borders;
(d) information exchange and cooperation between Member States in the areas covered by this Regulation, as well as information exchange and cooperation between Member States and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, including the support coordinated by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency;
(e) inter-agency cooperation among the national authorities in each Member State which are responsible for border control or for other tasks carried out at the border, as well as between authorities responsible for return in each Member State, including the regular exchange of information through existing information exchange tools, including, where appropriate, cooperation with national bodies in charge of protecting fundamental rights;
(f) cooperation among the relevant Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies in the areas covered by this Regulation, including through regular exchange of information;
(g) cooperation with third countries in the areas covered by this Regulation, focusing in particular on neighbouring third countries and on those third countries which have been identified through risk analysis as being countries of origin or transit for illegal immigration;
(h) technical and operational measures within the Schengen area which are related to border control and designed to address illegal immigration and to counter cross-border crime better;
(i) the return of third-country nationals who are the subject of return decisions issued by a Member State;
(j) the use of state-of-the-art technology including large-scale information systems;
(k) a quality control mechanism, in particular the Schengen evaluation mechanism, the vulnerability assessment and possible national mechanisms, to ensure the implementation of Union law in the area of border management;
(l) solidarity mechanisms, in particular Union funding instruments.
2. Fundamental rights, education and training, as well as research and innovation shall be overarching components in the implementation of European integrated border management».

Regarding the finding of the satisfactory operation of the Schengen area or not, a vulnerability assessment is carrying out and also with the Schengen assessment mechanism[11] established by Reg. (EU) 1053/2013[12] .

**Template 3.** Joint Operations Developed by FRONTEX




Source: Frontex/Agency at a glance/European Border and Coast Guard Agency

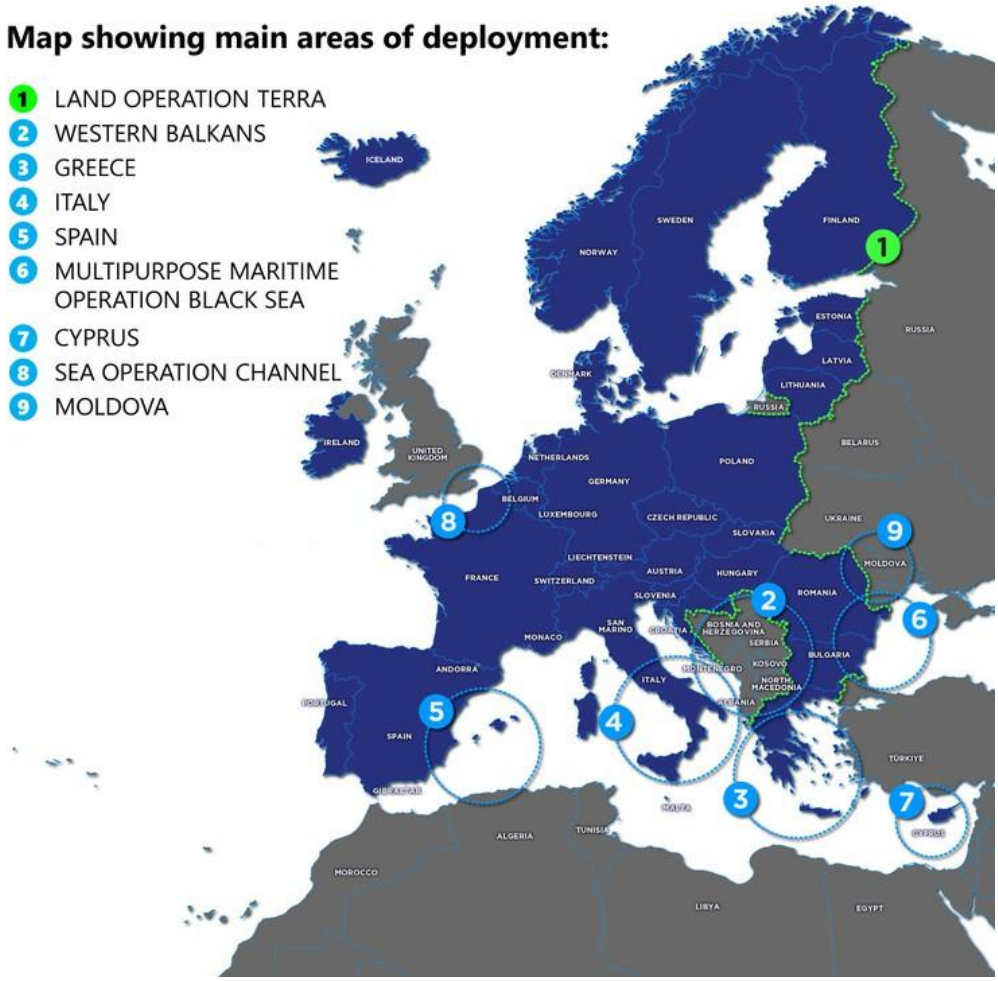
The tasks of the organization are defined in article 10 of the Reg. (EU) 1896/2019[13].

It must be mentioned that in article 82 of the above mentioned Regulation the duties and responsibilities of the members of the groups (RABITs and Standing Corps) are defined[14]

[11] Regulation (EU) No 656/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 establishing rules for the surveillance of the external sea borders in the context of operational cooperation coordinated by the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (L 189).
[12] Council Regulation (EU) 2022/922 of 9 June 2022 on the establishment and operation of an evaluation and monitoring mechanism to verify the application of the Schengen acquis, and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1053/2013 (L 160).
[13] Briefly, among its main tasks are «the monitoring of migratory flows and carrying out risk analyses regarding all aspects related to integrated border management, monitoring the operational needs of Member States linked to the execution of return, including through the collection of operational data, conducting vulnerability assessment, including assessments of the capacity and preparedness of Member States to deal with threats and problems at the external borders, monitoring the management of the external borders through the Agency's liaison officers in the Member States, monitoring the compliance of fundamental rights in all its activities at the external borders and return operations, supporting the development and operation of EUROSUR, providing assistance to Member States in cases where increased technical and operational assistance is required at their external borders through coordination and organization of joint operations, etc».
[14] According to the article 85 of the Reg. (EU) 1896/2019 «Without prejudice to Article 95, during a joint operation, pilot project, migration management support team deployment, rapid border intervention, return operation or return intervention, members of the teams in the territory of the host Member State, including statutory staff, shall be treated in the same way as officials of the host Member State with regard to any criminal offences that might be committed against them or by them».

and in particular for the members of the teams sent by EBCGA to carry out tasks and responsibilities in order to achieve the objectives of Reg. (EU) 656/2014[15], (EU) 2016/399[16] and Directive 2008/115/EK[17], while the implementation of executive powers is governed by the permission of the host MS in conjunction with the provisions of Reg. (EU) 656/2014 (Korontzis, 2015)[18].

**Template 4**




Source: https://www.frontex.europa.eu/what-we-do/operations/operations/

[15] Regulation (EU) No 656/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 establishing rules for the surveillance of the external sea borders in the context of operational cooperation coordinated by the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (L 189).
[16] Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on a Union Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code) (L 77).
[17] Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals (L 348).
[18] Article 38 of the Regulation.

The tasks of the specific organization focus on the following key areas:

- **Coordination**: Facilitating cooperation between Member States (MS) to improve border security.
- **Risk analysis**: Assessing risks at the EU external borders, considering geopolitical developments and analysing data from MS, other EU bodies, and open sources (e.g., internet, press) to understand border challenges.
- **Predictive analysis**: Forecasting future illegal immigration flows and the strategies of organized crime (modus operandi) to prepare for effective responses.
- **Support to MS**: Providing resources, training, and assistance for sea and land border protection, including operational support.
- **Technology monitoring**: Tracking investigations and developments at entry points (ports, airports) and maritime borders, collecting and forwarding information for expert evaluation, and keeping MS authorities informed of security sector research.

Regarding joint operations[19] these activities are conducted based on risk analysis performed by the EBCGA or in response to actual risks present at EU borders (Coppens, 2012). Each operation outlines its objective, the operational area, and the human and technical resources required. Many of these operations are funded by the EBCGA.

The allocation of resources and forces is carried out either through the RABITs or Standing Corps consisting of the available personnel by the MS and EBCGA and of the available equipment provided also by the MS and the EBCGA.

The EBCGA also works with third countries to support European Integrated Border Management and immigration policy by offering technical and operational assistance within the framework of the Union's external action policy. This cooperation is detailed in Articles 71 to 75 of Regulation (EU) 1896/2019. As part of these efforts, the organization can deploy liaison officers and experts from its permanent and other staff to third countries.

- Provides assistance to MS when increased technical and operational support is required at external borders (Korontzis, 2022), particularly in response to incidents necessitating rapid intervention, such as the support provided to Greece during the migration pressure along the Greece-Turkey land border on the Evros in 2020 (Tzimas, 2021). The EBCGA also assists MS in organizing joint repatriation operations.
- Real-time information exchange occurs through the Eurosur system.

To enhance operational effectiveness, the new institutional framework includes provisions for collaboration with third countries (non-EU countries). The organization works with these countries to advance European Integrated Border Management and immigration policy by providing technical and operational support within the Union's external action policy. The framework permits the deployment of liaison officers from the EBCGA staff to third countries, where they are integrated into local or regional

[19] More information available on the https://www.frontex.europa.eu/what-we-do/operations/operations/

cooperation networks, alongside immigration liaison officers and EU and Member State security experts, as outlined in article 66 of Regulation (EU) 1896/2019 and Regulation (EU) 2019/1240.

European organizations engage with both internal and external EU policies through collaboration with third countries, shaped by the EU determined policy. Additionally, various initiatives, such as Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) (Korontzis, 2012, d) and the European Arrest Warrant (EAW) (Korontzis, 2013), contribute to strengthening cooperation and fostering a common European culture. This gradual integration facilitates the sharing of knowledge, policies, and collaborative efforts.

One significant provision that embodies these supranational elements is found in article 42 of Regulation (EU) 1896/2019, titled "Situation at the external borders requiring urgent action". In particular «when external border control becomes ineffective to such an extent that it threatens to jeopardize the functioning of the Schengen area, either because a Member State does not take the necessary measures in accordance with the vulnerability assessment or because a MS facing specific and disproportionately large problems at the external borders has not requested sufficient support from the Agency or does not implement such support, then a unified, rapid and effective response at Union level should be provided. To mitigate these risks and to ensure better coordination at Union level, the Commission should propose to the Council a decision specifying the measures to be implemented by the Agency and to require the MS concerned to cooperate with the Agency for the implementation of these measures.

The executive power to issue such a decision should be vested in the Council, due to the potentially politically sensitive nature of the measures to be decided, possibly involving national executive and law enforcement powers. The Agency should then determine the actions to be taken for the practical implementation of the measures referred to in the Council decision.

The Agency should draw up a business plan together with the MS concerned. The MS concerned should facilitate the implementation of the Council Decision and the business plan by respecting, inter alia, its obligations under this Regulation. If a Member State does not comply within 30 days with that Council decision and does not cooperate with the Agency in implementing the measures provided for in that decision, the Commission should be able to initiate the special procedure of Article 29 of Reg. (EU) 2016/399[20] to deal with emergencies that endanger its entire operation without controls at the internal borders of the area».

This provision is a ground-breaking development within the Area of Freedom, Security, and Justice, one that would have been difficult to implement just a few years ago. Its creation was made possible by the institutional framework established by the Lisbon Treaty (LT) and the consensus of key EU institutions, including the European Parliament, European Commission, and European Council.

It reflects the collective will of EU citizens, as expressed through the European Parliament, as well as the determination of political leaders and the European

[20] Specific procedure where exceptional circumstances put the overall functioning of the area without internal border control at risk.
More specifically «1. In exceptional circumstances where the overall functioning of the area without internal border control is put at risk as a result of persistent serious deficiencies relating to external border control as referred to in Article 21, and insofar as L 77/22 Official Journal of the European Union 23.3.2016 EN those circumstances constitute a serious threat to public policy or internal security within the area without internal border control or within parts thereof, border control at internal borders may be reintroduced in accordance with paragraph 2 of this Article for a period of up to six months. That period may be prolonged, no more than three times, for a further period of up to six months if the exceptional circumstances persist……».

Commission to tackle shared challenges, particularly in response to the sharp rise in illegal immigration since 2015.

Specifically, the provision for unified and collective action by the EU in instances where a Member State is unable to manage specific situations at its borders—shared by the EU—demonstrates a policy with supranational characteristics. It acknowledges that effective governance requires consensus on critical issues, thereby incorporating supranational elements. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that participating in a cooperative framework such as the EU necessitates an understanding that what benefits the EU as a whole is also in the interest of individual MS.

## Standing Corps

To improve the efficiency of border security, asylum processes, the return of illegal immigrants and the fight against cross-border crime, the new institutional framework for Frontex includes the creation of a Standing Corps for the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA) [(Standing Corps)][21].

The Standing Corps will eventually comprise 10.000 officers, as specified in Regulation (EU) 1896/2019 [Annex I]. These officers will have executive powers and will participate in operations aimed at effectively guarding the external borders, alongside the presence of staff from the competent authorities of the host Member State. This arrangement will not only help combat cross-border crime but also facilitate the return of illegal immigrants.

It is important to note that, according to paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 of Article 82:

«2. The performance of tasks and the exercise of powers by members of the teams, in particular those requiring executive powers, shall be subject to the authorisation of the host Member State on its territory as well as to applicable Union, national or international law, in particular Regulation (EU) No 656/2014, as described in the operational plans referred to in Article 38.

3. While performing their tasks and exercising their powers, members of the teams shall fully ensure respect for fundamental rights and shall comply with Union and international law and the national law of the host Member State.

4. Without prejudice to Article 95(1) as regards statutory staff, members of the teams shall only perform tasks and exercise powers under instructions from and, as a general rule, in the presence of border guards or staff involved in return-related tasks of the host Member State. The host Member State may authorise members of the teams to act on its behalf».

Paragraph 7 defines that: « For staff who are seconded to the Agency or deployed from a Member State for a short term, the ability to carry and use service weapons, ammunition and equipment shall be subject to the home Member State's national law. The ability to carry and use service weapons, ammunition and equipment by the statutory staff who are deployed as members of the teams shall be subject to the framework and detailed rules laid down in this Article and Annex V. For the purpose of implementing this paragraph, the executive director may authorise statutory staff to carry and use weapons in accordance with the rules adopted by the management board, in line with point (b) of Article 55(5)» and in the paragraph 9 «Service weapons, ammunition and equipment may be used in legitimate self-defence and in legitimate defence of members of the

[21] Frontex carrers, European Border and Coast Guard Standing Corps, available at https://frontex.europa.eu/careers/standing-corps/about/ and additionally articles of the Reg. (EU) 54,55,56,57,58,61,82.

teams or of other persons in accordance with the national law of the host Member State in line with relevant principles of international human rights law and the Charter».

The Standing Corps consists of four categories of officers, including EBCGA personnel and officers sent from MS for long- or short-term missions, as well as a reserve that can be activated during crises. By 2027, the European Border and Coast Guard Standing Corps is expected to include a total of 10.000 staff members, with 3,000 being Category 1 officers—EBCGA staff. The remaining 7,000 officers will be seconded from EU Member States.

- **Category 1**: Border guards directly employed by Frontex as staff members, regularly deployed to border guarding missions based on their profiles.
- **Category 2**: Long-term staff seconded from MS.
- **Category 3**: Short-term staff seconded from MS.
- **Category 4**: A reserve of EU Member State border guards available to the EBCGA for rapid response during border management crises[22].

The Profiles -Specializations of the Standing Corps can be seen in the Template 5.

**Template 5.** Profiles - Specialisation of Standing Corps




Source: https://www.frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/standing-corps/profiles/

[22]More information available on https://www.frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/standing-corps/standing-corps/ and in the article 54 European Border and Coast Guard standing corps of the EGULATION (EU) 2019/1896 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 13 November 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1052/2013 and (EU) 2016/1624.

## Conclusions

Illegal immigration, which is one of the most important dimensions of organized crime, constitutes one of the most modern threats to the security of international society that are called upon to deal with at local, EU and international level. International police cooperation between international, EU and local national authorities plays an important role in dealing with it.

In order to implement the latter, bilateral and multilateral agreements have been drawn up, new research methods and European organizations have been developed that contribute to the planning, implementation and monitoring of policies related to the management of external borders.

The management of the external borders is one of the most important dimensions for the safe and smooth functioning of the EU internal area, where the free movement of citizens takes place and controls between EU MS have been abolished.

The security architecture built by the EU consists of five key elements:

- increased operations by EBCGA at sea and land borders,
- technological shielding of borders,
- conclusion of Readmission Agreements with three states,
- setting up reception centres at the EU external borders;
- the transformation of Frontex since 2019 into a European Border and Coast Guard Agency,
- multi-layered surveillance of the external borders consisting of EBCGA Standing Corps, RABITs under the auspices of Frontex, the European External Border Surveillance System (Eurosur) (Rijpma, J. & Vermeulen, M., 2015), the ETIAS system [23], VIS system[24], the Schengen Information System (SIS I and SIS II) and Eurodac.

The measures applied are considered effective as a reduction of illegal arrivals in the EU by 90% has been achieved[25]. However, the violation of fundamental rights and freedoms of immigrants, as shown in reports by international organizations and EU services, should not be overlooked[26].

It is an undeniable fact that population movements driven by economic, social, and political factors are unlikely to cease. The EU, known for its relatively high standard of

[23] Available at https://travel-europe.europa.eu/etias/what-etias_en
[24] REGULATION (EC) No 767/2008 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 9 July 2008 concerning the Visa Information System (VIS) and the exchange of data between Member States on short-stay visas (VIS Regulation)
[25] Available at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/el/policies/eu-migration-policy/ and at https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/statistics-migration-europe_el#illegalbordercrossings.
[26] « A report reveals how 6 countries violate the rights of refugees», available at https://www.efsyn.gr/ellada/dikaiomata/293637_ekthesi-apokalyptei-pos-6-hores-katapatoyn-ta-dikaiomata-ton-prosfygon, Regional Thematic Study:Management of the External Border of the EU and its impact on Human Rights of Migrants available at https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Migration/SRMigrants/Pages/RegionalThematicStudy.aspx και SUNDERLAND J., Hidden Emergency, Migrant Deaths in the Mediterranean, Human Rights Watch, August 2012, UNHCR, available at https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/2012_EU_Hidden%20Emergency.pdf.

living, attracts many individuals seeking better opportunities. Consequently, the phenomenon of illegal immigration has intensified around Europe, whether by sea or land.

In response, the EU established Frontex, now known as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA), as a central operational agency. EBCGA provides resources, expertise, training, and conducts joint sea and land operations, as well as preparing studies and risk analyses, to assist the MS involved in its administration. Its contribution has been significant in addressing illegal immigration, leading to the decision to establish a specialized body, the Standing Corps, which falls under the organization's responsibility.

This specialized body, composed of well-trained officers from the competent national authorities of all EU MS, plays a crucial role in effectively managing the EU external borders. The creation of the EBCGA and the Standing Corps reflects the political will of MS to collaboratively address the challenges posed by illegal immigration, demonstrating their solidarity and commitment to a response. This initiative also represents a significant step toward deeper integration within the EU.

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# ATLANTIC ANCHOR: PORTUGAL IN THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

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## Abstract

This paper explores Portugal's engagement with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a case study in geoeconomic strategy, situated at the intersection of U.S.-China rivalry and European integration. While much scholarly attention has focused on Central and Eastern Europe, Portugal's role in the BRI remains underexamined despite its Atlantic location, deep-sea port infrastructure, and historical ties with China. The study situates Portugal's participation in the BRI within the broader framework of geoeconomics, defined as the use of economic tools to pursue geopolitical aims. Chinese investments in Portuguese energy, infrastructure, and telecommunications have intensified since the Eurozone crisis, prompting concerns among Western allies about strategic dependencies. The Port of Sines exemplifies this strategic tension, attracting interest from both Chinese and American stakeholders. At the same time, Portugal has advanced its maritime ambitions through "blue economy" partnerships with China, balancing commercial cooperation with geopolitical caution. The study further examines the evolving regulatory landscape shaped by the European Union's foreign investment screening framework and the United States' efforts to curtail Chinese influence in critical sectors like 5G. Portugal's recent distancing from Huawei and reassessment of its BRI participation illustrate how smaller states can recalibrate their foreign policy amid intensifying global competition. The findings suggest that Portugal's case highlights the strategic dilemmas of middle powers navigating competing geoeconomic agendas, revealing how economic connectivity is increasingly instrumentalized for geopolitical ends in Southern Europe.

## Keywords

The Belt and Road Initiative, Portugal, Geoeconomics, Port of Sines, The EU, The U.S.

## Resumo

Este artigo explora o envolvimento de Portugal na Iniciativa «Belt and Road» (BRI) da China como um estudo de caso em estratégia geoeconómica, situado na intersecção entre a rivalidade entre os EUA e a China e a integração europeia. Embora grande parte da atenção académica se tenha centrado na Europa Central e Oriental, o papel de Portugal na BRI continua a ser pouco estudado, apesar da sua localização atlântica, das infraestruturas

portuárias de águas profundas e dos laços históricos com a China. O estudo situa a participação de Portugal na BRI no quadro mais amplo da geoeconomia, definida como a utilização de instrumentos económicos para perseguir objetivos geopolíticos. Os investimentos chineses nos setores da energia, infraestruturas e telecomunicações portugueses intensificaram-se desde a crise da zona euro, suscitando preocupações entre os aliados ocidentais quanto a dependências estratégicas. O Porto de Sines exemplifica esta tensão estratégica, atraindo o interesse tanto de partes interessadas chinesas como americanas. Ao mesmo tempo, Portugal tem promovido as suas ambições marítimas através de parcerias de «economia azul» com a China, equilibrando a cooperação comercial com a cautela geopolítica. O estudo examina ainda o panorama regulatório em evolução, moldado pelo quadro de análise de investimentos estrangeiros da União Europeia e pelos esforços dos Estados Unidos para restringir a influência chinesa em setores críticos como o 5G. O recente distanciamento de Portugal da Huawei e a reavaliação da sua participação na BRI ilustram como os Estados mais pequenos podem recalibrar a sua política externa num contexto de intensificação da concorrência global. As conclusões sugerem que o caso de Portugal destaca os dilemas estratégicos das potências médias que navegam por agendas geoeconómicas concorrentes, revelando como a conectividade económica é cada vez mais instrumentalizada para fins geopolíticos no sul da Europa.

**Palavras-chave**

Iniciativa Belt and Road, Portugal, Geoeconomia, Porto de Sines, UE, EUA.

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# ATLANTIC ANCHOR: PORTUGAL IN THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

**GÖKHAN TEKIR**

## Introduction

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is one of the most ambitious connectivity projects in the 21st century. The expansion of China's BRI across Europe has raised significant concern and debate, leading to a range of responses within the European Union (EU) and among its member states. Academically, there has been growing interest in the initiative's influence in Europe, with particular attention given to its role in Central and Eastern Europe through platforms such as the 17+1 cooperation. However, there is still limited scholarly focus on the relationship between Portugal and China within the context of the BRI, especially in relation to Southern Europe more broadly (Ferreria-Ferreia & Duarte, 2022: 218).

Portugal occupies a distinctive position within this evolving geoeconomic landscape. Although it is a small state in terms of material capabilities, it possesses structural advantages that make it attractive to China. These include its strategic Atlantic coastline, deep seaports such as Sines, a vast exclusive economic zone, and a diplomatic tradition shaped by longstanding engagement with both China and the United States (U.S.). Historical ties rooted in the Macau connection, a reputation for pragmatic diplomacy, and a long record of openness to foreign investment have further facilitated the entry of Chinese firms. As a result, China has acquired significant stakes in Portugal's energy sector, financial institutions, and logistics networks, integrating the country into its expanding presence in Western Europe.

These developments have taken place in a wider strategic context. The U.S. has expressed growing concern that Chinese influence in critical infrastructure may create vulnerabilities for the security of a NATO ally. Washington's warnings regarding Huawei and the future of 5G telecommunications, along with its interest in the Port of Sines as a potential hub for LNG, show how Portugal has become entangled in overlapping strategic agendas. Simultaneously, the EU has introduced stronger investment screening mechanisms and digital security regulations, encouraging member states such as Portugal to adjust earlier policies of openness toward Chinese capital.

Portugal, thus, has become an area in which great power competition takes place. Rather than acting as a passive recipient of great power competition, Portugal attempts to balance these external constraints with its own economic priorities. The country's

evolving approach to the BRI reflects a pattern of small state strategy that seeks to secure investment, when possible, preserve flexibility through selective connectivity, and rely on the EU and NATO frameworks to manage political and security risks. Existing literature has primarily focused on Southern European BRI engagement through Mediterranean ports such as Piraeus, while Portugal's Atlantic position remains underexplored. This study contributes to the literature by conceptualizing Portugal not merely as a recipient of Chinese investment but as a strategic node that actively leverages geoeconomic competition to enhance its agency.

This article argues that Portugal's engagement with the BRI demonstrates how small states navigate great power geoeconomic competition through a combination of selective openness, regulatory adjustment and calibrated hedging. Portugal neither fully aligns with China nor disengages under Western pressure. Instead, it manages competing expectations by exploiting its strategic maritime position, institutional affiliations with the EU and NATO, and long-standing diplomatic ties with Beijing. In doing so, Portugal challenges traditional assumptions that small states rely primarily on patronage or institutional sheltering. The Portuguese case shows that small-state agency is often exercised through flexible, sector-specific strategies that enable autonomy even under conditions of asymmetric dependence.

## Geoeconomics and Small States

Geoeconomics refers to the use of economic instruments such as investment, infrastructure, finance and technology for strategic purposes. It combines the logic of conflict with the methods of commercial interaction (Luttwak, 1990, p. 19). As a foreign policy strategy, geoeconomics involves using economic tools to pursue strategic goals, presenting an alternative to traditional military-based power politics. It represents a form of power projection carried out through economic means. Geoeconomics also carries a geographical aspect, as it often operates through critical economic corridors that establish and enhance connectivity (Scholvin & Wigell, 2018, pp. 4–5). Economic linkages function as instruments of geoeconomic strategy. Major global economic networks often concentrate power in a few central hubs, forming a hub-and-spoke structure. Economic interdependence produces two key forms of power: market power, derived from a state's economic scale, and bilateral dependence, where countries rely on specific goods or partners. Only actors that control these central hubs can effectively exploit interdependence as a strategic tool (Farrell & Newman, 2019, p. 52).

This networked structure has important implications for small states. Small states have been defined in various ways, including their geographic size, population and degree of international influence. Literature often distinguishes between microstates with very small populations, highly developed European small states, and politically or economically constrained states in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The challenge with this tripartite classification is that most conclusions about foreign policy behavior are drawn within each category rather than across them, which limits efforts to develop a general theory of small-state behavior (Hey, 2003, p. 2). Beyond physical indicators, there is also a psychological dimension. Keohane (1969, p. 296) offered this conceptualization: "A small power is a state whose leaders consider that it can never, acting alone or in a small group, make a significant impact on the system." They acquire diplomatic influence

through the multilateral processes of international organizations, especially through the equal-vote decision rules that characterize many of these institution small states gain diplomatic power through international system's multilateral processes (Maass, 2017, p. 152). Their foreign policy behavior relies primarily on diplomatic engagement, legal instruments and economic tools, since they lack the military capacity to project force (Pinto, 2014, p. 393). The strategic orientation of small states reflects a broader structural logic in which they emphasize international law, institutional norms and cooperative principles to compensate for limited material capabilities and preserve room for autonomous action within asymmetrical geoeconomic networks. Although they cannot shape the overall structure of global economic systems, small states can exert influence through control of specific nodes such as ports, data routes or regulatory gateways. Assets embedded in global networks therefore become important sources of leverage, particularly when a state occupies a valuable geographic position or hosts infrastructures that intersect with major corridors of trade and energy.

Portugal illustrates this dynamic. Despite modest material power, it possesses a maritime domain that significantly enhances its geoeconomic relevance. Portugal has a coastline of 942 square kilometers. Including its islands, the country has an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 1.72 million square kilometers, making it the third largest EEZ in the EU. If extended to the limits of the Portuguese continental shelf, this would add 3.88 million square kilometers, 20 times the size of Portugal's land area, making it the 11th largest EEZ globally. Combining the EEZ with the extended continental shelf would increase Portugal's maritime territory from 18 to 40 times its land area, roughly equivalent to the size of India (Silva & Pereira, 2019, p. 401). This vast oceanic space increases Portugal's economic and strategic significance far beyond its territorial size

The Port of Sines adds further weight to Portugal's position. The Port of Sines, located 58 nautical miles south of Lisbon, is Portugal's only deep-sea port, capable of handling large vessels with depths up to 28 meters. Positioned at the convergence of major global shipping routes such as the transatlantic, Mediterranean, and Cape passages, the Port of Sines has historically held strategic maritime significance. This importance has been further reinforced by the 2016 expansion of the Panama Canal, which significantly increased global cargo capacity and highlighted Sines as the nearest deepwater port in Europe to this critical transoceanic corridor (Wejchert, 2021). These geographical and infrastructural attributes make Portugal a notable node within broader geoeconomic networks, illustrating how a small state can derive influence from strategically positioned assets. China's expanding BRI has created a new strategic context that elevates the importance of the Port of Sines and enhances Portugal's overall geoeconomic relevance.

## The BRI as a Geoeconomic Design

Although officially framed as a cooperative development initiative, the BRI functions as an instrument of economic statecraft through which China advances strategic objectives. China possesses the required economic capacity to finance large-scale infrastructure projects, positioning itself as the principal investor across Eurasia and Africa (Kostecka-Tomaszewska & Krukowska, 2020, p. 275). The initiative operates through dual logic. Domestically, it seeks to integrate China's western provinces into transnational trade corridors and mitigate internal developmental asymmetries. Externally, it expands

Chinese presence across transport, energy and financial infrastructures, projecting influence through economic embeddedness rather than territorial control. In this sense, the BRI reflects a geoeconomic strategy in which infrastructure functions as both growth mechanism and geopolitical instrument (Poon et al., 2024, p. 2).

The initiative's digital component further extends this logic. Through the export of 5G systems, fiber networks and digital platforms, Chinese firms promote technological ecosystems that complement physical corridors. This digital layer deepens interdependence while embedding Chinese standards within critical data infrastructures, reinforcing the BRI's broader geoeconomic design (Casagrande & Dallago, 2025, p. 4; Tekir, 2020, p. 122).

Europe has become a central arena for China's geoeconomic expansion. Through state-linked enterprises, Beijing has acquired stakes in ports, utilities, financial institutions and logistics networks, embedding itself within critical European infrastructure (Kostecka-Tomaszewska & Krukowska, 2020, p. 271). These investments generate not only commercial partnerships but also structural forms of influence rooted in asymmetric interdependence. While major economies such as Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom have absorbed substantial inflows of Chinese capital, Southern and peripheral member states including Hungary and Greece have experienced more concentrated exposure. This uneven distribution has enabled China to cultivate bilateral leverage within the European Union, complicating the formation of a unified European response (Amighini, 2018, p. 265). The expanding presence of Chinese firms in European ports further reinforces this pattern by linking maritime infrastructure to broader networks of political and economic influence (Martin et al., 2024, p. 6). Container traffic patterns within Europe shifted after the global financial crisis, with Southern ports gaining relative prominence in global shipping networks. Especially, Greece's Piraeus port emerged as the flagship BRI project in the Mediterranean (Kalkschmied & Stricker, 2025, p. 3). This structural rebalancing, reinforced by changing trade routes and Chinese investment in Mediterranean infrastructure, created new openings for Atlantic facing states. Within this evolving maritime landscape, Portugal's deep seaport capacity and extensive maritime domain increased its geoeconomic relevance.

Portugal's engagement with the BRI must therefore be understood within this broader restructuring of European connectivity. As a member of both the EU and NATO, Portugal occupies a strategic intersection between European market integration and transatlantic security commitments. Chinese investments in Portuguese energy, transport and digital sectors extend beyond commercial exchange and reflect a calibrated strategy through which Lisbon seeks to leverage geographic position while managing alliance-based constraints. For Beijing, Portugal offers access to the EU single market and Atlantic routes. For Lisbon, the BRI provides an opportunity to attract capital and reinforce its role as an Atlantic gateway within Europe.

## Portugal-China Relations

Portugal's engagement with China within the BRI framework is rooted not only in contemporary economic calculations but also in a long-standing historical relationship that fostered bilateral trust. Portuguese presence in Macau from the sixteenth century

until its negotiated handover in 1999 created a comparatively low conflict diplomatic legacy, distinguishing Lisbon's relationship with Beijing from more coercive colonial experiences in Europe (Fernandes et al., 2022, p. 49). This historical continuity helped create a diplomatic environment in which engagement with China remained comparatively depoliticized and low conflict, a condition that small states often rely upon to manage asymmetrical relationships.

These historical foundations acquired renewed significance during the global financial and Eurozone crises, which severely constrained Portugal's fiscal autonomy and limited its access to international capital markets. Under these conditions of heightened vulnerability, China's acquisition of Portuguese sovereign bonds provided a critical source of liquidity and signaled the deepening of bilateral economic ties. Since 2000, Portugal has registered one of the most pronounced increases in Chinese capital inflows within Europe (Arena, 2022, p. 4).

China emerged as a crucial source of financing by purchasing Portuguese sovereign bonds at a moment when international markets had largely withdrawn. These interventions not only provided liquidity but also marked the beginning of a broader phase of Chinese economic embeddedness. Portugal subsequently became one of the European countries registering the most significant growth in Chinese capital inflows since 2000 (Arena, 2022, p. 4). Between 2015 and 2019, Chinese investment in Portugal diversified significantly beyond the energy sector, expanding into real estate, banking, health, and well-being. Both state-owned and private Chinese entities became key actors in the Portuguese market. Notably, the private conglomerate FOSUN acquired Luz Saúde, following earlier investments in Fidelidade and Banco Comercial Português. Other relevant developments included Bison Capital's acquisition of BANIF in 2016, although attempts by Anbang to purchase Novo Banco and by China Three Gorges to acquire EDP ultimately failed. Despite these setbacks, Portugal became the first Eurozone country to issue public debt in renminbi, reinforcing its strategy of positioning itself as a gateway for Chinese investment in Europe. Financial integration also progressed through Millennium BCP's issuance of UnionPay credit cards. In the energy sector, China Triumph International Engineering invested €200 million in a major solar power project in Alcoutim, while the launch of a blue partnership in 2017 further deepened bilateral cooperation in maritime affairs. Meanwhile, Chinese investment in real estate included large-scale projects in Oeiras, Monsanto, and Estremoz, reflecting a broader strategy of long-term economic engagement and strategic positioning within the Portuguese economy (Ferreria-Ferreia & Duarte, 2022, pp. 224–225).

This phase of economic penetration coincided with institutional measures that facilitated capital inflows. The center right government led by Passos Coelho introduced the Golden Visa program, which attracted significant Chinese participation, while the subsequent Socialist government adopted a more explicitly supportive stance toward BRI cooperation (Silva et al., 2023, p. 161).

In an effort to boost its position in the globalized economy, Portugal has also sought to involve China in its Atlantic maritime initiatives, particularly in the capital-scarce blue economy sector. In 2016, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Chinese Oceanic State Administration and the Portuguese Ministry of the Sea to promote cooperation in scientific research and commercial projects. That same year, collaboration

with the University of the Azores was proposed for joint studies on mineral exploration. This partnership advanced further in 2017 with the signing of an Action Plan during a Portuguese business mission to China (Silva & Pereira, 2019, pp. 402–403). These common interests have strengthened Portugal–China relations in the context of the BRI.

These cumulative developments laid the groundwork for the formalization of cooperation under the BRI. During President Xi's 2018 visit to Portugal, the two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding, which formalized Portugal's engagement with the BRI. Within the BRI framework, Portugal and China committed to advancing cooperation by utilizing bilateral and multilateral platforms, including major development banks and the EU–China Connectivity Platform, to generate strategic complementarity. The MoU articulates seven principal domains of collaboration. Policy coordination serves as the overarching mechanism for aligning national strategies. Transport, logistics and port infrastructure constitute a second area, with particular emphasis on the Port of Sines, the future Vasco da Gama terminal, and the reinforcement of maritime, rail and air connectivity. A third domain concerns the expansion of two-way trade and investment, including coordinated engagement in third-country markets, especially those in the Lusophone community. Energy cooperation forms the fourth area, centered on renewable integration, smart electricity transmission and advanced grid management. The fifth domain promotes industrial and technological collaboration, notably in electric mobility and intermodal transport solutions linked to the Trans-European Transport Network. Financial cooperation represents the sixth area, encouraging institutional support for joint projects and deeper dialogue between monetary and regulatory authorities. Finally, people-to-people connectivity constitutes the seventh domain, encompassing education, cultural exchange, tourism, public health collaboration and strengthened interaction among local governments, media, think tanks and youth (Figueiredo, 2019, pp. 8–11).

These developments reflect an interaction that is simultaneously pragmatic and geoeconomic. For Portugal, Chinese capital expanded policy flexibility under fiscal constraint. For China, investment in Portugal secured strategic access to a Western European economy embedded within EU and transatlantic structures. This logic of economic embeddedness becomes particularly visible in the case of the Port of Sines, where infrastructure, geography and great power competition converge.

## The Port of Sines

China considers the Port of Sines a major geoeconomic asset within the BRI due to its potential to connect the initiative's overland and maritime routes. Sines is positioned at the westernmost point of the New Eurasia Land Bridge Economic Corridor, which is the longest and most ambitious of the BRI's six economic corridors. At the same time, it offers a strategic location on the Atlantic, aligning with the objectives of the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road. Analysts from China's National Marine Information Centre highlight that Sines could serve as an Atlantic entry point for BRI trade into Europe and function as a platform for the export of European goods to Latin America and North Africa. This would allow Sines to become a central axis for BRI operations in Europe and support the launch of additional infrastructure projects. They argue that China should invest in both the development and long-term management of the port (Wejchert, 2021).

Although there is no direct Chinese involvement in the Port of Sines, Portugal was the first member state of the EU to establish a "Blue Partnership" with the People's Republic of China. At the International Conference on Portugal-China Cooperation held in Lisbon in December 2021, Chinese and Portuguese officials emphasized their countries' ongoing collaboration in marine protection, biodiversity, and pollution control, alongside growing academic exchanges aimed at advancing the blue economy. While scientific and technological cooperation is already in place, Portuguese authorities noted that further progress is possible. Two key frameworks offer new opportunities for Chinese investment: the Sea National Strategy 2021–2030 and the Recovery and Resilience Plan, which includes a Sea Component envisioning a Blue Hub with infrastructure and technology clusters across several coastal regions. Future cooperation could expand into emerging fields such as blue biotechnology, ocean renewable energy, aquaculture, and fisheries (Silva et al., 2023, p. 164).

Portugal viewed Chinese engagement as an opportunity to elevate Sines into a major trans-Atlantic logistics hub. The government had already been actively promoting the port before the 2018 BRI memorandum, with Prime Minister Costa emphasizing Portugal's strategic role in connecting Europe and Asia through the new maritime routes. Former Foreign Minister Santos Silva likewise stressed Portugal's strong interest in the BRI's large-scale infrastructure financing and its willingness to place Sines within the emerging Maritime Silk Road. If Chinese interest did not materialize, Lisbon expected that the U.S. might step in, given Sines' advantageous position for LNG exports to Europe (Arena, 2022, pp. 10–11).

This dual interest has increasingly drawn the U.S. into the competition over Sines. The US shale boom had created a geopolitical opportunity to expand gas exports to allies and lessen their reliance on suppliers such as Russia and North Africa. Sines, as the closest European deepwater port to US shale basins, offers a natural entry point for American LNG, yet only about one third of US LNG bound for Europe currently uses the port, suggesting significant room for growth if its capacity is expanded. Since 2016, the EU has already become one of the largest buyers of US LNG (Wejchert, 2021). Within these interests, the Trump administration urged Portugal to align Sines' development with US infrastructure preferences US Ambassador to Portugal Geoge Glass called the project a step toward making Portugal the "Singapore of the West." However, Portuguese officials pushed back, rejecting U.S. interference while affirming both their alliance with Washington and economically driven ties with China (Horta, 2021).

Portugal has sought to leverage the geoeconomic competition among major powers to raise the profile of the Port of Sines. Pedro do Ó Ramos, President of APS, explained that the revised investment strategy for Sines focuses on expanding capacity and improving connectivity. Preparatory work for the Vasco da Gama Terminal and upgraded links to Terminal XXI form the core of this plan. Two studies on new road and rail access are being approved to advance key infrastructure, including a second railway line on the port's eastern side to provide redundancy and direct connections to both terminals, along with new road links. The intraport network will also be modernized through improved access to the multipurpose terminal and marina. Ramos emphasized the importance of strengthening the port's reach into the Iberian hinterland, noting that the Évora–Elvas railway section, expected in early 2026, will cut travel time to Madrid by more than three hours and enable Sines to compete more effectively with Valencia (PortsEurope, 2025).

To attract global investment, the government launched an international tender for the €640 million Vasco da Gama Terminal, to be developed through a public–private partnership. Chinese companies, including COSCO, have reportedly expressed interest in the project (Wejchert, 2021).

Simultaneously, the European Commission (EC) also supports projects to strengthen Iberian energy integration, including compressor stations and cross-border pipelines such as TRA N 285, TRA N 283, and the Guitiriz Zamora Adradas line, which aim to connect Iberia with France. Although the MidCat gas interconnector is an EU priority, its development has stalled due to cost concerns. A future connection from Sines to Barcelona via Huelva, Cordoba, or Badajoz, already linked to Portuguese gas storage, could improve regional energy flow. With its strategic Atlantic location, Sines is well positioned to become a key LNG entry point for Europe and a hub for LNG powered maritime traffic (Silvestre, 2020).

Amid this convergence of geoeconomic interests, the EU's regulatory response has become increasingly relevant. EU Framework for Screening of Foreign Direct Investment, which promulgated in 2019 and entered into force in 2020, provides a cooperation mechanism between the EC and member states regarding critical infrastructure, critical technologies or critical inputs (Regulation (EU) 2019/452). While ultimate decision-making authority remains with national governments, the framework is likely to shape member states' approaches toward Chinese involvement in strategic sectors such as ports.

As a result of this development, Vasco de Gama Terminal, the real focus of the expansion of the Port of Sines, remained underdeveloped. This reflects Portugal's attempt to balance the competing expectations of China, the U.S., and the EU without committing to any single actor. For a small state, connectivity can generate strategic opportunities, yet great-power rivalry simultaneously may narrow the room for maneuvering. Given Sines' importance for Chinese maritime ambitions, US energy strategy, and EU connectivity plans, Portugal's caution appears designed to preserve diplomatic flexibility and protect its strategic autonomy.

## Portugal and Digital Silk Road

During Xi's December 2018 visit to Lisbon, Huawei and Altice Portugal signed an MoU to cooperate on the development and rollout of 5G services in the country. In 2019, Huawei announced plans to open its first European 4G and 5G technical support center in Lisbon. Portuguese telecom companies NOS and Altice partnered with Huawei to develop 5G networks, with NOS launching the country's first 5G network in Matosinhos in October 2019. This positioned NOS as a national leader in 5G innovation, supporting smart city and research initiatives (Mendes & Wang, 2023, p. 139).

NIS 2 Directive enacted by the EU tightens cybersecurity requirements for member states and calls for coordinated security risk assessments for 5G networks. Security risk assessments of critical supply chains should consider both technical and non-technical factors, such as those outlined in EU 5G cybersecurity guidelines. Key criteria include the dependency of essential entities on specific ICT services or products, their role in sensitive functions, the availability of alternatives, overall supply chain resilience, and

risks linked to emerging technologies (Directive (EU) 2022/2555). Although Huawei has not been specifically named, EU's stringent laws are directly relevant to Huawei's participation in European countries' 5G networks.

Then-Prime Minister António Costa acknowledged EU security concerns about Huawei but stressed that Europe should not halt its digital modernization. Following the European Parliament's new investment-screening rules, he argued that closing the EU to foreign capital was misguided and that Brussels should prioritize education and research instead. During his April 2019 visit to China, Then-Foreign Minister Santos Silva noted that Portugal would submit its 5G security assessment to the EU to determine whether any companies should be excluded on national-security grounds. President Rebelo de Sousa, implicitly addressing the Altice–Huawei agreement, emphasized that Portugal remained free to choose any operator that met its security standards and saw no issue with Huawei competing for 5G contracts despite external pressure (Arena, 2022, p. 9).

A more direct pressure came from the U.S. which considers Huawei as an agent of the Chinese state. In 2019, President Trump signed an executive order which prohibited Huawei in domestic use. On May 15, 2020, the U.S. Department of Commerce announced plans to limit Huawei's use of U.S. technology and software for designing and producing semiconductors abroad. The U.S. also launched a worldwide campaign to block Huawei's 5G ambitions. The ban on U.S. companies supplying Huawei with hardware and software has significantly undermined the company (Mendes & Wang, 2023, p. 140). Portugal has been subject to sustained diplomatic pressure from the U.S. to exclude Huawei from the development of its 5G networks. In 2020, Ambassador Glass criticized Portugal for permitting Chinese investments in key sectors like telecommunications and energy. He cautioned that allowing Huawei into the country's 5G network could seriously impact U.S.–Portugal security ties (Horta, 2021).

This diplomatic pressure appears to have influenced subsequent policy decisions. In May 2023, Portugal's Cybersecurity Council (CSSC) issued a resolution effectively barring the use of products from Chinese companies in the country's 5G and related 4G networks. Despite additional costs, Altice Portugal has chosen Nokia to supply its 5G core network infrastructure, replacing Huawei (Lipscombe, 2023).

Portugal's experience with Huawei and 5G reflects the interaction between small-state diplomacy and the pressures of geoeconomic competition. In the early phase, Lisbon adopted a hedging strategy that sought to maximize economic opportunities created by China's technological expansion. Cooperation agreements with Huawei, the prospect of a technical support center in Lisbon, and early 5G trials allowed Portugal to attract investment, upgrade infrastructure, and position itself within emerging digital value chains. This behavior is consistent with the logic of small states that try to enhance national autonomy by leveraging external economic flows. Yet as the EU strengthened its cybersecurity regime through the NIS2 Directive and the U.S. framed 5G infrastructure as a strategic arena linked to national security, Portugal's room for maneuver contracted. The geoeconomic environment shifted from opportunity to constraint. Regulatory obligations and alliance expectations became more important than the commercial gains offered by Huawei. The 2023 Cybersecurity Council decision and Altice Portugal's later selection of Nokia reveal how a small state, when confronted with hardening geopolitical rivalries, adjusts its position to remain aligned with its core

institutional and security partners. Portugal's trajectory shows that small states can exploit geoeconomic openings during calm periods in the international system, but when major-power competition intensifies they often prioritize political and security alignment over purely economic calculations, even when this choice involves significant financial costs.

## Portugal's Evolving China Policy

Since 2023, Portugal has not only canceled its contracts with Huawei but has also begun reassessing its involvement in the BRI, citing China's support for Russia in the Ukraine war as a main factor (Sheridan, 2023). These decisions signaled a broader shift in Portugal's strategic posture, reflecting growing alignment with EU and transatlantic security concerns and increasing caution toward Chinese technological and infrastructural engagement.

At the same time, friction has emerged in other domains of bilateral relationships. China initially excluded Portuguese passport holders from its visa-waiver program for short-term travel, despite including nationals from 11 other European countries. The parallel exclusion of the United Kingdom prompted speculation that Portugal's omission may have been a retaliatory response to its effective ban on Huawei equipment in national 5G networks (The Macao News, 2024). Yet this diplomatic signal was relatively short-lived. On 30 September 2024, Chinese authorities announced that Portugal would be added to the visa-exemption scheme, allowing stays of up to 15 days for tourism, business, family visits, and transit (Consular General of Portugal in Guangzhou, 2024). This shift indicates a more conciliatory stance by Beijing, suggesting a strategic recalibration aimed at preserving bilateral relations despite ongoing tensions over technology and security.

Portugal remains the only Western European state still formally participating in China's BRI. Confronted with declining U.S.-bound exports due to Trump-era tariffs, Lisbon has sought to strengthen commercial ties with China even as the EU criticizes Beijing for market distortions and its support for Russia's war economy. This engagement with Beijing illustrates a hedging strategy in which Portugal seeks to balance geopolitical commitments with the material benefits of Chinese investment. This behavior underscores how small states navigate asymmetric environments by adjusting relations rather than choosing definitive sides.

## Conclusion

Portugal's experience with the BRI illustrates how a small Western state can navigate an environment shaped by intensifying geoeconomic rivalry among China, the EU and the U.S. while attempting to preserve strategic autonomy. As this study demonstrates, Portugal's choices cannot be reduced to a simple narrative of alignment or disengagement from China. Instead, the Portuguese trajectory reflects a pattern of selective engagement, careful hedging and regulatory adaptation. These strategies are shaped by the interaction between structural pressures and the opportunities created by Portugal's maritime geography, institutional position and longstanding diplomatic ties with China. The case therefore reinforces the broader argument that small states are

neither passive recipients of great power competition nor entirely autonomous actors. Rather, they operate within fluctuating opportunity structures that enable limited but meaningful forms of agency.

The historical dimension of Portugal's relationship with China is central to understanding its early confidence in pursuing deeper economic ties. Centuries of interaction, culminating in the peaceful handover of Macau in 1999, generated a degree of bilateral trust that is unusual within Europe. This historical foundation helped make Portugal relatively receptive to Chinese investment at a time when it faced severe fiscal pressure during the Eurozone crisis. Chinese purchases of Portuguese sovereign bonds, followed by significant investments in energy, real estate, telecommunications and financial services, provided Lisbon with an important alternative source of liquidity during a moment when access to global markets was constrained. These developments highlight a central feature of small state strategy. Smaller states commonly use diversified economic partnerships to expand their policy autonomy when confronted with structural vulnerabilities and limited domestic resources.

Portugal opened its economy to Chinese capital, and it participated in China-led BRI. However, as both the EU and the U.S. reoriented their approaches to China, Portugal's geoeconomic space began to narrow. The evolving debate around Huawei illustrates this shift clearly. Portugal's initial enthusiasm for cooperation with Huawei in the development of fifth generation telecommunications reflected a period in which Lisbon sought to capture the economic benefits associated with emerging digital value chains. Over time, however, European cybersecurity regulation became more stringent and the U.S. pressure grew more explicit. This produced an environment in which the commercial appeal of Huawei conflicted with Portugal's obligations to its principal allies. The eventual decision in 2023 by the Cybersecurity Council to effectively exclude Huawei from national networks shows how small states adjust their posture when economic incentives collide with alliance expectations and when broader geopolitical tensions raise the perceived risks of technological dependence.

The contestation over the Port of Sines further illustrates this complex interplay. Through the maritime dimension of the BRI China viewed the port of Sines as a strategically located Atlantic gateway that could integrate European markets into wider logistics and energy networks. The U.S., by contrast, saw the port of Sines as an important potential hub for liquefied natural gas exports that could reduce European dependence on Russian energy. The EU approached the port primarily through regulatory mechanisms that emphasize critical infrastructure protection and energy security. Portugal attempted to position itself within this triangle of interests and sought to use the competing preferences of the major powers to attract investment and promote the development of the port of Sines. Yet the divergent expectations governing Chinese, European and American interests constrained Portugal's decision space. The slow progress of the Vasco da Gama terminal demonstrates how small states often face delays or policy paralysis when they attempt to avoid appearing overly aligned with any particular great power. This case reinforces the central insight of this study. Connectivity can provide important opportunities for small states, but heightened geopolitical rivalry simultaneously reduces their room for maneuver.

Developments since 2023 in Portugal's broader China policy continue to reveal the adaptive nature of small state strategy. Lisbon's cancellation of Huawei contracts and reassessment of its participation in the BRI reflect the changing international environment, particularly growing concerns about China's alignment with Russia following the invasion of Ukraine. Yet this shift has not resulted in Portugal's disengagement from China. Instead, Lisbon has demonstrated a continued willingness to maintain diplomatic channels, develop commercial partnerships and express support for multilateral governance formats that include China. Prime Minister Luis Montenegro's visit to Beijing in 2024, during which he reaffirmed the one China principle and expressed interest in deepening bilateral cooperation, underscores this dual strategy. Portugal remains responsive to European and American security concerns, but it also seeks to preserve the economic benefits and diplomatic flexibility associated with continued engagement with China. This behavior exemplifies hedging which is a strategy commonly employed by small states to balance geopolitical commitments with economic opportunities.

Portugal's approach therefore reflects a distinctive pattern of small state agency. Lisbon seeks to remain aligned with the EU and the NATO, as these institutions form the foundation of its security and political identity. At the same time, it avoids foreclosing avenues of cooperation with China, whose investments played a stabilizing role in earlier periods of economic difficulty and still represent valuable opportunities for diversification. This careful balancing act underscores the broader complexity of small state strategy in an era in which economic and security considerations are increasingly intertwined. As connectivity projects become instruments of geopolitical influence, small states face the challenge of securing developmental benefits while avoiding the political risks associated with deepening reliance on any single external actor.

The Portuguese example also contributes to theoretical debates concerning geoeconomics and the behavior of small states under conditions of systemic rivalry. The case shows that small states embedded in institutional environments such as the EU do not exert agency by directly challenging great powers but by adjusting their economic openness, regulatory posture and diplomatic messaging in response to changing circumstances. Portugal's strategy of controlled openness, regulatory precise adjustment and diplomatic ambiguity exemplifies the tools through which small states navigate and partially shape geoeconomic competition. Furthermore, Portugal's extensive maritime domain and strategically located port infrastructure illustrate how small states can leverage geographic assets to gain relevance within global networks. These assets enable them to attract the attention of major powers and expand their bargaining space, even if they cannot reshape the broader system.

Ultimately, Portugal's evolving relationship with China reveals both the possibilities and the limits of small state agency in a contested geoeconomic order. Portugal cannot completely sever economic ties with China without sacrificing important opportunities, nor can it disregard the security expectations of its Western partners. Its behavior is therefore characterized by cautious flexibility, selective alignment and continual recalibration. These strategies allow Portugal to extract benefits from multiple geoeconomic spheres while mitigating the risks associated with deepening geopolitical polarization. As competition between China, the EU and the U.S. intensifies, the Portuguese case shows that the future of the BRI in Western Europe will depend not only

on the strategic vision of major powers but also on the decisions of small states that occupy critical nodes in global connectivity.

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# REGIONAL COOPERATION, ENERGY DIPLOMACY, AND GEOPOLITICAL DYNAMICS OF FOSSIL FUELS: BIBLIOMETRIC TRENDS IN ENERGY SECURITY

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## Abstract

Emphasizing three main themes—regional frameworks for energy cooperation, the changing role of state and non-state actors in energy diplomacy, and the changing geopolitics of fossil fuels—this paper investigates bibliometric trends in energy research. The study underlines the need for regional energy cooperation, including market integration, cross-border electricity trade, and the acceptance of renewable energy technologies, as well as their relevance. While shaping global energy relations and politics, these systems are vital to improving energy security and sustainability. The paper also examines how non-state actors—businesses, international organizations, and civil society—are increasingly shaping energy diplomacy. Emphasizing the need for global cooperation and private-sector involvement in energy policy, the results point to a shift from state-centered governance to a more dispersed approach. The study also examines how global shifts in energy control affect resource availability, supply routes, and energy security, thereby addressing the evolving dynamics of fossil fuel geopolitics. Efforts to diversify energy sources and reduce dependence on fossil fuels are

reshaping long-term economic plans and international relations. The paper concludes that proactive steps in policy integration, innovation, and international cooperation are necessary to handle the complexity of worldwide energy transitions. Developing plans that promote a stable and sustainable global energy future depends on awareness of these changing trends.

**Keywords**

Energy Security, Diplomacy, Bibliometrics, Publication Trends, and Research Landscape.

**Resumo**

Com ênfase em três temas principais — os quadros regionais para a cooperação energética, a evolução do papel dos atores estatais e não estatais na diplomacia energética e a evolução da geopolítica dos combustíveis fósseis —, este artigo investiga as tendências bibliométricas na investigação sobre energia. O estudo sublinha a necessidade de cooperação energética regional, incluindo a integração de mercados, o comércio transfronteiriço de eletricidade e a aceitação de tecnologias de energia renovável, bem como a sua relevância. Ao moldarem as relações e a política energética globais, estes sistemas são vitais para melhorar a segurança e a sustentabilidade energéticas. O artigo examina também como os atores não estatais — empresas, organizações internacionais e sociedade civil — estão a moldar cada vez mais a diplomacia energética. Enfatizando a necessidade de cooperação global e do envolvimento do setor privado na política energética, os resultados apontam para uma mudança de uma governação centrada no Estado para uma abordagem mais dispersa. O estudo examina também como as mudanças globais no controlo energético afetam a disponibilidade de recursos, as rotas de abastecimento e a segurança energética, abordando assim a dinâmica em evolução da geopolítica dos combustíveis fósseis. Os esforços para diversificar as fontes de energia e reduzir a dependência dos combustíveis fósseis estão a remodelar os planos económicos de longo prazo e as relações internacionais. O artigo conclui que são necessárias medidas proativas em matéria de integração de políticas, inovação e cooperação internacional para lidar com a complexidade das transições energéticas a nível mundial. O desenvolvimento de planos que promovam um futuro energético global estável e sustentável depende da consciência destas tendências em mudança.

**Palavras-chave**

Segurança Energética, Diplomacia, Bibliometria, Tendências de Publicação e Panorama da Investigação.

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# REGIONAL COOPERATION, ENERGY DIPLOMACY, AND GEOPOLITICAL DYNAMICS OF FOSSIL FUELS: BIBLIOMETRIC TRENDS IN ENERGY SECURITY

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## Introduction

Energy security is the capacity of a nation or region to sustain a constant, reasonably priced, dependable supply of energy sources, all of which are vital for social development and economic prosperity (Gitemen, Magaril, & Kozhevnikov, 2023). Three main components define energy security: they ensure that a country can meet its energy needs while promoting environmental protection and economic stability. First, it is imperative to ensure that readily available energy sources meet household needs. To maintain its social and economic growth, any country needs dependable and enough energy sources. Maintaining reasonable energy costs for people and businesses also depends critically on price stability. Stable energy costs help households and companies reduce their financial load, hence promoting economic development. Furthermore, sustainability is a major component of energy security, underscoring the need to use renewable and environmentally friendly energy sources to meet the needs of future generations (Gasser, 2020; Khan, Su, Khurshid, & Qin, 2023).

While these features provide a foundation for energy security, achieving them remains difficult, especially for emerging nations. Energy insecurity is exacerbated by the unequal distribution of energy resources, rapid industrialization, and the effects of climate change. Furthermore, the ongoing reliance on fossil fuels despite growing calls for a transition to

renewable energy highlights the gap between policy goals and actual practice. Achieving energy security requires implementing numerous interconnected plans. Diverse energy sources are a very important strategy, as they ensure a consistent supply and reduce dependence on a single source. Furthermore, improving energy efficiency is crucial because it reduces waste and makes better use of current resources. Another important component is strengthening the infrastructure supporting energy generation, storage, and delivery, to facilitate their effective application. Moreover, developing energy technologies can inspire creativity and bring fresh ideas to meet changing energy consumption. Last but not least, encouraging international cooperation is essential to supporting group efforts to address global energy issues and ensure an equitable distribution of resources for all (Burns, 2019).

Developing nations, however, face special difficulties in putting these ideas into practice. Restricted financial means restrict their capacity for technological and infrastructure investments. Further obstacles arise from their reliance on developed nations for technological expertise and transfer. These countries are also more vulnerable to global price swings, which could disrupt their economies. The key issue is how these countries can accelerate their shift toward energy security while advancing fair development. Customizing policies to local contexts, supporting innovation, and enhancing regional energy cooperation would help us achieve sustainable and fair energy development. Beyond its conventional role in addressing global issues such as climate change, economic inequality, and geopolitical tensions, diplomacy is essential for ensuring energy security. Within the field of energy security, diplomatic initiatives operate at several levels to address complex, interrelated problems. The restriction of domestic resources is one of the main difficulties. Many countries struggle to meet their growing energy needs; therefore, international collaboration is essential. Through diplomatic efforts, nations can secure access to vital energy resources. Although some resource-rich countries employ energy exports as a political instrument, global energy management is greatly different (Lazard & Youngs, 2021). This raises a crucial issue: How can global systems provide fair access to energy resources while reducing the risk of geopolitical conflict?.

Beyond its conventional role in addressing global issues such as climate change, economic inequality, and geopolitical tensions, diplomacy is essential for ensuring energy security. Within the field of energy security, diplomatic initiatives operate at several levels to address complex, interrelated problems. The restriction of domestic resources is one of the main difficulties. Many countries struggle to meet their growing energy needs; therefore, international collaboration is essential. Through diplomatic efforts, nations can secure access to vital energy resources. Although some resource-rich countries employ energy exports as a political tool, global energy management is somewhat different (Griffiths, 2019). Reforming these systems is crucial to meeting the specific needs of emerging countries and promoting a more inclusive global energy system. Furthermore, essential to energy diplomacy is the shift to renewable energy. Although sustainability depends on this change, technology transfer and financing present major difficulties. Many current diplomatic projects overlook the need to ensure that poor nations have adequate access to financial support and renewable energy technologies. Energy diplomacy must change to encourage fair engagement so that every country can both benefit from and help shape the global energy transition (Prontera, 2020). Negotiating

these urgent issues will significantly shape a fairer, more stable, and sustainable global energy future.

Diplomacy in energy security and current research still have major gaps that compromise their effectiveness in addressing pressing issues. Addressing these gaps is therefore essential to provide more complete and lasting solutions. One main difference is the absence of regional energy cooperation systems. Although many energy security projects focus on global solutions, regional cooperation—especially in underdeveloped regions such as Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America—is sometimes overlooked. Through regional energy cooperation, nations can pool resources, share infrastructure, and negotiate energy agreements more effectively. A region-specific energy security plan, such as the ASEAN Energy Security Initiative, might call for group investments in energy infrastructure, linked energy networks, and cooperative renewable energy initiatives. This strategy would not only address local energy issues but also help participating nations in practice.

The second disparity concerns the scant involvement of non-state entities in energy diplomacy. Most current studies concentrate on state-led initiatives, therefore ignoring the growing impact of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), multinational companies, and local communities. By driving innovation and helping shape energy policies, these groups are vital. By bringing sophisticated energy solutions to underdeveloped countries, multinational companies can help to promote technology transfer. NGOs fight for fair access to energy to ensure that underprivileged groups are involved in the course change. Analyzing how these players operate as middlemen in energy diplomacy could pave the way for more equitable energy sector governance going forward.

The third gap is the too strong emphasis on the geopolitics of fossil fuels. While issues such as the political consequences of renewable energy and the importance of essential minerals in energy transitions are often overlooked, the present study focuses primarily on the political aspects of fossil fuels. The shift to renewable energy presents new challenges, especially regarding the geopolitics of vital minerals such as lithium and cobalt, which are essential for solar panel and battery technology. Evaluation of how renewable energy supply chains affect energy security depends on an awareness of these processes. Reducing reliance on limited mineral resources through recycling, technological innovation, and diversifying supply chains to lower risks is part of the suggested solutions. Addressing these challenges will enable energy diplomacy and research to better align with the changing terrain of energy security, thereby promoting more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable solutions for both rich and poor countries.

Diplomacy on energy security is changing greatly right now. Global events, including the development of renewable energy technologies and geopolitical changes, influence these developments. Recent studies (Proedrou, 2023) have highlighted the urgent need to address energy-related issues through more integrated and inclusive approaches across these transitions. Although studies on energy security have advanced greatly, the literature still shows major gaps that prevent the useful use of research results in policymaking. Although bibliometric studies have helped identify patterns in research, they often lack practical information for legislators. Monitoring publishing patterns or spotting prolific writers and institutions provides only partial insight into how research results may be used in sensible energy strategies. Furthermore, little study has been

done on how energy diplomacy may balance the sometimes competing interests of rich and poor countries.

In this study, energy diplomacy is understood as the set of diplomatic practices, negotiations, and policy instruments through which states and non-state actors seek to secure access to energy, manage transboundary energy relations, and shape global energy governance. Unlike traditional energy security, which primarily focuses on supply stability and affordability, energy diplomacy emphasizes political negotiation, institutional cooperation, and multi-actor engagement across national and regional boundaries (Prontera, 2020; Griffiths, 2019). This conceptual distinction is essential for bibliometric analysis, as it allows the mapping of how scholarly discourse has evolved from state-centric energy geopolitics toward more complex and inclusive governance arrangements.

This work offers pragmatic models to bridge the gap between policy execution and scholarly research. Using bibliometric analysis to pinpoint important knowledge hubs—including eminent academics, research institutes, and powerful research clusters—and encouraging focused interactions with legislators is one sensible way. Such alliances could help to co-create research-based policies that fit actual requirements. This approach aims to ensure that academic ideas are effectively incorporated into energy diplomacy projects, thereby supporting a fairer and more balanced approach to global energy security. Several bibliometric research questions are proposed in this work: (1) What are the developing patterns in research concerning regional energy cooperation frameworks? , (2.). Over time, how has scholarly study on the functions of state and non-state players in energy diplomacy changed? & (3). How do current research trends on the geopolitics of fossil fuels compare with those on the geopolitics of renewable energy?

## Methodology

In scientific studies, bibliometric analysis is a method for examining trends and patterns in data from academic publications (Donthu, Kumar, Mukherjee, Pandey, & Lim, 2021). This approach can track the evolution of a scientific field, assess the influence of research, and pinpoint important research topics (Choudhri, Siddiqui, Khan, & Cohen, 2015). Starting with terms and phrases relevant to your study topic, then selecting a database, is the fundamental process for conducting bibliometric analysis using Scopus and VOSviewer. For a bibliometric study, Scopus is a great choice because it covers scientific papers across many fields. Depending on the publication year, publication type (such as books or journal articles), and institutional affiliation, researchers can narrow their search results. In this work, researchers searched the Scopus database for papers emphasizing energy security and diplomacy using a particular formula. Every element of the formula utilized is broken out in great detail below:

Using titles, abstracts, or keywords, this method identifies 82 English-language journal articles on energy security and diplomacy. The next level involves gathering data. Export the Scopus data in a VOS Viewer-compatible format (e.g., CSV), then clean and prepare it for analysis (Öztürk, Kocaman, & Kanbach, 2024). This process may require data reformatting, duplicate removal, and integration of data from multiple sources. In the next stage, we analyzed the data using the VOS viewer program. In the VOS viewer,

import the cleaned data. Among the several options the program offers for visualizing bibliometric data are timelines, cluster diagrams, and network maps. Examine the visualizations to find trends, patterns, and data correlations (Moral-Muñoz, Herrera-Viedma, Santisteban-Espejo, & Cobo, 2020).

**Table 1.** Formula for Searching for Publication Documents with Energy Security and Diplomacy Topics

| Nº | Formula | Explanation |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | TITLE-ABS-KEY ("energy security" and "diplomacy") | – TITLE-ABS-KEY: Search for keywords in the title, abstract and keywords of the article.<br>– "energy security": Search for the keyword "energy security".<br>– AND: Combining two keywords, so the article must contain them second those keywords.<br>– "diplomacy": Search for the keyword "diplomacy". |
| 2. | AND [LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE,"ar")] | – AND: Limits search results to articles that match the conditions specified next.<br>– LIMIT-TO: Limit document types.<br>– DOCTYPE: Document type.<br>– "With": Search for articles ("ar" means "article"). |
| 3. | AND [LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE,"English")] | – AND: Limits search results to articles that match the conditions specified next.<br>– LIMIT-TO: Restrict language.<br>– LANGUAGE: "English": Search for articles in English |
| 4. | AND [LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE,"j")] | – AND: Limits search results to articles that match the conditions specified next.<br>– LIMIT-TO: Limit the source of the article.<br>– SRCTYPE: "j": Search for articles from journals ("j" means "journal") |

## Results

This Results section is structured to address the three research questions proposed in this study. Specifically, the analysis of publication trends and keyword clusters responds to Research Question 1 on regional energy cooperation frameworks; the author and institutional patterns address Research Question 2 concerning the evolving roles of state and non-state actors in energy diplomacy; and the thematic comparison between fossil fuel geopolitics and emerging renewable energy topics addresses Research Question 3. For librarians, legislators, and scholars, understanding annual publishing distribution is vital. Understanding research trends and identifying new areas of inquiry can help us to improve our decisions about policy, education, and research. The following is the annual publication count on energy security and diplomacy:

While major energy-related crises have historically contributed to increases in publication activity, the data show that 2019 had the highest number of publications, accounting for 14.6% of the total sample. This peak cannot be explained solely by the 2008 global energy crisis. Instead, it likely reflects a convergence of factors, including intensified debates on the post-Paris Agreement energy transition, rising geopolitical tensions

surrounding gas supply routes, and growing scholarly attention to China's Belt and Road Initiative in the energy sector.

**Table 2.** Distribution of Publications on Energy Security and Diplomacy Topics by Year

| Years | Σ | % | Years | Σ | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2024 | 6 | 7,3 | 2013 | 4 | 4,9 |
| 2023 | 4 | 4,9 | 2011 | 2 | 2,4 |
| 2022 | 2 | 2,4 | 2010 | 2 | 2,4 |
| 2021 | 3 | 3,7 | 2009 | 1 | 1,2 |
| 2020 | 6 | 7,3 | 2008 | 5 | 6,1 |
| 2019 | 12 | 14,6 | 2007 | 4 | 4,9 |
| 2018 | 4 | 4,9 | 2006 | 2 | 2,4 |
| 2017 | 5 | 6,1 | 2004 | 1 | 1,2 |
| 2016 | 6 | 7,3 | 2002 | 1 | 1,2 |
| 2015 | 7 | 8,5 | 1999 | 1 | 1,2 |
| 2014 | 4 | 4,9 | Total | 82 | |

These dynamics positioned 2019 as a critical moment for research on energy security and diplomacy. Furthermore, helping to explain growing publishing rates are current studies concentrated on energy security and diplomacy. As new renewable energy technologies develop, they could improve energy security and hasten the shift toward more ecologically friendly living. Moreover, financing for diplomacy and energy security could affect publishing patterns. Other elements could influence future bibliometric statistics in these domains. Studies on energy security and diplomacy may be affected by geopolitical events such as rising global tensions or the emergence of new powers. Publications on renewable energy and artificial intelligence could also rise in tandem with developments in these subjects. Moreover, diplomatic ties and energy security are greatly shaped by policies on climate change and energy trade. Examining the distribution of publications across authors helps researchers understand the terrain of their work. This study clarifies active researchers, networks of cooperation, and the results of different research projects. This identifying method is shown in the table below:

**Table 3.** Distribution of Publications on Energy Security and Diplomacy Topics by Author

| No | Author | Σ | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Pradhan, R. | 4 | 2,90 |
| 2 | Prontera, A. | 3 | 2,17 |
| 3 | Aalto, P. | 2 | 1,45 |
| 4 | Bahgat, G. | 2 | 1,45 |
| 5 | Jirásek, J. | 2 | 1,45 |
| 6 | Kavina, P. | 2 | 1,45 |
| 7 | Proedrou, F. | 2 | 1,45 |
| 8 | Sivek, M. | 2 | 1,45 |
| 9 | Zholdasbekova, A. | 2 | 1,45 |
| 10 | Abzhaparova, L. | 1 | 0,72 |

This study highlights certain bibliometric patterns among authors of publications in the domains of diplomacy, security, and energy. The statistics show that some writers, including Pradhan and Prontera, have made more significant contributions than their colleagues, suggesting they are field leaders. Although some eminent writers are present, the statistics also show that many others contribute to the publication of works on this subject, thereby demonstrating the field's appeal to scholars from all backgrounds and organizations. Still, the statistics do not fully reflect the extent of author cooperation. The large number of publications by different authors underscores the indispensable need for collaborative study in this discipline.

Analyzing these writers' publishing patterns shows a consistent annual increase in the number of works reflecting growing research on energy, security, and diplomacy. Examining the research subjects closely reveals numerous important areas, including (a) climate change and energy security and (b) the part energy technology plays in guaranteeing energy security. Also noted as major players in energy security are non-governmental entities. Furthermore, this paper discusses the moral and ethical aspects of energy security, as well as the link between diplomacy and it. Reflecting a growing interest in energy, security, and diplomacy, as well as the development of several important study areas, the bibliometric data overall indicate that several authors are increasingly dominant in these fields. Using country-specific publication distribution analyses, researchers can better understand the global research landscape, patterns in international cooperation, national research strategies, resource allocation, and the overall influence of research in this domain. This study helps governments, scholars, and other interested parties make informed decisions about scientific inquiry. Completed identification is shown in the table below.

**Table 4.** Distribution of Publications on Energy Security and Diplomacy Topics by Country

| No | COUNTRY | Σ | No | COUNTRY | Σ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | United States | 8 | 11 | Finland | 2 |
| 2 | India | 7 | 12 | Germany | 2 |
| 3 | United Kingdom | 7 | 13 | Greece | 2 |
| 4 | China | 6 | 14 | Iran | 2 |
| 5 | Kazakhstan | 5 | 15 | Japan | 2 |
| 6 | Czech Republic | 4 | 16 | Qatar | 2 |
| 7 | Pakistan | 4 | 17 | Russian Federation | 2 |
| 8 | Turkey | 4 | 18 | Saudi Arabia | 2 |
| 9 | Australia | 3 | 19 | Singapore | 2 |
| 10 | Italy | 3 | 20 | Switzerland | 2 |

The table above compiles the number of publications on diplomacy and energy security from many nations. According to the statistics, publications on energy security and diplomacy indicate that Western countries—including the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany—hold a more prominent position than other nations. This implies that these countries might be leaders in policy and research. Furthermore, major contributors to this issue include developing and emerging economies such as India, China, and Kazakhstan. This trend shows growing participation of poor countries in research and policy on energy security and diplomacy. Although several countries dominate this field, the statistics also show that many other countries publish on this

topic in line with world interest in diplomacy research and energy security. Various factors affect the publication's dissemination on this issue worldwide. For countries dependent on imports, where maintaining diplomatic relations and energy supply becomes even more critical, energy security is extremely vital. This dependence could inspire more field-based research and publication activity.

Publication variations also depend much on research capacity; nations with strong research budgets and modern infrastructure usually generate more papers on diplomacy and energy security. Government initiatives supporting energy security, diplomatic research, and publishing will help boost the number of publications from many nations. Moreover, international cooperation in diplomatic research and energy security can increase the general quality of national publications. For researchers, librarians, legislators, and others curious in the research scene, measuring research impact, spotting trends, assessing research policies, and contrasting institutional performance, citation analysis grounded in published sources is a useful tool:

**Table 5.** Distribution of Publications on Energy Security and Diplomacy Topics by Source

| No | SOURCE TITLE | Σ |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Central Asia And The Caucasus | 5 |
| 2 | Energy Policy | 5 |
| 3 | Geopolitics Of Energy | 3 |
| 4 | Asia Europe Journal | 2 |
| 5 | Asia Pacific Review | 2 |
| 6 | India Quarterly | 2 |
| 7 | International Journal Of Energy Economics And Policy | 2 |
| 8 | Journal Of Contemporary China | 2 |
| 9 | Resources Policy | 2 |
| 10 | Romanian Journal Of European Affairs | 2 |
| 11 | Asian Perspective | 1 |
| 12 | Asian Studies Review | 1 |
| 13 | Australian Journal Of International Affairs | 1 |
| 14 | Balkan Social Science Review | 1 |
| 15 | Baltic Region | 1 |
| 16 | Canadian Foreign Policy Journal | 1 |
| 17 | China Perspectives | 1 |
| 18 | China Review | 1 |
| 19 | Chinese Journal Of Population Resources And Environment | 1 |
| 20 | Climate Policy | 1 |

The table shows the number of papers on diplomacy and energy security published in different academic journals. With five apiece, Central Asia and the Caucasus have the most publications of all. Geopolitics of Energy has a moderate count of publications—three—while Asia Europe Journal and Asia Pacific Review have two. With two each, India Quarterly, International Journal of Energy Economics, Journal of Contemporary China, Resources Policy, and Romanian Journal of European Affairs show fewer publications; Asian Perspective and Asian Studies Review show one each. According to the data, regional and specialized journals such as Central Asia and the Caucasus, Energy Policy, and Geopolitics of Energy, publish most papers on energy security and diplomacy. This

suggests that researchers from particular areas and disciplines are especially interested in this issue.

Furthermore, the results reveal that many publications on energy security and diplomacy exist in general and multidisciplinary journals such as the Asia-Europe Journal, Asia-Pacific Review, and India Quarterly, stressing the relevance of this topic across several academic and policy spheres. Although some publications are the best venues for this kind of study, the data also show that many other publications contribute to the growing body of work in this field. This broad and varied attention from researchers worldwide is evident in their distribution. Academic publications feature issues of energy security and diplomacy, depending on several elements. Leading academics and more publications in these fields are attracted by prestigious research and policy magazines. Specialized or multidisciplinary publications, meanwhile, give professionals from many disciplines a forum to investigate linked problems. Furthermore, editorial policy influences which papers are approved and published, including research approaches and thematic focus. Furthermore, open-access publications expand readership and encourage more scholarly participation, and they are included in important academic databases.

**Table 6.** Journal Title Based Distribution of Publications on Energy Security and Diplomacy Topics

| Authors | Title | Year | Source title | Cited by | Author Keywords |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hache E. | Do renewable energies improve energy security in the long run? | 2018 | International Economics | 86 | Critical materials; Energy security; Energy technology; Energy transition; Patents |
| Odgaard O.; Delman J. | China's energy security and its challenges towards 2035 | 2014 | Energy Policy | 72 | China; Energy security of supply; Regional conflict potentials |
| Zhao S. | China's global search for energy security: Cooperation and competition in Asia-Pacific | 2008 | Journal of Contemporary China | 68 | |
| Holmes J.; Yoshihara T. | China's naval ambitions in the Indian Ocean | 2008 | Journal of Strategic Studies | 57 | China; Energy Security; Indian Ocean; Maritime Strategy; Soft Power |
| Lall M. | Indo-Myanmar relations in the era of pipeline diplomacy | 2006 | Contemporary Southeast Asia | 48 | Geopolitics of energy; India; India’s new foreign policy; India’s Northeast; Myanmar; Myanmar gas reserves; Pipeline diplomacy |
| Vatansever A. | Is Russia building too many pipelines? Explaining Russia's oil and gas export strategy | 2017 | Energy Policy | 47 | Energy security; Natural gas exports; Oil exports; Pipelines; Russian energy policy; Transit |
| Aalto P.; Korkmaz Temel D. | European energy security: Natural gas and the integration process | 2014 | Journal of Common Market Studies | 47 | |
| Bahgat G. | Pipeline diplomacy: The geopolitics of the Caspian Sea region | 2002 | International Studies Perspectives | 45 | Caspian Sea; Crude oil; Natural gas |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aalto P. | Energy market integration and regional institutions in east Asia | 2014 | Energy Policy | 31 | ASEAN; Energy; Institutions; Market; North east asia; South east asia |
| Gholz E.; Awan U.; Ron E. | Financial and energy security analysis of China's loan-for-oil deals | 2017 | Energy Research and Social Science | 30 | China; Diplomacy; Energy security; Loan-for-oil deals; Oil finance |
| Stern J. | Natural gas security problems in Europe: The Russian–Ukrainian crisis of 2006 | 2006 | Asia-Pacific Review | 27 | |
| Conker A.; Hussein H. | Hydraulic mission at home, hydraulic mission abroad? Examining Turkey's regional 'Pax-Aquarum' and its limits | 2019 | Sustainability (Switzerland) | 26 | Hydraulic mission; Middle East; Turkey; Water conflict; Water diplomacy |
| Cheng J. | A Chinese view of China's energy security | 2008 | Journal of Contemporary China | 25 | |
| Szulecki K.; Overland I. | Russian nuclear energy diplomacy and its implications for energy security in the context of the war in Ukraine | 2023 | Nature Energy | 22 | |
| Prontera A. | The new politics of energy security and the rise of the catalytic state in southern Europe | 2018 | Journal of Public Policy | 19 | catalytic state; energy diplomacy; energy security; European Union; gas market; regulatory state |
| Bird T; Hommel D | The trans-political nature of Southwest China’s energy conduit, Yunnan Province | 2016 | Geopolitics | 17 | |
| Hancock L.; Wollersheim L. | Eu carbon diplomacy: Assessing hydrogen security and policy impact in australia and germany | 2021 | Energies | 14 | Australia; Carbon diplomacy; Energy policy; Energy security; EU; EU CBAM; Germany; Hydrogen; Regulation |
| Cheng J.Y.S. | China’s relations with the gulf cooperation council states: Multilevel diplomacy in a divided Arab world | 2016 | China Review | 14 | |
| Zhiznin S.Z.; Timokhov V.M. | Economic and geopolitical aspects of the nord Stream 2 GAS pipeline | 2019 | Baltic Region | 14 | Energy security; Gas pipeline; Geopolitical and economic factors; Nord Stream 1; Nord Stream 2; NS 1; NS 2; Third energy package |

Furthermore, the data show a significant upward trend in publications on energy security and diplomacy over the years. This implies that legislators and academics still find the field increasingly attractive. Although there are now more publications overall, yearly variations are clear. Changes in research interests, funding availability, and significant worldwide events that influence diplomacy and energy security help explain several

factors driving these developments. Driven by the ongoing global energy crisis, rising geopolitical tensions, and the rapid transition to renewable energy, publications are expected to increase significantly in 2023. Most publications from 2018 and 2019 indicate a pivotal period for research and policy debates on energy security and diplomacy. Furthermore, notable years such as 2014, 2016, and 2022 are critical, significantly increasing the overall volume of publications in this sector. Over the years, scholars have regularly investigated energy security and diplomacy, thereby highlighting the rich historical backdrop and ongoing growth of this topic.

Three particularly highly referenced books in energy security and diplomacy should also be mentioned: "Do renewable energies increase long-term energy security?" (2018) with 86 references, "Chinese energy security and 2035 problems" (Odgaard & Delman, 2014) cited 72 times, and "China's global energy security quest: Asia-Pacific cooperation and competition" by Zhao (2008) with 68 references. The chart highlights several strong keywords; "energy security" is the main theme and appears in most of the articles. Reflecting China's major influence on the world energy scene, many of these works concentrate on its energy security. Globally, political dynamics shape energy security. In bibliometric research, a major technique is the study of publication distribution based on keyword frequency. This method clarifies the study terrain inside a scientific field, tracks research trends, and points out common research themes. The following list shows the discovered subjects:

**Table 7.** Distribution of Keywords on Energy Security and Diplomacy Topics

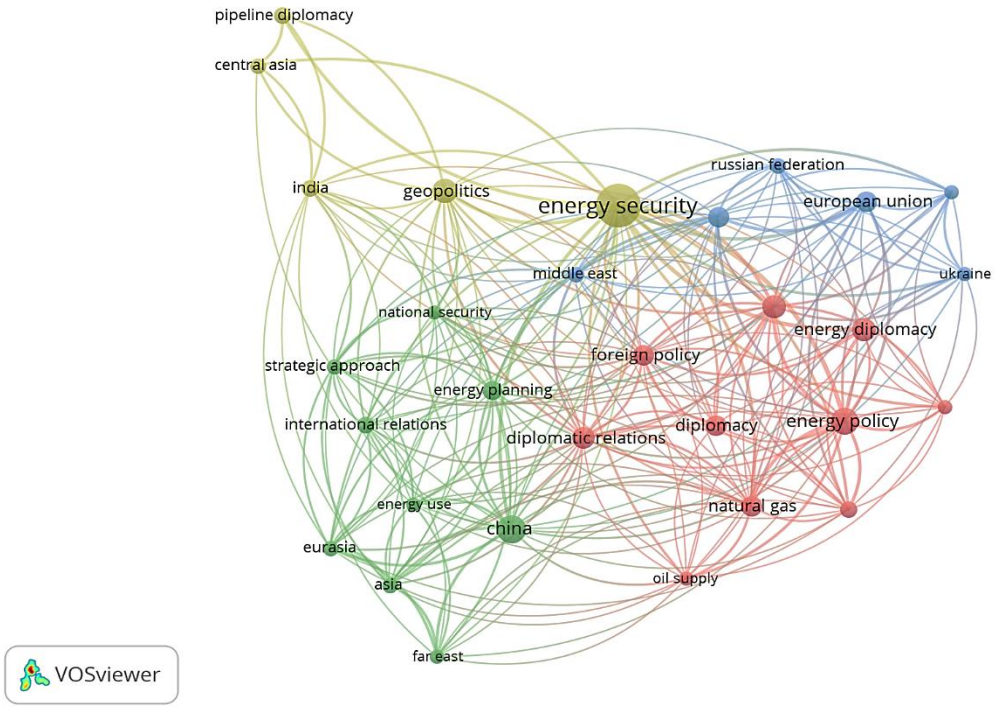
| No | Keyword | occ | total link strength | No | Keyword | occ | total link strength |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Asia | 5 | 25 | 13 | Eurasia | 5 | 25 |
| 2 | central asia | 5 | 15 | 14 | european union | 8 | 33 |
| 3 | China | 15 | 35 | 15 | foreign policy | 8 | 27 |
| 4 | Diplomacy | 8 | 20 | 16 | Geopolitics | 12 | 39 |
| 5 | diplomatic relations | 9 | 38 | 17 | India | 6 | 23 |
| 6 | Energy | 10 | 36 | 18 | international relations | 6 | 19 |
| 7 | energy diplomacy | 11 | 20 | 19 | middle east | 5 | 20 |
| 8 | energy market | 6 | 28 | 20 | natural gas | 8 | 32 |
| 9 | energy planning | 7 | 27 | 21 | pipeline diplomacy | 6 | 15 |
| 10 | energy policy | 14 | 53 | 22 | russian federation | 5 | 18 |
| 11 | energy resource | 8 | 32 | 23 | strategic approach | 5 | 22 |
| 12 | energy security | 37 | 88 | | | | |

The term "energy security" is most often used and has the strongest network of links, underscoring its importance in the study of energy security and diplomacy. Reflecting its major influence in scholarly debate on these subjects, "China" also ranks highly in both frequency and strength of linkage. With strong link strength, the word "Geopolitics" underscores its indispensable relevance to the study of diplomacy and energy security. Energy security, China, and geopolitics interact to show that China's energy security is closely linked to global geopolitical trends. Studies in this field address energy markets, energy planning, energy diplomacy, pipeline diplomacy, foreign policy, the Russian Federation, the Middle East, India, the European Union, Eurasia, and Central Asia.

## Energy security and diplomacy topic network visualizations

In bibliometric research, the study of publication distribution with network visualization serves numerous significant purposes. Network visualization facilitates the identification of important scientific field study subjects. Usually, when representing these subjects, large, densely connected nodes help researchers identify emerging research trends and grasp the primary areas of concentration in their field. Furthermore, network visualization helps clarify links across several research subjects. Thick and frequent lines—edges—connect closely related subjects so that scholars may investigate the links among several spheres of research and find multidisciplinary research prospects.

**Figure 1.** Publication on energy security and diplomacy network visualization




The bibliometric data network visualization above helps us identify patterns and gaps in the literature on diplomacy and energy security. Several important conclusions of the trend analysis are: (a) the dynamics of China's partnerships and their consequences for energy security receive much attention. A clear cluster in the middle of the graphic links the phrase "China" with several facets of energy security, including "energy policy," "energy diplomacy," and "energy security." This link indicates a critical area of research. (b) A noteworthy cluster at the top of the figure links the keyword "natural gas" to other subjects, including "energy markets," "geopolitics," and "energy policy," suggesting that natural gas is increasingly recognized as a major energy source and a central theme in energy security studies. (c) The clusters at the bottom of the figure link the term "energy infrastructure" with related subjects, including "pipelines," "investment," and "energy

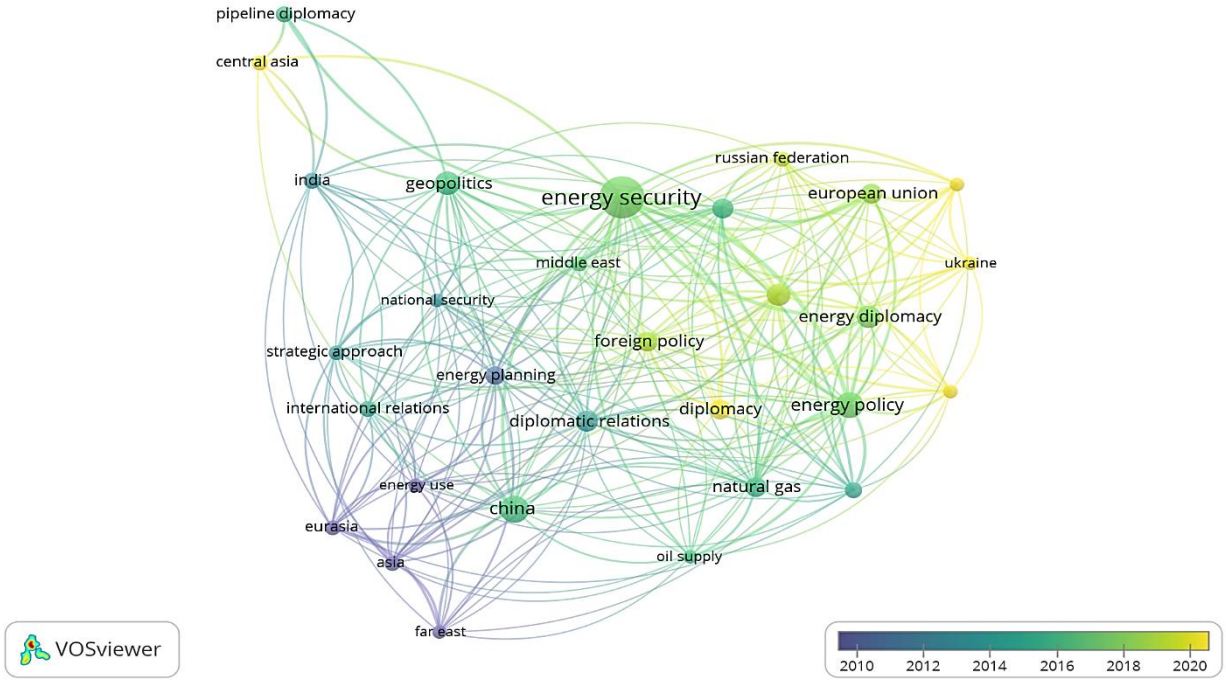
security." This indicates that energy infrastructure, such as pipelines and power grids, plays a crucial role in energy security and is a main area of study. The image clearly shows the link between geopolitics and energy security: "geopolitics" is connected to several energy-related security issues, therefore underlining their relevance in this field. The visualization also reveals several smaller clusters that point to emerging research topics, including "energy transition," "sustainability," and "multi-stakeholder energy diplomacy." This indicates that fields of energy security and diplomacy are changing and combining important new themes. Furthermore, the visualization highlights gaps, suggesting that research on energy security is largely focused on particular domains.

## Visualization analysis with overlay overlays

In bibliometric research, one key strategy is to study publication distribution using overlay visualization. Based on elements such as publication year, author's country, journal, keywords, and institution, this approach uses visual tools to show patterns and links among scientific publications. In a scientific study, overlay analysis enables investigators to identify temporal trends. Through analysis of annual publication distribution, scientists can identify patterns in the popularity of various study domains, highlighting both increases and decreases.

Using bibliometric data visualizations of relevant publications, this paper investigates the evolution of the topics of energy security and diplomacy over time. a). Reflecting a growing interest among researchers and stakeholders in this field, the visualization shows a steady year-over-year increase in the number of publications on energy security and diplomacy. b). It also highlights a shift in emphasis over time from diplomacy to energy security. At first, conventional geopolitical and energy security concerns—especially regarding natural gas and oil—were of primary importance. Topics such as the energy transition, sustainability, and multi-stakeholder energy diplomacy have recently attracted significant attention. The evolution of the subject over time exposes the following: (a). 2010–2014 is the timeframe. At this time, conventional geopolitical and energy security concerns dominated attention. The image shows that topics such as energy geopolitics, energy security, and oil appear in lighter colors, suggesting they were published more frequently throughout this period. (b). Timescale: 2015–2019. This era brought increasing focus on sustainability and energy transition. Lighter colors indicate the growing presence of topics such as the energy transition, sustainability, and renewable energy in publications over this period. {c}. 2020–present is the current timeframe. Multi-party energy diplomacy and international cooperation have taken center stage. Based on their lighter hues, the picture shows that issues such as "multiparty energy diplomacy," "international cooperation," and "global energy governance" have been progressively highlighted in publications during this period.

**Figure 2.** Overlay Visualization of publications on diplomatic and energy security issues.




Over time, several elements can affect the evolution of issues and trends in publications on energy security and diplomacy. First, the shift toward renewable energy sources, rising energy demand in developing countries, and the consequences of climate change are driving major changes in the global energy landscape. This development underscores the need for sustainability, energy transition, and collective energy diplomacy. Second, the study's focus on energy security and diplomacy might be affected by geopolitical concerns, regional disputes, and global economic crises. Third, new research opportunities in this field are created by technological advances in the energy sector, including renewable energy and energy storage. Finally, an emphasis on sustainability and energy justice is resulting from expanding knowledge of the social and environmental effects of energy. Through an overlay visualization of bibliometric data, one can understand the trends and evolution of issues in publications on energy security and diplomacy over time. Influenced by changes in the global energy landscape, international political and economic developments, technological innovations, and shifting societal norms and values, this study shows a pattern of increasing publication numbers and a shift in topic focus.

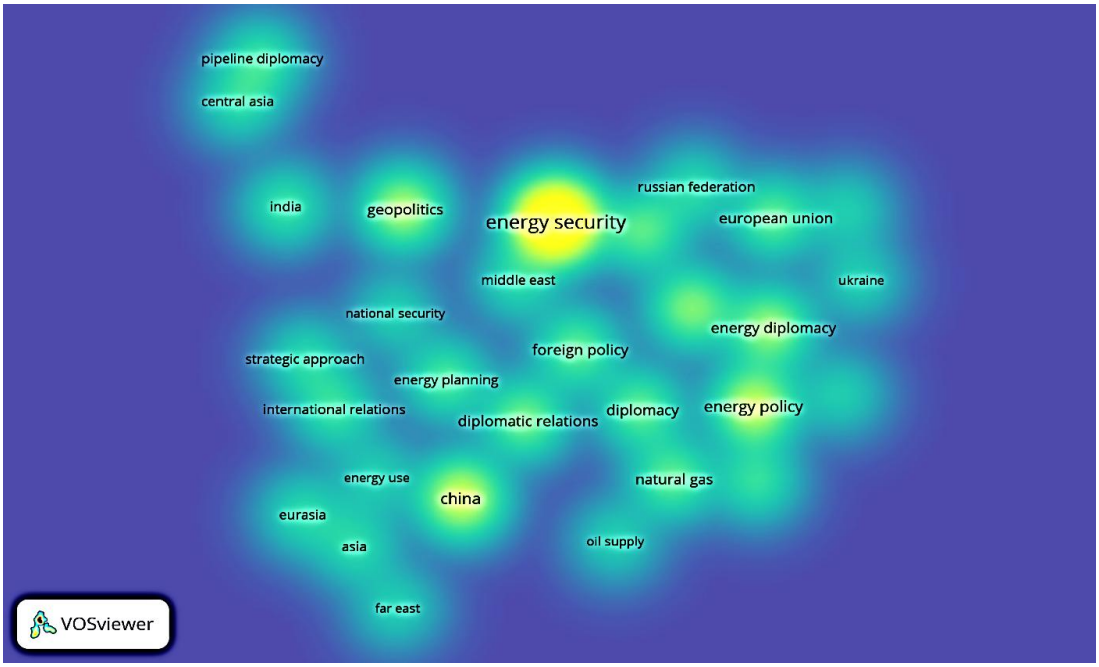
## Analysis of Density Visualization

In bibliometric research, the application of density visualization in publication distribution analysis serves various significant goals. This approach enables scientists to identify

important study subjects within a given field. This method helps academics to focus on the most important and relevant subjects for their work.

The bibliometric data visualization picture on diplomacy and energy security offers a density and subject trend analysis. () a). The relationship between China and energy security is a major topic of research; the figure's central cluster links the term "China" with many dimensions of energy security, including "energy policy," "energy diplomacy," and "energy security." The acknowledgement of natural gas as a major energy source and a vital topic in energy security research is expanding. A noteworthy cluster at the top of the image links the keyword "natural gas" to numerous other topics, including "energy markets, " "geopolitics," and "energy policy." Energy infrastructure, including pipes and power grids, is vital for energy security and a main focus of research; the clusters shown at the bottom of the figure link the term "energy infrastructure" to several related topics, including "pipelines,," "investment," and "energy security. {d}. The visualization highlights the links between the term "geopolitics" and several issues connected to energy security, therefore illustrating the interaction between energy security and geopolitics. This underscores the importance of geopolitics and energy security in studies of the topic, as they are closely intertwined. E) as well. The visualization reveals several small clusters suggestive of emerging research topics, including "energy transition, sustainability, and multi-stakeholder energy diplomacy," indicating that the fields of energy security and diplomacy are evolving and encompassing major new subjects.

**Figure 3.** Density Visualization of Energy Security and Diplomacy Topics Publications




Among the most frequently discussed subjects in the literature on energy security and diplomacy are "China," "natural gas," "energy infrastructure," "geopolitics," and "energy

policy," as emphasized here by the graphic. Topics such as "energy transition," "sustainability," "multi-party energy diplomacy," "Africa," "Latin America," and "South Asia" show lower density, indicating they are not discussed as extensively in this context. Bibliometric data visualizations offer insightful analysis of trends and the topic density in papers on diplomacy and energy security. This study highlights important issues, including China's energy security and relations, the significance of natural gas, and the need for energy infrastructure. Less often discussed are topics such as the energy transition, sustainability, and multi-stakeholder energy diplomacy. These topics should be the main focus of future studies to help us better grasp diplomatic difficulties and energy security.

## Conclusion

This bibliometric analysis demonstrates three key findings. First, research on energy security and diplomacy has increasingly emphasized regional cooperation frameworks, highlighting the importance of institutional integration, cross-border infrastructure, and coordinated energy markets in enhancing resilience. Second, the literature reveals a gradual shift from state-centered energy governance toward more inclusive models that recognize the growing influence of non-state actors, including private firms, international organizations, and civil society. Third, while fossil fuel geopolitics remains a dominant theme, recent studies show a clear expansion toward renewable energy, energy transition, and sustainability-oriented diplomacy. By systematically linking publication trends, thematic clusters, and keyword dynamics, this study contributes to a clearer understanding of how energy diplomacy research has evolved over time. The findings provide not only a structured overview of the research landscape but also insights that can inform policymakers and scholars seeking to navigate the complex intersection of energy security, diplomacy, and global governance. Recent developments imply that reaching sustainability and energy security depends on these models. The results are especially significant, as they could influence international energy policies and prompt legislators to focus more on regional synergies to enhance the resilience of the global energy system. Notably, there is also a change in the roles of state and non-state actors in energy diplomacy. The results reveal a notable shift in the roles that both state and non-state players play in energy diplomacy. Though state actors remain essential, the growing participation of non-state actors—private energy firms, international organizations, and civil society groups—is reshaping energy governance. Indicating a shift toward a more inclusive and cooperative framework, multilateral cooperation and private-sector initiatives are increasingly significant in shaping energy diplomacy. Globally, this transition has significant consequences that might affect the balance of power in energy governance and encourage creative ideas by including several players. Furthermore, current studies investigate the geopolitical dynamics of fossil fuels. These factors are driving the global energy transition, demonstrating that although fossil fuels still play a major role, there is a clear trend toward diversifying energy sources and reducing reliance on them.

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# CRYPTOCURRENCY TERRORISM FINANCING: A THREAT ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS OF GLOBAL RESPONSES

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## Abstract

The rise and popularity of cryptocurrency in the global financial system has presented opportunities and challenges in the fight against terrorism financing. This is because, the decentralized, pseudonymous, safety, privacy, and borderless nature of these digital currencies and assets has created the opportunity for terror groups to exploit. Terror groups take advantage of these opportunities to fund their operations, launder assets, organize, plan attacks, and consolidate their presence in the global financial system. Using the qualitative method of research, through the use of academic and non-academic documents, reports, and analysis from relevant institutions such as the Financial Action Taskforce (FATF), the United Nations (UN), The Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), national governments and other relevant agencies, this article examines the global counter-measures taken by these actors in combating cryptocurrency terrorism financing. The article examine the prospects and challenges faced in combating the menace. The findings of the article show that in spite of the global efforts aimed at combating cryptocurrency terrorism financing the lack of global regulations and laws against money laundering, terrorism financing through the cryptocurrency ecosystem, lack of effective synergy and collaboration by relevant actors in the fight against cryptocurrency and terrorism financing and the evolving nature of the crypto and tactics of terror groups to evade surveillance continue to affect the counter-measures. To address these gaps, the article recommends the need for more collaboration

among actors in combating this threat, strengthening a stronger regulatory framework to protect and guarantee the safety of the cryptocurrency users from threats posed by terror groups and other transnational criminal networks operating in the crypto digital space..

**Keywords**

Cryptocurrency, Counterterrorism, Terrorism Financing, Financial Action Taskforce (FATF), The Inter-Governmental Action Group Against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), & The United Nations (UN).

**Resumo**

A ascensão e a popularidade das criptomoedas no sistema financeiro global têm apresentado oportunidades e desafios na luta contra o financiamento do terrorismo. Isto deve-se ao facto de a natureza descentralizada, pseudónima, segura, privada e sem fronteiras destas moedas e ativos digitais ter criado oportunidades que os grupos terroristas podem explorar. Os grupos terroristas aproveitam-se destas oportunidades para financiar as suas operações, branquear ativos, organizar-se, planear ataques e consolidar a sua presença no sistema financeiro global. Utilizando o método de investigação qualitativa, através do recurso a documentos académicos e não académicos, relatórios e análises de instituições relevantes, tais como o Grupo de Ação Financeira Internacional (GAFI), as Nações Unidas (ONU), o Grupo de Ação Intergovernamental contra a Lavagem de Dinheiro na África Ocidental (GIABA), governos nacionais e outras agências relevantes, este artigo examina as contramedidas globais adotadas por estes atores no combate ao financiamento do terrorismo através de criptomoedas. O artigo examina as perspetivas e os desafios enfrentados no combate a esta ameaça. As conclusões do artigo mostram que, apesar dos esforços globais destinados a combater o financiamento do terrorismo através de criptomoedas, a falta de regulamentação e legislação globais contra a lavagem de dinheiro e o financiamento do terrorismo através do ecossistema das criptomoedas, a falta de sinergia e colaboração eficazes por parte dos atores relevantes na luta contra o financiamento do terrorismo através de criptomoedas, bem como a natureza em evolução das criptomoedas e as táticas dos grupos terroristas para escapar à vigilância, continuam a afetar as medidas de combate. Para colmatar estas lacunas, o artigo recomenda a necessidade de uma maior colaboração entre os intervenientes no combate a esta ameaça, reforçando um quadro regulamentar mais sólido para proteger e garantir a segurança dos utilizadores de criptomoedas contra as ameaças representadas por grupos terroristas e outras redes criminosas transnacionais que operam no espaço digital das criptomoedas.

**Palavras-chave**

Criptomoedas, Contraterrorismo, Financiamento do Terrorismo, Grupo de Ação Financeira Internacional (GAFI), Grupo Intergovernamental de Ação contra a Lavagem de Dinheiro na África Ocidental (GIABA) e Organização das Nações Unidas (ONU).

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# CRYPTOCURRENCY TERRORISM FINANCING: A THREAT ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS OF GLOBAL RESPONSES

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**KWOPNAN IBRAHIM BULUS**

## Introduction

The emergence of cryptocurrency has led to a paradigm shift throughout the international economic and financial system, necessitating a departure from the traditional financial system to a private and digitised system through blockchain technology (Zhuk, 2024). Cryptocurrency has been used as a means of exchange presupposing currency as well as a store of value (Mattke, Maier & Reis, 2020). There is no monolithic definition as to what cryptocurrency entails, as expressed in several studies. However, despite this non-monolithic stance, most of the studies regarding the subject matter have a consensus that the term could be operationalized as a digital currency typically lacking a centralized authority responsible for regulation and ensuring strict compliance. Rather, it utilises a decentralised system for transaction recording and issuance management. It relies on cryptography to prevent counterfeiting and fraud, thereby ensuring the security of transactions. The emphasis on security provides reassurance and instills confidence in the system (Zohuri, Nguyen & Moghaddam, 2022). Other studies similarly describe cryptocurrency as an electronic and virtual currency created to facilitate and buying, selling, and exchange of goods and services irrespective of physical borders, territories without any interference from a central authority (He, Li, Wang & Shah, 2024). It achieves this through encryption technology, which controls the creation of units and verifies transactions (Ibid).

The inherent characteristic of cryptocurrency resonates in its decentralisation and anonymity, and global accessibility devoid of the control of any centralized issuing authority, such as a Bank or a trusted party, has given rise to a myriad of challenges (Sharma, Pant, Sharma & Brahmachari, 2020). Proponents of the cryptocurrency school of thought, such as Changpeng Zhao (CZ) and Vitalik Buterin, believe that cryptocurrency emerged due to a lack of confidence in the extant international financial system (Doll-Steinberg & Leaf, 2023). Events of the 2008 economic recession alongside the COVID-

19 that followed, fuelled by the COVID Lock malware, became widespread due to the COVID and further propelled the use of cryptocurrency as a means of exchange, thus solidifying and entrenching the use of cryptocurrency in different jurisdictions (Dyntu & Dykyj, 2021).

The emergence of cryptocurrency has heralded an era where terrorist groups can take advantage of the anonymity of cryptocurrency, its decentralised and global accessibility to perpetrate transnational organised crimes in the form of Terrorism Financing (TF) (Majumder, Routh & Singha, 2019; Sestino, Tuček & Bresciani, 2024). Terrorist groups across the globe have used cryptocurrency as a conduit for the transfer of funds for terrorism in different parts of the world. Cryptocurrencies, owing to their anonymity, decentralized, and unregulated nature, have opened up vistas of opportunities and alternative channels for terrorist groups to fund, plan, and carry out attacks covertly without any scintilla of trace (Akcinaroglu & Shi, 2023). According to a US Department of Justice press release (15 December 2022), "defendants collected and transferred approximately USD 35,000 through cryptocurrency and other electronic means to Bitcoin wallets and accounts they believed to be funding ISIS" (See DOJ, 2022). The report also assert that Terrorist organisations are also using cryptocurrencies to raise funds. For example, Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) called for cryptocurrency donations in this memorable poster (Ibid).

As put forward by the Anti-Money Laundering & Counter Financing of Terrorism AML/CFT, Terrorism financing is a course of action leading to the provision and facilitation of financial assistance to terror groups to enable them to carry out their violent act of terror on states and non-state actors in society (FATF Report 2015). This definition further supports the definition by Wang & Zhu (20221) that terrorist financing is the economic basis of terrorist activities and the lifeline of all terrorist organizations. Interestingly, since the emergence of cryptocurrency and its increasing usage, terrorist organizations have leveraged its non-regulatory and unrestricted access to plan and carry out attacks. Consequently, legislators around the world have called for global action to regulate the sale, purchase, and limit the exchange of cryptocurrencies (Ibrahim, 2019). According to the FATF 2023 Report, most time, terrorism financing takes the form of using digitally enabled technology for crowdfunding (see FATF Report, 2023). Research from notable institutions such as the FATF and subsequent assessments on emerging terrorist financing risks further revealed that terror groups and other violent non-state actors driven by ethnic and racial hate continue to rely on online crowdfunding as an avenue to fund their operations (FATF, 2015). This was evidenced in situations where violent extremist and terrorist groups often exploit and hijack the unregulated donation-based crowdfunding support to fund and sustain their operations (see FATF, 2023). The report gave examples with ISIS and other Salafist groups operating in Europe, particularly Germany, under the guise of charity organizations using crypto to plan, fund, and carry out acts of terror (Ibid).

The rise in using cryptocurrency systems to facilitate transnational organised crimes and support the activities of terrorist groups across the world is most alarming, hence the need to nip it in the bud to prevent it from resulting in increased global insecurity as currently being experienced (Carata, 2017). Studies by Amiram, Jørgensen, & Rabetti (2022) revealed that given the increase in terrorism financing, global peace has remained elusive, leaving many weaker states and developed states vulnerable to the activities

and threats of terror attacks. Although there have been responses by international organisations such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in collaboration with Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU's), and International Police Organisation (Interpol) to address the menace of Terrorism financing, the phenomenon has continued due to the privacy-enhanced features of certain cryptocurrencies such as Monero and Zcash, used for crowdfunding for terrorism making them invisible for regulators(Gordon, 2011; Rébé, 2019; Wagman, 2022).

This article, therefore seeks to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the initiatives by international organisations such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in curtailing terrorism financing and ensuring global peace. The challenges faced by these international organisations and lessons drawn from their regulatory challenges are used to inform the development of a suitable global regulatory framework to ensure global peace. To do this, the article uses the qualitative research approach by integrating academic and non-academic literature such as journal articles and reports from relevant regulatory agencies at the global, sub-regional, and national levels such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), The Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA) and other relevant material relevant to analyzing the relationship between cryptocurrency, terrorism financing and its implication on various global countermeasures. This method relies on secondary data analysis, where the emphasis is carried out by reviewing and assessing extant policies, international laws, policies, and regulations from relevant institutions and actors in combating terrorism financing and other forms of transnational organized crimes. Needless to say, this method offers a comprehensive threat assessment of the various measures taken by relevant actors towards combating terrorism financing.

The research questions posed by this article are as follows: How is cryptocurrency used as a tool for financing terrorism? What are the regulatory and enforcement challenges in addressing terrorism financing? What measures have been implemented to stem the tide of terrorism financing globally, and how effective are these measures?

Following the introduction, the second section offers a theoretical discussion on the relationship between cryptocurrency and terrorism financing. The third section assesses how terror groups use various cryptocurrency methods to fund their operations and carry out their activities. The fourth section of the article responds to the global responses by relevant actors in the international arena to counter the threat of terrorism financing through cryptocurrency platforms. The fifth section addresses the challenges and threats faced by relevant actors in the global response to combating cryptocurrency terrorism financing. The sixth section concludes the article by providing a general overview and implications on how relevant actors involved in countering cryptocurrency terrorism financing can adequately achieve their objective in an evolving and challenging global financial and international system.

## Cryptocurrency and Terrorism Financing: Theoretical Discussions

Research has shown that several theoretical paradigms from multiple academic disciplines, ranging from Criminology, Economics, Political Science, Psychology, and

International Relations, seek to assess and explain the relationship between cryptocurrency and terrorism financing (Hasan, 2023; Saha, Hasan, Mahmud, Ahmed, Parvin & Karmakar, 2024). These perspectives explain the link between cryptocurrency and terrorism financing.

As argued and put forward by the proponents of the Routine Activity Theory (RAT), try to link cryptocurrency financing because terror groups are often considered motivated offenders, exploit the vulnerability, lack of regulations, and censorship of the digital financial ecosystem to carry out their acts of terror and other forms of activities ( Lee & Choi, 2022). Terrorist organizations believed that using this avenue would make it difficult for relevant regulatory agencies to detect, track, and counter their threats. Perspectives such as the Rational Choice Theory (RCT) and the Economic Theory of Crime see members of terrorist organizations are rational actors who always assess their economic benefits, opportunities, and risks before carrying out their attacks ( Luong, 2024). Contextualizing this paradigm to cryptocurrency financing suggest the fact that the digital ecosystem operates within the prism of anonymity, borderless structure, decentralized financing, cost-effectiveness, and blockchain technology provides the platform for easy movement and laundering of assets and funds, does not only make it attractive for them, it also reduces the risk, scrutiny, and exposure from relevant regulatory agencies and traditional financial institutions (Klein, Assadi & Zwilling, 2024). The Network Theory (NT) situates its stance on the fact that the decentralized nature of digital funds and the crypto financial network presents the perfect opportunity for terror groups to fund their operations through crowdfunding, peer-to-peer transactions, and other digital marketplaces (Ferretti & D'Angelo, 2020). They easily launder and fund their operations without using the traditional banking system, which makes it difficult and cumbersome to fund their operations (Ekici & Tuzuner, 2024). Studies have also shown that global terrorist organizations such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Al-Qaeda, and Hezbollah are leveraging on the advantage of these decentralized financial networks to not only fund their operations but also recruit and attract foreign fighters (Eaddy, 2019; Kushelevitch, 2025; Manning, Akartuna & Johnson, 2025).

In perspective, operationally, these theories offer a multipronged analysis and understanding of how terrorist organizations fund their operations through the digital ecosystem enabled by the growing global presence of cryptocurrency (Whyte 2023). This is because, within the theoretical lens of the routine activity approach, terrorist organizations exploit the opportunities offered by the decentralized nature of digital finance and the economic structure to effectively sustain and fund their operations (Movchan, Shliakhovskyi, Kozii & Fedchak, 2023). The Rational Choice stance seeks to point out the strategic resilience framework for these terror groups to adapt by thinking rationally and leveraging the opportunities offered by cryptocurrency to plan, fund, and carry out their attacks (Farber & Yehezkel, 2025). The theoretical integration of the economic theory of crime further justifies, measures, and points out the cost-benefit logic for terrorist groups and other violent non-state actors to make meaningful financial decisions that will not only sustain and consolidate the financial base of such groups, but the economic perspectives on crime will also determine the longevity of these groups (Whyte 2023; Bătușaru & Sbârcea, 2024; Akcinaroglu & Shi, 2025). The final theoretical intersection of the network theory further puts the crypto economy and ecosystem in

relation to decentralized and cell-like structures of modern terrorist organizations, which operate across different layers and network cells (Cascavilla, 2024).

Collectively, these theoretical positions further explain and reveal that financing terrorism today is an evolving process that requires technological, strategic thinking, economic incentives, and a decentralized network or layers, which tend to create the perfect opportunity for terrorist organizations to effectively fund their operations, carry out attacks, consolidate, and expand their frontiers without being hindered by territoriality and geography (Cascavilla, 2024; Akcinaroglu & Shi, 2025). It is also vital to state that the emergence of cryptocurrency does not create funding for acts of terror, but the innovation it brought to the digital financial ecosystem, directly or indirectly, created the platform for these violent non-state actors to fund and carry out their operations (Whyte, 2023). Therefore, understanding how terrorist organizations fund their operations and activities requires the integration and understanding of these integrated theoretical positions, given the fact that any counter terrorism measure must also address the structural deficits associated with the decentralized structure of cryptocurrency operations, altering the cost-benefit advantages by the economic opportunities associated with cries and disrupting the illicit networks that explain the operations of modern terrorist organizations.

## How are Cryptocurrencies used to fund terror?

The decentralized, borderless, non-regulatory, cost-effective, and pseudonymous nature of cryptocurrency has increasingly become an avenue through which terror groups use to not only fund their operations, but also plan, recruit, and facilitate their attacks in the global system (Akcinaroglu & Shi, 2025). Research by experts reveals that due to the non-complexity and flexibility of the crypto ecosystem, it has become an easy avenue for terror organizations to continue perpetrating, sustaining, and consolidating themselves despite the various measures taken by states and non-state actors to combat their activities (Dyntu & Dykyj, 2021). Terror groups use several cryptocurrency avenues and methods to fund their operations around the world, as evidence from studies has shown there are several ways these organizations use to fund their operations (Akram, Nasar & Rehman, 2021). This argument is further supported by evidence suggesting that terror groups, including Al-Qaeda, ISIS, the Houthis in Yemen, and Hamas, have increasingly resorted to and turned to cryptocurrencies as a means to finance and sustain their operations and organizations (Krylova, 2023; Darwish, 2024). These groups are said to consistently use the cryptocurrency space to solicit funds through encrypted messaging platforms, social media, and darknet platforms (Bauer & Levitt, 2020). This fundraising process is usually carried out under the guise of false humanitarian support for charity organizations and crowdfunding activities (Vidino, Lewis, & Mines, 2020).

The fact that cryptocurrency presents an opportunity for Peer-to-Peer (P2P) transactions under its platform makes it easy for terror groups to use this method to fund its operations (Jovanovic, Kostić, Sebastian & Sedej, 2022). This is because P2P allows for direct transactions between persons irrespective of boundaries and the challenges associated with the traditional banking system, where it is easier to monitor, track, and regulate the movement of funds (Ibid). In addition, P2P transactions are not only anonymous, easier, faster, not regulated, and difficult to track, which makes terrorist

organizations leverage on these advantages to easily launder funds which making it difficult to trace (Teichmann, 2022).

Other studies revealed that terrorist organizations also take advantage of the fact that the use of mixers and tumblers for crypto transactions to fund their operations (Mehta & Chawla, 2024). This process involves the mixing of funds gotten through illicit means such as trafficking of drugs, persons, drug sales, kidnapping for ransom, etc., with clean funds by these transnational terror groups, thereby hindering the ability of law enforcement agencies to trace the origin of such funds and monitor such transactions (Burgess, Hamilton & Leuprecht, 2024; Navani & Cirella, 2024). This service has further enabled these groups to finance, consolidate, and sustain their activities, knowing it will be difficult to counter.

Research has also revealed that the use of privacy coins such as Monero and Zcash with enhanced security features, non-detectability, and traceability features has become an attractive digital coin used by terrorists to fund their operations (Silfversten, Favaro, Slapakova, Ishikawa, Liu, & Salas, 2020; Gross, Sedlmeir, Babel, Bechtel & Schellinger, 2021). This is because, unlike Bitcoin, whose transactions are sometimes traced, the introduction of these privacy coins into the crypto ecosystem has become a conduit used by terror groups and other transnational criminal organizations to fund their operations (Søgaard, 2024).

Furthermore, it has been revealed that the darknet marketplace has become an attractive and resource marketplace for these transnational terror organizations to purchase goods and services (Rawat, Mahor, Chouhan, Pachlasiya, Telang & Garg, 2022). Studies have shown that terrorist organizations like ISIS have used the dark web as a space for the procurement of weapons, recruiting fighters, planning, and executing attacks, and other resources needed for the expansion and sustainability of the organizations (Lakomy, 2024). The ongoing conflict in the Middle East between Israel and Hamas saw Hamas increasingly leverage cryptocurrency to plan and execute the October 7th, 2023, attacks (Darwish, 2024). The demand for ransom payment through cryptocurrency by terrorist organizations is also another method through which these organizations finance their operations. Studies have shown that terror groups like Al Qaeda, Boko Haram, Boko Haram, and ISIS are exploring the digital financial system to not only fund their operations but also demand ransom payments from their kidnapped victims (Gross, Sedlmeir, Babel, Bechtel & Schellinger, 2021; Ofusori & Hendradi, 2023; Goldbarsht, 2024).

It is on this note that, in today's international system, technological and innovative advancements meant for the development of societies have also become an alternative and high-resource avenue for terror groups to fund and sustain their operations.

## What are the Global Responses Cryptocurrency Terrorism Financing?

It is trite that the emergence of cryptocurrency as a conduit pipe for terrorism financing has led to regulatory approaches around the world, particularly by states and international organisations, to curtail it (Majumder, Routh & Singha, 2019). Research had shown that finance serves as the lifeblood of terrorist groups, which not only guarantees the organization's operations, survival, and longevity; yet, paradoxically, it



also represents one of their most significant vulnerabilities, as these funds are constantly monitored, detected and disrupted by states and non-state actors in their counterterrorism engagements (Lormel, 2018). Therefore, disrupting the flow of funds is an antidote to preventing terrorism. One of the major international organisations providing a roadmap to mitigate terrorism financing using cryptocurrency is the Financial Action Task Force (Haider & Akhtar, 2024). The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is a global organisation saddled with the responsibility of tackling money laundering, terrorism, and proliferation financing through research and monitoring how criminals raise, use, and move funds across the world. The role of the FATF is to set standards for compliance by states on how best to curtail terrorism financing (Bondaroff & Morrow, 2024).

The FATF has developed recommendations to be adhered to by states in the fight against terrorism financing, as well as funding for weapons of mass destruction. These recommendations are required to be implemented by member states of the FATF (Ibid). The FATF 40 recommendations are divided into seven distinct parts which include the following: AML/CFT Policies and coordination, Money laundering and confiscation, Terrorist financing and financing of proliferation, Preventive measures, Transparency and beneficial ownership of legal persons and arrangements, Powers and responsibilities of competent authorities and other institutional measures, international cooperation (see FATF Report 2015). Beyond these recommendations, the FATF has also developed recommendations regarding virtual currencies (Anggriawan & Susila, 2024). In this context, these virtual assets refer to any digital representation of value that can be electronically traded, transferred, used for payment, and exchanged for goods and services (Hrytsai, 2022). They have the potential of faster, cheaper, and easier payments without regard to the conventional payment system (Ibid). However, they are unregulated, thereby subjecting the process to enormous risk and becoming a haven for financial transactions of criminals and terrorists, making it easy for them to explore (Adaramola, 2025). Under the virtual currency standard, countries are expected to understand the money laundering and terrorist financing risks the sector faces, Licence or register virtual asset service providers, and supervise the sector in the same way it supervises other financial institutions (Ngo, Pham, Chung & Ryu, 2025). On the other hand, Virtual Assets service providers are expected to implement the same preventive measures as financial institutions, including customer due diligence, record keeping, and reporting of suspicious transactions, and obtain, hold, and securely transmit originator and beneficiary information when making transfers (see FATF Report, 2023).

Furthermore, research also revealed that national and regional governments have adopted diverse regulatory approaches to curtail terrorism financing within their jurisdictions (Giraldo & Trinkunas, 2007). As noted by Stigall, Miller & Donatucci, (2020), concerning National governments, the United States has played a vital role in stamping out terrorism financing. This is evidenced by the 2018 National Strategy for counterterrorism, which has an objective of examining:

> *"the capacity of terrorists to conduct attacks in the homeland and against vital United States interests overseas is sharply diminished; The sources of strength and support upon which terrorists rely are severed; Terrorists' ability to radicalize, recruit, and mobilize to violence in the homeland is diminished; Americans are prepared and protected from terrorist attacks in*



> *the homeland, including through more exacting border security and law enforcement actions; Terrorists are unable to acquire or use WMDs, including chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons, and other advanced weaponry; and public sector partners, private sector partners, and foreign partners to take a greater role in preventing and countering terrorism"* (see US Center for Counterterrorism, 2018).

Studies also revealed that in 2020, the US recorded the largest seizure of terrorist organizations' monetary funds in the form of cryptocurrency accounts of about 150 Bitcoin and 155 virtual currencies tied to Al-Qaeda (Mokhemar, 2022). The United States has also responded by identifying state sponsorship of terrorism financing and meting out necessary sanctions (Byman, 2020).

Other studies have also revealed that the European Union (EU) has responded to the emergence of cryptocurrency as a tool for terrorism financing through the process of issuing several directives and regulations to counter-terrorism financing, including Directive (EU) 2015/849 (Schindler, 2022). The fourth Anti-Money Laundering Directive (4AMLD) aims to prevent the financial system from being used for money laundering and terrorist financing. In the same vein, the New Anti-Money Laundering Directive (AMLD 6) and the Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on the prevention of the use of the financial system for money laundering or terrorist financing present clearer rules for preventing money laundering and terrorist financing by the European Union (Premti, Jafarinejad & Balani, 2021).

In terms of law enforcement from the regional and international sphere in combating terrorism financing, Europol, Interpol, and the UNODC have played significant roles. In the case of Europol, several initiatives have been adopted to ensure enforcement and mitigate the risks of terrorism financing (D'Amato & Terlizzi, 2022). The Europol and Basel Institute consider investing in preventing and combating the misuse of the crypto ecosystem for financial crime as vital to safeguard both national and international security (Freudlsperger, Maricut-Akbik & Migliorati, 2022). They do that through investing in research and innovation, capacity building, and cross-border, multi-stakeholder collaborations are therefore pivotal in mitigating the menace of terrorism financing through cryptocurrency (Wahl, 2024). This position was also re-echoed by John Brandolino, UNODC Director, Division of Treaty Affairs during the 8th cryptocurrency conference in Vienna, 2024, stating that:

> *"Multilateral collaboration is essential to dismantling the finances of criminal organisations and terrorists. UNODC fully supports and promotes efforts to collectively strengthen our ability to prevent and counter the criminal misuse of crypto assets, which in turn contributes to overall global security"* (see UNODC, 2024).

This was also re-echoed by Iker Lekuona, Director of the Basel Institute's International Centre for Asset Recovery (ICAR), who said:

> *"In our work assisting with major transnational corruption and asset recovery cases, we see how money launderers and other criminals systematically*



> *target weak links in the chain. All institutions involved in detecting and investigating financial crimes and in recovering assets need to build their capacity to work on crypto-related cases"* (UNODC, 2024).

Law enforcement also involves the sharing of information between law enforcement agencies, financial institutions, financial intelligence unit (FIU) to track the movement of funds, ascertaining the source and purpose of usage of the funds (Wagman, 2022). This helps in determining the legality or otherwise of these funds for prosecution by law enforcement agencies, in collaboration with the FATF (Ibid).

Private sectors also have a role to play, particularly cryptocurrency exchanges and fintech companies, through compliance and monitoring (Alam & Zameni, 2019). This is because, cryptocurrency exchanges are required by law to provide know your customers KYC information for purposes of traceability for funds with the potential to be used for terrorism financing (Hasan, Talukder, Saju & Lysuzzaman, 2024). This involves the collection of identifying information from users for a range of reasons, such as confirming users are not subject to sanctions, blocking individuals residing in prohibited jurisdictions, and empowering proactive investigations in case of future suspicious activity (Ibid). They are also obliged to monitor transactions on an ongoing basis for suspicious activity that could reveal money laundering, terrorism financing, or other forms of financial crime. They are also required to monitor transactions effectively, as businesses will undoubtedly encounter some risky behaviour requiring direct outreach to customers, updating records, and reporting suspicious activity to relevant enforcement bodies (Takaragi, Kubota, Wohlgemuth, Umezawa & Koyanagi, 2023). Cryptocurrency service providers (VASPs) are also obliged to collect and disclose sender and beneficiary information for crypto asset transfers under FATF CTF standards (Kapsis, 2023). This is in conformity with the travel rule as developed by the Financial Action Task Force in their recommendations. This information helps regulators and law enforcement agencies to unravel the identity of criminals in various locations across the world. In the United Kingdom, for instance, crypto firms are required to register with the Financial Conduct Authority FCA and comply with the requirements of the regulations, if they intend to provide certain crypto asset services by way of business, and if this service will be during business carried on by them in the United Kingdom (see FCA 2019).

Studies by Uzougbo, Ikegwu & Adewusi (2024) also revealed a need for increased cooperation between the public and private sectors is essential for effective enforcement of cryptocurrency laws, given their important role in detecting and preventing illicit activities.

## What are the Challenges and Gaps in addressing these threats?

The regulatory challenge in curtailing the use of cryptocurrencies as a channel for terrorism financing is embedded in the technology that governs cryptocurrency itself. Cryptocurrency exchanges like Coinbase often include user-centric information such as the "Know Your Customer" information needed for compliance with regulatory frameworks for transferring cryptocurrency and converting cryptocurrency to fiat (Kazerani, Rosati & Lesser, 2017). Consequently, due to its anonymity and decentralised



nature, cryptocurrency allows criminals to go undetected, particularly with cryptocurrencies with enhanced privacy features (Ibid). Research revealed that Cryptocurrencies with enhanced privacy features, such as Monero and Zcash, make identification of participants very challenging (Zhao & Zhang, 2021). In Monero, the privacy of the receiver identity is protected with a stealth address generated by the transaction sender, even the transaction receiver does not know the stealth address (Ibid). All Monero transactions are private by default, and the transaction amount is hidden with a cryptographic method (Thyagarajan, Malavolta, Schmidt & Schröder, 2020). In Monero, ring signatures and confidential transactions are combined to create Ring CT transactions, which can hide both the amount and origin of Monero transactions (Ibid). The implementation of robust security features, such as enhanced privacy features, makes it difficult for hackers to gain access, preventing unfortunate hacks such as the Mt. Gox exchange hack and the DAO attack on Ethereum (Arnone, 2024). In response to this concern, several privacy-enhanced cryptocurrencies have been developed that store the information "on-chain" (i.e., on the public blockchain) in a privacy-respecting manner that attempts to make the sender and receiver anonymous to third parties (Zheng, Xie, Dai, Chen & Wang, 2018).

Although these cryptocurrencies with enhanced privacy features provide security for the cryptocurrency against hacks, criminals explore these privatised features to avoid being detected as they engage in illicit activities using cryptocurrency (Maurushat & Halpin, 2022). However, for cryptocurrencies with decentralised and enhanced privacy features, such "Know Your Customer" information is non-existent, making it difficult for regulators to navigate and identify participants (Ibid).

Another challenge to cryptocurrency regulation lies on the fragmented regulatory approach across the world (Al-Tawil, 2023). Different international organisations and jurisdictions across the globe have developed approaches in diverse ways as to curtail transnational organised crimes like terrorism financing (Wronka, 2024). This multifaceted approach most often leads to regulatory arbitrage since there is no global consensus on a single window to curtail this transnational offence (Perdana & Jiow, 2024). This is because criminals are likely to explore less stringent jurisdictions to continue in their nefarious activities, thereby making regulatory approaches less effective. Therefore, developing standardised regulations across jurisdictions is necessary, considering the transnational nature of terrorist financing and money laundering (Al Naqbi, Nobanee & Ellili, 2025). This would greatly aid AML/CFT efforts in cases that span multiple international jurisdictions by fostering greater communication and the pooling of resources. Second, standardisation would mitigate the legal and jurisdictional mosaic of international perspectives on Bitcoin use and regulation (Fletcher, Larkin & Corbet, 2021).

In terms of enforcement gaps, the cryptocurrency regime is shrouded by inadequate enforcement in certain jurisdictions (Guseva, 2022). While there is effective enforcement in some jurisdictions, others are lagging, given room for arbitrage (Brummer, Yadav & Zaring, 2022). This creates a problem given the nature of cryptocurrency. Consequently, studies have also shown that law enforcement in certain jurisdictions does not have the requisite expertise to deal with complex issues relating to cryptocurrency (Uzougbo, Ikegwu & Adewusi, 2024). Cryptocurrency transaction involves parties in different countries, and they normally create ambiguity on which jurisdiction's laws apply. This

ambiguity can lead to regulatory gaps and enforcement challenges, which allow illicit activities such as money laundering and terrorism financing to flourish (Ibid).

Furthermore, another issue that poses a challenge to dealing with the issue of terrorism financing is inadequate international collaboration and information sharing by relevant stakeholders involved in tackling this challenge (Amiram, Jørgensen & Rabetti, 2022). Although certain international organisations have developed approaches fostering international cooperation by ensuring cross border cooperation in different jurisdictions, whether such initiatives have yielded positive result or is limited by sovereignty of states as this is a challenge to the effective regulation of cryptocurrency for counter terrorism financing since cross border information sharing need to be carried out with speed to prevent acts of terrorism happening.

Whilst regulatory approaches to curtailing cryptocurrency as a tool for terrorism financing is a step in the right direction, the major challenge is how this can be done without infringing on private rights of individuals. Hence the need to balance financial privacy with regulation becomes desirable (Li, Susilo, Yang, Yu, Du, Liu & Guizani, 2019). In addition, overregulation also whittles down the development of cryptocurrency as it stifles innovation and prevents it from growth (Džafić & Hečimović, 2023). Therefore, balancing regulation with innovation is necessary.

## Conclusion

The emergence of cryptocurrency is a game-changer in today's global financial system given the immense opportunities and advantages it has in respecting individual and group privacy, ensuring financial decentralization, securing digital assets, dismantling some of the barriers associated with traditional banking, financial systems, and combating terrorism and other forms of complex global transnational crimes. Its efficiency in strengthening inclusion, non-regulatory, and non-interference nature from external sources makes it attractive to individuals and organizations who respect trade secrecy and financial anonymity. However, despite its attractive features, it has also presented an opportunity for terror groups and other criminal organizations to not only evade surveillance from relevant security agencies in countering the illicit movements and laundering of funds, but the platform is also an avenue for these groups to fund their operations but carry out other activities that threaten the peace and stability of the global financial and security system.

The findings of this study, suggest that these terrorist organizations have been leveraging on the fact that cryptocurrency transactions mostly involve P2P transactions, privacy coins, and dark web marketplaces to perpetuate their acts of terror and fund their operations despite the global efforts and responses from states and non-state actors in combating terrorism financing. Therefore, to combat these challenges, it is important for relevant actors such as states, global, regional, and sub-regional financial regulators, and other sectors utilizing the crypto digital space to strengthen and enhance their surveillance capabilities of tracking and stopping the various channels used by these groups to fund their operations. It is also important for these actors to initiate measures that further strengthen the safety and security of users in the crypto ecosystem and other Anti-Money Laundering Measures at the global, regional, sub-regional, national,

and individual levels. Furthermore, the need for increased stakeholder collaboration in the fight against terrorism financing is important, because counterterrorism involves the coalition of the willing for it to be more viable and effective.

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# TRADE CREATION EFFECTS ON GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS: A CASE STUDY OF BRICS

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## Abstract

Over the last twenty years, international trade and production have increasingly been structured around what is commonly known as Global Value Chains (GVCs). The trade volume of BRICS significantly centers on Global Value Chains (GVCs) or Global Supply Chains. In this regard, the institutional frameworks of BRICS concerning FDI inflows and foreign exchange reserves have positively influenced trade creation among BRICS nations, thereby affecting the Global Value Chains. This paper aims to examine the directional trade flows of BRICS and its intra-trade volume in relation to global value chains. Firstly, the institutional changes within BRICS (FDI inflow and foreign exchange reserves) can enhance merchandise trade among BRICS countries. Secondly, there is an increase in merchandise trade outflows from BRICS, and finally, an increase in service trade outflows from BRICS. The first and third findings can be interpreted as trade creations resulting from the rise in foreign exchange reserves and FDI inflows in BRICS nations, along with rules of origin acting as an implicit trade barrier for imports from the rest of the world. Understanding the Global Value Chains is crucial for comprehending the third finding regarding the increase in trade flows from BRICS. The primary factor driving the rise in outflows is the necessity of the complementarities of value chains for the importation of intermediates by BRICS members.

## Keywords

Global Value Chains, Trade Creation, Trade Diversion, and BRICS.

## Resumo

Nos últimos vinte anos, a produção e o comércio internacional têm-se estruturado cada vez mais em torno do que é comummente conhecido como Cadeias de Valor Globais (CVG). O volume de comércio dos BRICS centra-se significativamente nas Cadeias de Valor Globais (CVG) ou nas Cadeias de Abastecimento Globais. Neste contexto, os quadros institucionais dos BRICS relativos aos fluxos de IDE e às reservas cambiais influenciaram positivamente a criação de comércio entre as nações dos BRICS, afetando assim as Cadeias de Valor Globais. Este artigo tem como objetivo examinar os fluxos comerciais direcionais dos BRICS e o seu

volume de comércio intra-BRICS em relação às cadeias de valor globais. Em primeiro lugar, as mudanças institucionais no seio dos BRICS (fluxos de IDE e reservas cambiais) podem potenciar o comércio de mercadorias entre os países dos BRICS. Em segundo lugar, verifica-se um aumento nas saídas de comércio de mercadorias dos BRICS e, finalmente, um aumento nas saídas de comércio de serviços dos BRICS. A primeira e a terceira conclusões podem ser interpretadas como criações de comércio resultantes do aumento das reservas cambiais e dos fluxos de IDE nos países do BRICS, juntamente com as regras de origem que atuam como uma barreira comercial implícita para as importações do resto do mundo. Compreender as Cadeias de Valor Globais é crucial para entender a terceira conclusão relativa ao aumento dos fluxos comerciais dos BRICS. O principal fator que impulsiona o aumento das saídas é a necessidade de complementaridades das cadeias de valor para a importação de produtos intermédios pelos membros dos BRICS.

**Palavras-chave**

Cadeias de Valor Globais, Criação de Comércio, Desvio de Comércio e BRICS.

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## Introduction

The evolving architecture of the global economy has been profoundly shaped by the rise of regional economic cooperation and the fragmentation of production across borders. Over the past three decades, the expansion of Global Value Chains (GVCs) has transformed international trade from the exchange of finished goods to the exchange of intermediate inputs, services, and knowledge. In this context, trade creation the process through which economic integration leads to the replacement of higher-cost domestic production with lower-cost imports from partner economies has become a central mechanism linking regional cooperation with global production networks. The emergence of the BRICS grouping, comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, has added a new dimension to this transformation by reshaping trade flows, investment patterns, and production linkages among major emerging economies.

Since the early 2000s, BRICS countries have experienced rapid economic growth, increased industrial capacity, and expanded participation in international trade. Their growing share of global GDP, manufacturing output, and foreign direct investment has strengthened their position within global production systems. However, beyond their individual economic performance, the collective integration of BRICS economies has created new opportunities for trade creation within the bloc. By reducing trade barriers, promoting investment cooperation, and strengthening institutional coordination, BRICS has facilitated the expansion of intra-bloc trade in intermediate goods, technology, and services. These developments have significant implications for GVC participation, as increased intra-regional trade can enhance specialization, reduce production costs, and foster deeper integration into global production networks. The relationship between trade creation and GVC participation is particularly important for emerging economies. Trade creation within BRICS can stimulate industrial upgrading, encourage technology diffusion, and improve competitiveness in global markets. At the same time, it may alter

the geographical distribution of value addition by shifting production stages among member countries. Understanding how BRICS-driven trade creation influences GVC integration is therefore crucial for evaluating the broader role of South–South cooperation in the global economy.

The rise of Global Value Chains (GVCs) is a dominating feature of the recent evolution in the structure of international trade. In the OECD, the import content of exports increased by 63% between 1995 and 2011, reaching a value of 24.3% on average[1]. This internationalisation of production through global value chains calls for a revaluation of the effects of regional trade agreements (RTA) on trade flows. In reality, about 70% of international trade today involves global value chains (GVCs), as services, raw materials, parts, and components cross borders often numerous times. Once incorporated into final products they are shipped to consumers all over the world[2]. The Exports from one country to another often involve complex interactions among a variety of domestic and foreign suppliers. Even more than before, trade is determined by strategic decisions of firms to outsource, invest, and carry out activities wherever the necessary skills and materials are available at competitive cost and quality (OECD)[3].

## Data Base and Methods

This study adopts a quantitative and empirical research design to examine the trade creation effects of BRICS and their implications for Global Value Chain (GVC) integration. The analysis relies on secondary macroeconomic and trade datasets compiled from internationally recognized databases, including ITC, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, UN Comtrade, OECD, and UNCTAD. These sources provide consistent and comparable cross-country indicators required for longitudinal and panel analysis. The study covers the five BRICS economies; Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa over the period 2000–2024, capturing the phase of rapid economic expansion and deepening economic cooperation among member states.

To evaluate trade creation and GVC participation, the study uses a panel dataset consisting of trade, macroeconomic, and institutional indicators. The key dependent variable is intra-BRICS trade intensity, measured through bilateral merchandise trade flows among BRICS members. Complementary indicators of GVC participation are derived from FDI inflows among the BRICS. These variables capture the degree to which BRICS economies participate in fragmented global production networks.

The independent variables include FDI inflows, and intra-BRICS trade growth. Institutional indicators such as trade policy interventions on the are incorporated as control variables to account for structural factors affecting trade and production integration among the BRICS. The empirical strategy combines descriptive statistics, and trade trend analysis. Initially, descriptive analysis is conducted to identify patterns in intra-BRICS trade growth, and FDI patterns of the flow among the BRICS. This is

[1] For some countries such as Luxembourg or Belgium, imports make up more than a third of their exports. See data https://data.oecd.org/trade/import-content-of-exports.html
[2] OECD Information, https://www.oecd.org/trade/topics/global-value-chains-and-trade/
[3] OECD Information, https://www.oecd.org/trade/topics/global-value-chains-and-trade/

followed by correlation analysis to explore the relationships between trade integration, FDI flow, and GVC participation indicators.

To estimate trade creation effects, the study employs a simple regression model intends to analyse the directional trade flows of BRICS and its intra-trade volume towards the global value chains, along with support of foreign currency reserves and FDI Inflows as independent variables. This framework explains bilateral trade flows as a function of economic size, geographic and economic distance, and institutional factors. The model is extended to include BRICS integration variables to capture intra-regional trade effects. Through this mixed-method quantitative approach, the study provides a rigorous empirical basis for assessing how trade creation within BRICS influences participation in Global Value Chains.

## Literature Review

Estimating the effects of regional trade agreements requires building a counterfactual world. There are two main approaches: using a structural model to simulate the counterfactual as in Caliendo and Parro (2015), or using gravity equations to predict the counterfactual as in Carrere (2006), Magee (2008), Baier and Bergstrand (2007) and Baier and Bergstrand (2015). This paper is closely related to Magee (2008), which estimates the effects of trade agreements using a panel of 133 countries from 1980 to 1998. Also closely related is Carrere (2006), who uses a gravity model to assess trade creation and trade diversion effects. Our contribution comes from the broader coverage of Regional Trade Agreements and countries, our focus on the effect of RTA on inflows to and outflows from the region, and on the account of the role of Global Value Chains. Also related is Baier and Bergstrand (2007) and Baier and Bergstrand (2015) who address the problem of endogeneity related to free trade agreements and trade flows by using panel data and average treatment effects (ATEs). They find positive estimates and conclude that free trade agreements increase members' international trade.

Anderson and Yotov (2016) refer to a gravity model to estimate the effects of trade agreements on terms of trade and global efficiency. They face two main problems: heteroscedasticity in trade flows data and indigeneity due to the two-way causality. To address the first one, they use the Poisson pseudo maximum likelihood (PPML). To address the second one, they introduce two variables, one for trade agreements between countries with low most-favoured-nation tariffs (MFN), the other for trade agreements between countries with high MFN tariffs. They find an increase in the global efficiency of manufacturing trade over the period 1990-2002.

The behaviour of trade flows following a regional trade agreement is also impacted by the depth of the agreement, as analysed in Mattoo et al. (2019). Using a sample of 96 countries for the period 2002-2014, they show that deep agreements lead to more trade creation and less trade diversion than shallow agreements. Additionally, beyond complementarity in trade policy, GVCs also create strong interdependence of GDP fluctuation at business cycle frequency and are associated with network propagation effects of any reform aiming at reducing the cost of cross-country trade.2 Moreover, the segmentation of production across countries also has significant implications for the magnitude of estimated trade elasticities (Amiti et al. (2014), de Soyres et al. (2018)).

Finally, Estevadeordal et al. (2008) study the impact of regional trade agreements on trade liberalization towards non-members. Focusing on Latin American countries, they found "complementary effects" in the sense that a preferential tariff reduction leads to a reduction in the external tariff. Freund and Ornelas (2010) provide an insightful review of the literature on regionalism. The empirical findings of this paper, combined with theories of optimal trade policy suggest two opposing forces towards greater global integration: the response of trade flows to an RTA gives members an incentive to reduce trade barriers towards non-members; however, it gives non-members an incentive to increase trade barriers towards the region. The incentive for members to lower trade barriers echoes the literature on multilateralism (Estevadeordal et al. (2008), Bagwell and Staiger (1999)).

## Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

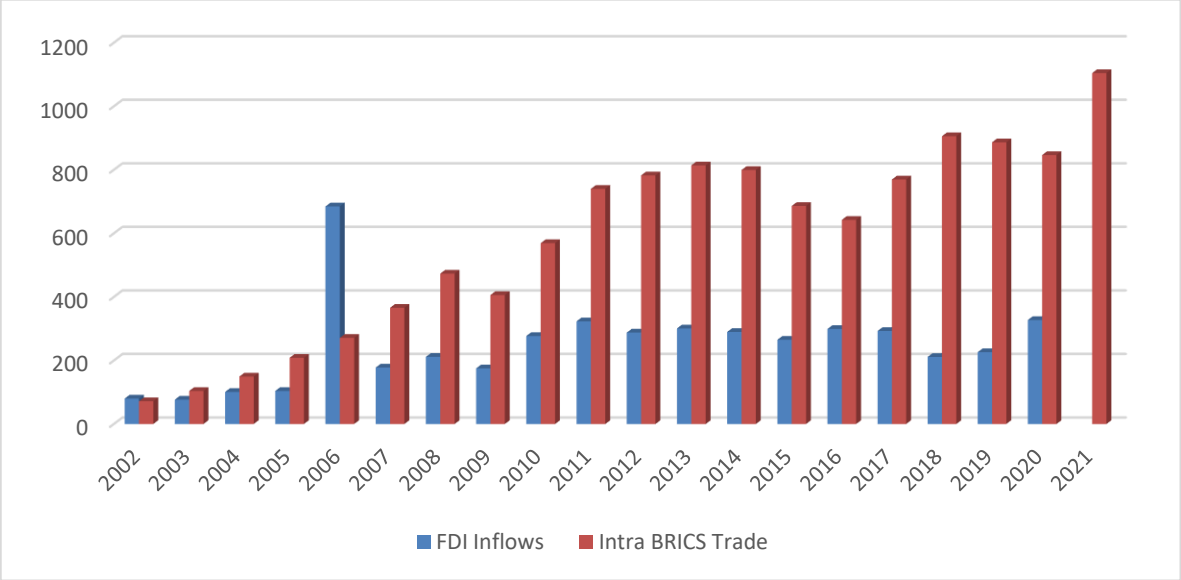
The concept that "trade creates geography" is particularly significant when analysed within the framework of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), as this bloc exemplifies how the expansion of trade relationships can alter both regional and global economic landscapes. Historically, the geography of global trade was primarily influenced by North America and Western Europe. Nevertheless, the swift increase in intra-BRICS trade and their integration into global value chains has facilitated the rise of new economic centers throughout the Global South. The surge in trade among BRICS nations has encouraged the development of major ports, industrial corridors, logistics networks, and financial hubs in cities like Shanghai, Mumbai, São Paulo, and Johannesburg, demonstrating how trade flows actively reshape spatial economic patterns. As trade between BRICS countries has intensified, companies have started to relocate production to areas that offer larger markets, lower labour costs, and improved infrastructure. This shift has resulted in significant accumulation effects, especially in the manufacturing and services sectors, leading to the creation of new "core regions" within emerging economies. For instance, China and India have evolved into key manufacturing and services centers, drawing in investments and establishing solid industrial clusters that link suppliers, producers, and global markets. These trends exemplify how trade has transformed economic geography by moving the focal points of production and consumption towards emerging economies. The BRICS experience also underscores the development of new South–South trade corridors, which diminish reliance on conventional North–South trade routes. Investments in infrastructure, digital connectivity, and financial collaboration such as development banking and currency cooperation, have boosted regional integration and adopted alternative economic order. As these systems expand, new trade routes and production centers continue to arise, reinforcing the notion that geography is shaped by trade. In this regard, BRICS illustrates how the expansion of trade influences geographical progress.

## Findings and Analysis

The BRICS FDI inflows significantly influenced on its intra BRICS trade volume. The BRICS formed 2009, the period of post global financial crisis the bellow figure gave the evidence of the BRICS institutional arrangements on FDI inflows leads to increase the intra BRICS

trade volume which exhibits trade creation on global value chains. The detailed analysis is given below.

**Figure 1.** The BRICS FDI and Intra BRICS Merchandise Trade Volume (Values in Billion USD)




Source: ITC Calculation based on UNCOMTRADE, ITC Statistics, and BRICS Joint Statistical Report 2020.
https://www.trademap.org/Country_SelProduct_TS.aspx?nvpm=1%7c%7c6757%7c%7c%7cTOTAL%7c%7c%7c2%7c1%7c1%7c2%7c2%7c1%7c3%7c1%7c1%7c1

In the above figure 1 illustrates the impact of FDI inflows on the Intra BRICS merchandise trade volume. From 2002, Intra-BRICS merchandise trade volume were 71.73 Billion USD and the volume had increased up to 473.4 Billion USD in the year 2008. This data depicts pre-BRICS era wherein the intra BRICS trade volume had been positively influenced by the FDI inflows devoid of any institutional arrangements. During this period, the BRICS FDI inflow share had substantially increased from 79.99 Billion USD to 211.33 Billion USD. After the formation of the BRICS i.e., post BRICS, the Intra BRICS merchandise trade volume had significantly risen due to an increase in the FDI inflows among the BRICS countries. In the year 2009, Intra BRICS merchandise trade volume stood at 406.05 Billion USD along with FDI inflows at 175.04 Billion USD.

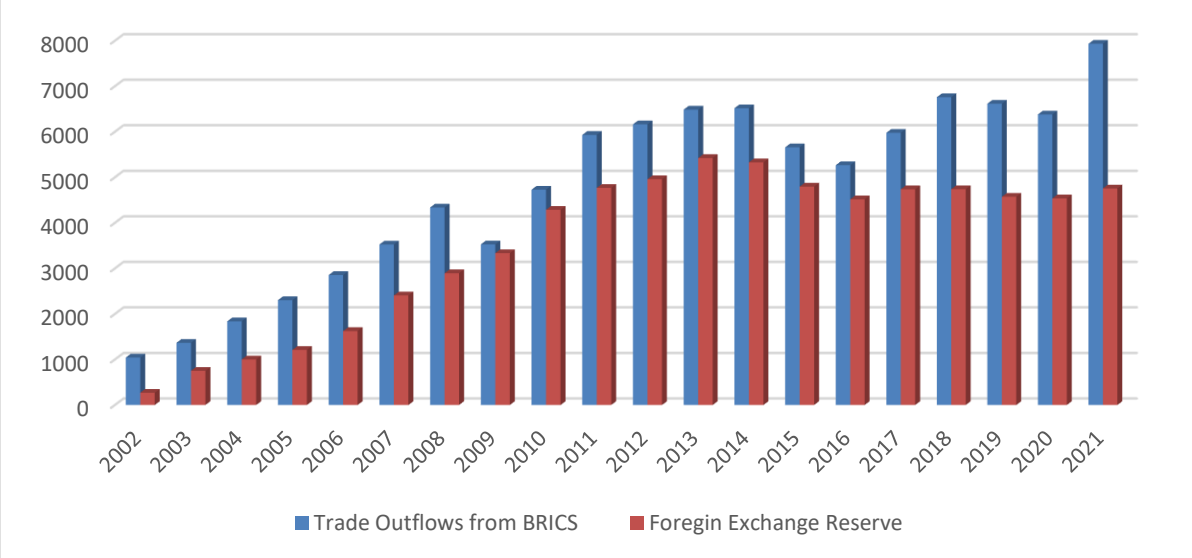
The period of 2010- 2018, the intra BRICS merchandise trade volume increased from 569.25 to 905.69 Billion USD. Similarly, the imports also increased from 358.54 to 552.42 Billion USD. The institutional arrangements on FDI inflows have influenced by increasing of Intra BRICS trade volume, which makes massive volume of trade creation in this group. The FDI inflows during this period constantly maintained at same pace with 211.19 Billion USD. The bilateral trade negotiations, the BRICS New Development bank financial assistances on transport sectors (9.56 Billion USD), Urban development projects (3.69 Billion USD), ICT projects (300 Million USD), and Multiple areas projects (2.15 Billion USD) are major factors positively influenced on Intra BRICS trade volume.

In the period of COVID-19 pandemic, the BRICS intra trade volume have played significant role on their economic recoveries. The BRICS emergency programme loan for economic recovery (6 Billion USD), and Emergency assistance programme in combating COVID-19 (6 Billion USD). The above economic recovery assistance by New Development Bank platform necessitated 2 Billion USD on each BRICS member states. Under this platform total distributed 12 Billion USD financial assistances on combating on COVID-19 situation. The COVID pandemic period of 2019 -21 data shows that intra BRICS exports increased from 354.49 to 451.26 Billion USD. The intra BRICS trade volume increased from 886.45 to 1104 Billion USD. The intra BRICS trade volume increased this situation because of the BRICS emergency loan, and economic assistance programme under the new development bank institutional arrangement. The BRICS FDI inflows increased from 226.14 to 327.31 Billion USD in 2019-20 period. In this pandemic uncertainties, the BRICS institutional involvement on the basis of New development bank projects, Emergency loan, and FDI inflows have greatly influenced the intra trade volume and economic recoveries. The increase in the FDI inflows leads to creation of intra BRICS trade volume on global value chains.

## The BRICS Foreign Exchange Reserve and Trade Creation on GVCs

The BRICS group have contributed to the largest level of foreign exchange reserve which consist of 4.75 Trillion USD in 2021. The BRICS foreign exchange reserve have influenced its inter BRICS merchandise trade volume over the years. The below figure illustrates the relations of foreign exchange reserve and inter BRICS Merchandise Trade volume.

**Figure 2.** The BRICS Foreign Exchange Reserve and Inter Merchandise Trade Volume (Values in Billion USD)




Source: ITC Calculation based on UNCOMTRADE, ITC Statistics, and BRICS Joint Statistical Report 2020.
https://www.trademap.org/Country_SelProduct_TS.aspx?nvpm=1%7c%7c6757%7c%7c%7cTOTAL%7c%7c%7c2%7c1%7c1%7c2%7c2%7c1%7c3%7c1%7c1%7c1

The above figure 2 illustrates inter BRICS merchandise trade relations, in the case of inter BRICS merchandise trade volume (2002-2008) increased from 1041.37 to 4337.1 Billion USD. Similarly, BRICS Foreign Exchange Reserve also increased from 268.41to 2894.32 Billion USD during this period. The BRICS foreign exchange reserve act as catalyst and boost external trade sector of BRICS.

In the period of 2009-18, inter BRICS merchandise trade volume increased from 3527.78 to 6760.3 Billion USD, and in the case of BRICS foreign exchange reserve increased from 3335.18 to 4739.25 Billion USD. The inter BRICS trade volume and foreign exchange reserve have helped the BRICS economy at a greater level to recover these nations from global financial crisis, and Eurozone crisis.

In the case of pandemic period (2019-21), inter BRICS trade volume increased from 6616.18 to 7933.52 Billion USD. In the case of BRICS foreign exchange reserve volume increased from 4573.54 to 4755.3 Billion USD. The above data portray BRICS as an institution that is actively engaged in the global volume of trade and global value chains on merchandise trade. The BRICS have succeeded to combat global financial crisis, and Eurozone crisis certain level.

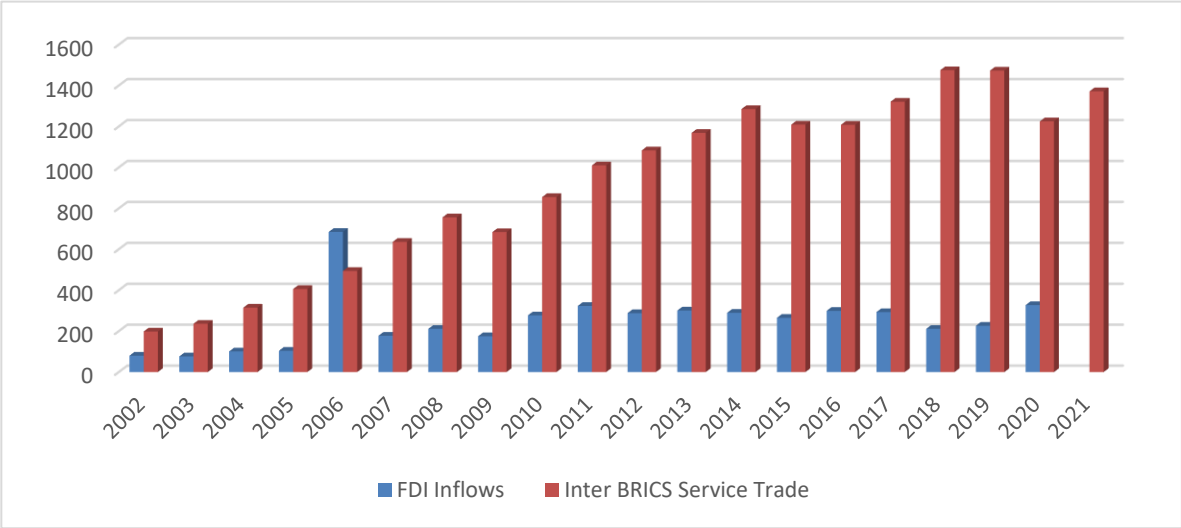
In the case of the BRICS merchandise exports share contribution on world exports increased in the period of 2002-08. The percentage of exports share increased from 8.80% in 2002) to 14.73% in 2008 (see table 5 in the appendix part). The period of 2009 -2018, same tendency also exhibited from 15.28 (2009) % to 18.63% (2018). In the period of pandemic (2019-21) BRICS exports share increased from 18.96 % (2019) to 20.07% (2021) on over World merchandise trade exports volume.

In the case of the BRICS merchandise imports share contribution on world imports increased in the period of 2002-08. The percentage of imports share increased from 7.15% in 2002 to 12.08% in 2008 (see the table 6 in the appendix part). The period of 2009-18, the imports contribution share increased from 12.94% (2009) to 16.04% (2018). In the period of pandemic (2019-21), the BRICS imports share increased from 15.99% (2019) to 16.52% (2021) on over World merchandise trade imports volume. To, conclude that the BRICS contributed total merchandise trade share on global trade volume reached 10.01% in 2021, 18.09 % in 2020, and 17.43% in 2019. This evidence clearly marked that the BRICS actively participated during the pandemic on global value chains and global supply chains of the trade in merchandise.

## The BRICS FDI Inflows and Trade Creation on GVCs

The BRICS FDI inflows significantly influenced on its inter BRICS service trade volume. The bellow figure gave the evidence of the BRICS institutional arrangements on FDI inflows leads to increase the intra BRICS service trade volume which exhibits trade creations on global value chains. The detailed analysis is given bellow.

**Figure 3.** The BRICS FDI Inflows and Inter BRICS Service Trade (Values in Billion USD)




Source: ITC, UNCTAD, WTO trade in services database based on Eurostat, International Monetary Fund, BRICS Joint Statistical Report 2020, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and relevant national statistical authorities statistics https://www.trademap.org/Country_SelProductCountry_TS.aspx?nvpm=1%7c%7c6757%7c%7c6757%7cTOTAL%7c%7c%7c2%7c1%7c1%7c2%7c2%7c1%7c3%7c1%7c1%7c1

The above figure 3, depict inter BRICS service trade relations, in the case of inter BRICS service trade volume (2002-2008) increased from 198 to 756 Billion USD. Similarly, BRICS Foreign Direct Investment Inflows also increased from 79.99 to 211.33 Billion USD during this period. The BRICS FDI inflows boost inter BRICS service trade volume such that the economy revives as a result of the pandemic shocks wherein the global value chains can positively benefit from such trade creations.

In the period of 2009-18, inter BRICS service trade volume increased from 684 to 1475 Billion USD, and in the case of BRICS FDI inflows increased from 175.04 to 211.19 Billion USD. The inter BRICS service trade volume and FDI inflows have helped the BRICS economy at a greater level to recover these nations from global financial crisis, and Eurozone crisis.

In the case of pandemic period (2019-21), inter BRICS service trade volume decreased from 1473 to 1372 Billion USD. In the case of BRICS FDI inflows volume reached 327.31 Billion USD in 2020. The economic system suffered a major setback as most parts of the world were forced into a complete lockdown due to the ongoing fatal contagion, causing a major decline in employment, output, and service trade. The Inter BRICS service trade volume assists in the economic recovery of these economies from pandemic uncertainties.

In the case of the BRICS service exports share contribution on world service exports increased in the period of 2005-10. The percentage of exports share increased from 7.29% in 2005 to 9.86% in 2010 (see table 7 in the appendix part). The period of 2011 -2018, same tendency also exhibited from 10.13 (2011) % to 9.74% (2018). In the period of pandemic (2019-21) BRICS exports share increased from 9.80 % (2019) to 11.42% (2021) on over world service trade exports volume.

In the case of the BRICS service imports share contribution on world imports increased in the period of 2005-10. The percentage of imports share increased from 8.75% in 2005 to 11.99% in 2010 (see the table 8 in the appendix part). The period of 2011-18, the imports contribution share increased from 12.96% (2011) to 15.30% (2018). In the period of pandemic (2019-21), the BRICS service imports share decreased from 14.59% (2019) to 11.56% (2021) on over world service trade imports volume. To, conclude that the BRICS contributed total service trade share on global trade volume reached 11.49% in 2021, 12.59 % in 2020, and 12.03% in 2019. This evidence clearly marked that the BRICS actively participated during the pandemic on global value chains and global supply chains of the trade in service.

The paper postulated the following hypotheses based on the literature and theoretical explanations. Firstly, the institutional changes in the BRICS (FDI Inflow, FDI Outflow, and Foreign Exchange Reserve) can increase the trade within the BRICS countries, secondly; a decrease in the trade outflows, and finally; an increase in the trade inflows. The following functional model can represent the three hypotheses mentioned above.

Change in trade within the BRICS = f [BRICS Institutional Arrangements]

Change in Trade Inflows to the BRICS = f [BRICS Institutional Arrangements]

Change in Trade outflows from the BRICS = f [BRICS Institutional Arrangements]

**Table 1.** Correlation between Institutional Arrangements and BRICS Trade

| | FDI Inflows | FDI Outflows | Foreign Exchange Reserve |
|---|---|---|---|
| Intra BRICS Trade | 0.32 | 0.90 | 0.97 |
| Inter BRICS Service Trade | 0.30 | 0.91 | 0.94 |
| Trade Outflows from BRICS | 0.35 | 0.90 | 0.97 |

In the first hypothesis, it is expected that institutional arrangements can positively impact the trade within BRICS, meaning that trade within BRICS will increase along with FDI inflow and Foreign Exchange reserve, and trade will decrease with an increase in FDI outflow. To test the same, a multiple linear regression was performed. The model is as follows:

Δ Trade within BRICS= f [Δ FDI Inflows, Δ FDI Outflow, Δ Foreign Exchange Reserve]

The regression result is explained in Table 1. It shows the model is significant where the R squared value is 0.93 and the model F value is less than 0.05. With respect to individual coefficients, it expects a positive relationship between Trade within BRICS and FDI inflow and Foreign Exchange Reserve with a statistical significance. However, the regression result revealed that both have a positive relationship with Trade within BRICS with no statistical significance where their corresponding p-values are greater than 0.05. On the other hand, we expect a negative relationship between Trade within BRICS and FDI outflows, although, it is statistically not significant.



| **Table 2.** Regression Analysis of Trade within BRICS and BRICS Institutional Arrangements | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Coefficients* | *Standard Error* | *t Stat* | *P-value* |
| Intercept | -20.1171571 | 53.86403 | -0.37348 | 0.714386 |
| FDI Inflows | 0.000428431 | 0.150097 | 0.002854 | 0.997763 |
| FDI Outflows | -0.77592637 | 0.766379 | -1.01246 | 0.328499 |
| Foreign Exchange Reserve | 0.190778916 | 0.035783 | 5.331496 | 0.000106 |
| R Square | 0.936754723 | | | |
| Standard Error | 78.86251389 | | | |
| *Significance F* | 1.23609E-08 (95%) | | | |

The second hypothesis, that is trade Inflow to the BRICS is dependent on BRICS institutional arrangements (FDI Inflow, FDI Outflow, and Foreign Exchange Reserve). As done in the first hypothesis test, a similar multiple regression is performed and Table 2 reveals the result. It shows the model is significant where the R squared value is higher and the F value is less than 0.05. With respect to individual coefficients, it expects a positive relationship between trade inflows to the BRICS and FDI inflow and Foreign Exchange Reserve. However, the regression result revealed that Foreign Exchange Reserve has a positive relationship with Trade within BRICS with a statistical significance where its corresponding p-values is less than 0.05. As against the hypothesis, the result shows a negative relationship between Trade inflows to the BRICS and FDI inflows, still, it is not significant. On the other hand, we expect a negative relationship between Trade Inflows to the BRICS and FDI outflows, but the result shows a positive relationship with no statistical significance.

The third hypothesis is trade outflow from the BRICS is dependent on BRICS institutional arrangements (FDI Inflow, FDI Outflow, and Foreign Exchange Reserve). As done in the previous analysis, multiple regression is performed and Table 3 reveals the result. It shows the model is significant where the R squared value is higher and the F value is less than 0.05. With respect to individual coefficients, it expects a positive relationship between trade outflows to the BRICS and FDI inflow and Foreign Exchange Reserve with a statistical significance. However, the regression result revealed that Foreign Exchange Reserve has a positive relationship with trade within BRICS with statistical significance where its corresponding p-values is less than 0.05. However, the result shows a positive relationship between trade inflows to the BRICS and FDI inflows with no statistical significance. On the other hand, we expect a negative relationship between trade inflows to the BRICS and FDI outflows, but it is not statistically significant.

| **Table 3.** Regression Analysis of Trade Inflows to the BRICS and BRICS Institutional Arrangements | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Coefficients* | *Standard Error* | *t Stat* | *P-value* |
| Intercept | 149.4699468 | 111.7667556 | 1.337338155 | 0.202435166 |
| FDI Inflows | -0.105916187 | 0.311449205 | -0.340075315 | 0.738848312 |
| FDI Outflows | 1.091043943 | 1.590221588 | 0.686095543 | 0.503857601 |
| Foreign Exchange Reserve | 0.180547784 | 0.074249775 | 2.431627373 | 0.029051999 |

| | |
|---|---|
| R Square | 0.93775944 |
| Standard Error | 163.6381 |
| *Significance F* | 1.10307E-06 (95%) |

**Table 4.** Regression Analysis of Trade outflow from the BRICS and BRICS Institutional Arrangements

| | *Coefficients* | *Standard Error* | *t Stat* | *P-value* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intercept | 519.7003899 | 312.4668057 | 1.663217918 | 0.118484303 |
| FDI Inflows | 0.544366005 | 0.8707199 | 0.625190724 | 0.541902914 |
| FDI Outflows | -6.660548235 | 4.445789422 | -1.498169977 | 0.156294951 |
| Foreign Exchange Reserve (FER) | 1.364212298 | 0.207580418 | 6.571970077 | 1.24529E-05 |
| R Square | 0.977 | | | |
| Standard Error | 457.483 | | | |
| *Significance F* | 1.17601E-09 (95%) | | | |

## Conclusion

To conclude that, it is hypothesized that BRICS institutional arrangements have an impact on intra BRICS trade, inter BRICS service trade, and merchandise trade outflows from BRICS. The study considers FDI inflows, outflows, and foreign exchange reserves as proxies for BRICS institutional arrangements. A multiple regression analysis is performed to assess the impact of institutional arrangements on trade and it developed three models based on the hypothesis. The regression result revealed that all the three models are fit and statistically significant, meaning that institutional arrangements can explain the changes in the BRICS trade. With respect to individual coefficients, the sign of FDI inflow, outflow, and FER are as expected, however, they are statistically not significant. In the second test, as against the expectation, FDI inflows had a negative sign and outflows had a positive sign, which reveals an opposite relationship. Although, the values are statistically not significant. In the third model, the signs of the coefficients are as expected, however, only the coefficient of the Foreign Exchange Reserve is statistically significant. To overall conclude that the BRICS FDI inflows have positively influenced inter service and intra merchandise trade volumes. In the case of BRICS, foreign exchange reserve influenced them for inter merchandise trade volume. The above institutional arrangements on FDI inflows, Foreign exchange reserves made impacts in trade creations in BRICS group. This would be exhibiting factors of trade creation on global value chains along with total trade volume 10.4 Trillion USD in 2021 compare with previous year data of 8.44 Trillion USD volume. There are 1.95 Trillion USD trade volume difference between 2020 and 2021. The above trade creation also good for global value chains and global supply chains in the era of pandemic. The BRICS contributed total volume of merchandise trade on 8.73 Trillion USD out of 48.17 Trillion USD world merchandise trade volume in 2024 along with 18.12 % share of global merchandise trade volume. The BRICS also contributed total service trade on 2.2 Trillion USD out of 20 Trillion USD world service trade volume in 2024 along with 11 % share of global service trade volume.

The above data demonstrated that the interaction between Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), intra-BRICS trade, and Global Value Chain (GVC) participation forms a mutually reinforcing cycle within the BRICS economies. Rising FDI inflows have played a catalytic role in strengthening production capacity, industrial diversification, and technology



transfer across the BRICS. Investment in manufacturing, infrastructure, logistics, and digital sectors has enhanced productive efficiency and created the necessary conditions for expanding cross-border production networks.

The findings suggest that FDI acts as a bridge connecting domestic industries with regional and global markets. Increased investment flows stimulate intra-BRICS trade by creating demand for intermediate inputs, encouraging supply-chain complementarities, and facilitating the relocation of production stages across member countries. As firms expand operations and integrate supply chains within the bloc, trade in intermediate goods and services grows, reflecting deeper production interdependence.

In turn, the expansion of intra-BRICS trade strengthens GVC participation. Greater exchange of components, technology, and services allows BRICS economies to move beyond primary commodity exports toward higher value-added manufacturing and services. This process contributes to industrial upgrading, improves export competitiveness, and enhances the position of BRICS within global production hierarchies. The study therefore concludes that FDI, intra-BRICS trade, and GVC integration operate as an interconnected triad: FDI enables trade expansion, trade fosters production linkages, and these linkages deepen integration into global value chains.

However, sustaining this virtuous cycle requires continued policy coordination, improved infrastructure, and stronger institutional cooperation to reduce structural asymmetries among member economies. Strengthening these foundations will enable BRICS to maximize the long-term developmental benefits of FDI-driven trade creation and to play a more influential role in the evolving architecture of global value chains.

Overall, the study concludes that BRICS cooperation represents an important driver of South–South economic integration and a significant force in the ongoing restructuring of the global trading system. Strengthening policy coordination, improving logistics and infrastructure, and promoting innovation-led industrial upgrading will be essential for sustaining trade creation and enhancing the long-term contribution of BRICS to global value chains.

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## Appendix

**Figure 5.** World Merchandise Exports (Values in Trillion USD)

| Year | World Exports | Inter BRICS Exports | % of Share contribution |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2002** | 6.42 | 0.56 | 8.80 |
| **2003** | 7.48 | 0.73 | 9.82 |
| **2004** | 9.09 | 0.98 | 10.85 |
| **2005** | 10.34 | 1.26 | 12.27 |
| **2006** | 11.95 | 1.58 | 13.23 |
| **2007** | 13.78 | 1.94 | 14.09 |
| **2008** | 15.96 | 2.35 | 14.73 |
| **2009** | 12.34 | 1.88 | 15.28 |
| **2010** | 15.09 | 2.47 | 16.42 |
| **2011** | 18.14 | 3.08 | 16.97 |
| **2012** | 18.39 | 3.20 | 17.41 |
| **2013** | 18.85 | 3.40 | 18.08 |
| **2014** | 18.85 | 3.47 | 18.42 |
| **2015** | 16.41 | 3.15 | 19.20 |
| **2016** | 15.92 | 2.92 | 18.37 |
| **2017** | 17.56 | 3.23 | 18.39 |
| **2018** | 19.33 | 3.60 | 18.63 |
| **2019** | 18.76 | 3.55 | 18.96 |
| **2020** | 17.49 | 3.49 | 19.94 |
| **2021** | 22.14 | 4.65 | 21.00 |
| **2022** | 24.68 | 5.08 | 20.58 |
| **2023** | 23.64 | 4.69 | 19.83 |
| **2024** | 23.92 | 4.87 | 20.35 |

Sources: ITC calculations based on UN COMTRADE and ITC statistics, https://www.trademap.org/Country_SelProduct_TS.aspx?nvpm=1%7c%7c%7c%7c%7cTOTAL%7c%7c%7c2%7c1%7c1%7c2%7c2%7c1%7c2%7c1%7c1%7c1

**Table 6.** World Merchandise Imports (Values in Trillion USD)

| Year | World Imports | Inter BRICS Imports | % of Share contribution |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2002** | 6.60 | 0.47 | 7.15 |
| **2003** | 7.70 | 0.62 | 8.11 |
| **2004** | 9.39 | 0.84 | 9.00 |
| **2005** | 10.61 | 1.02 | 9.68 |
| **2006** | 12.26 | 1.26 | 10.33 |
| **2007** | 14.11 | 1.57 | 11.16 |
| **2008** | 16.34 | 1.97 | 12.08 |
| **2009** | 12.62 | 1.63 | 12.94 |
| **2010** | 15.33 | 2.23 | 14.60 |
| **2011** | 18.37 | 2.84 | 15.46 |
| **2012** | 18.52 | 2.95 | 15.93 |
| **2013** | 18.86 | 3.07 | 16.29 |
| **2014** | 18.92 | 3.03 | 16.03 |
| **2015** | 16.56 | 2.50 | 15.13 |
| **2016** | 16.07 | 2.34 | 14.56 |
| **2017** | 17.80 | 2.74 | 15.42 |
| **2018** | 19.67 | 3.15 | 16.04 |
| **2019** | 19.10 | 3.05 | 15.99 |
| **2020** | 17.72 | 2.88 | 16.26 |
| **2021** | 22.45 | 3.85 | 17.14 |
| **2022** | 25.30 | 4.32 | 17.07 |
| **2023** | 23.94 | 3.80 | 15.87 |
| **2024** | 24.25 | 3.86 | 15.91 |

Sources: ITC calculations based on UN COMTRADE and ITC statistics, https://www.trademap.org/Country_SelProduct_TS.aspx?nvpm=1%7c%7c%7c%7c%7cTOTAL%7c%7c%7c2%7c1%7c1%7c2%7c2%7c1%7c2%7c1%7c1%7c1

**Table 7.** World Service Exports (Value in Trillion USD)

| Year | World Service Trade Exports | Inter BRICS Service Exports | % of Share Contribution |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2005** | 2.55 | 0.18 | 7.29 |
| **2006** | 3.02 | 0.23 | 7.61 |
| **2007** | 3.62 | 0.30 | 8.36 |
| **2008** | 4.06 | 0.36 | 9.08 |
| **2009** | 3.64 | 0.32 | 8.81 |
| **2010** | 3.96 | 0.39 | 9.86 |
| **2011** | 4.45 | 0.45 | 10.13 |
| **2012** | 4.58 | 0.46 | 10.15 |
| **2013** | 4.87 | 0.48 | 9.86 |
| **2014** | 5.23 | 0.49 | 9.53 |
| **2015** | 4.99 | 0.47 | 9.52 |
| **2016** | 5.07 | 0.46 | 9.24 |
| **2017** | 5.52 | 0.52 | 9.43 |
| **2018** | 6.07 | 0.59 | 9.74 |
| **2019** | 6.21 | 0.60 | 9.80 |
| **2020** | 4.96 | 0.56 | 11.42 |
| **2021** | 7.31 | 0.64 | 8.75 |
| **2022** | 8.35 | 0.82 | 9.82 |
| **2023** | 8.18 | 0.81 | 9.90 |
| **2024** | 9.27 | 0.91 | 9.81 |

Source: ITC, UNCTAD, WTO trade in services database based on Eurostat, International Monetary Fund, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and relevant national statistical authorities statistics, https://www.trademap.org/Service_SelService_TS.aspx?nvpm=1%7c%7c%7c%7c%7c%7c%7cS00%7c1%7c3%7c1%7c2%7c2%7c1%7c5%7c1%7c1%7c1

**Table 8.** World Service Imports (Values in Trillion USD)

| Year | World Service Trade Imports | Inter BRICS Service Imports | % of Share Contribution |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2005** | 2.51 | 0.22 | 8.75 |
| **2006** | 2.95 | 0.26 | 8.93 |
| **2007** | 3.49 | 0.33 | 9.55 |
| **2008** | 3.95 | 0.38 | 9.78 |
| **2009** | 3.55 | 0.36 | 10.22 |
| **2010** | 3.86 | 0.46 | 11.99 |
| **2011** | 4.31 | 0.55 | 12.96 |
| **2012** | 4.46 | 0.61 | 13.84 |
| **2013** | 4.71 | 0.68 | 14.60 |
| **2014** | 5.13 | 0.78 | 15.33 |
| **2015** | 4.88 | 0.73 | 15.02 |
| **2016** | 4.91 | 0.73 | 15.04 |
| **2017** | 5.31 | 0.80 | 15.05 |
| **2018** | 5.77 | 0.88 | 15.30 |
| **2019** | 5.92 | 0.86 | 14.59 |
| **2020** | 4.65 | 0.65 | 14.15 |
| **2021** | 7.12 | 0.83 | 11.65 |
| **2022** | 8.12 | 0.95 | 11.69 |
| **2023** | 9.82 | 1.12 | 11.40 |
| **2024** | 10.08 | 1.08 | 10.71 |

Source: ITC, UNCTAD, WTO trade in services database based on Eurostat, International Monetary Fund, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and relevant national statistical authorities statistics, https://www.trademap.org/Service_SelService_TS.aspx?nvpm=1%7c%7c%7c%7c%7c%7c%7cS00%7c1%7c3%7c1%7c1%7c2%7c1%7c5%7c1%7c1%7c1

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# FROM RHETORIC TO REALITY: THE INSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION OF BRICS ENERGY COOPERATION (2009–2025)

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## Abstract

Structural transformations in global energy markets are reshaping the energy cooperation and financing needs of emerging economies. In this context, the expanding BRICS group is becoming an increasingly effective actor in global energy governance. The literature generally views the group's structure as a platform for dialogue limited to political declarations. However, this paper demonstrates that BRICS energy cooperation has gone beyond mere political rhetoric and has developed into an operational mechanism with technical tools and financial capacity. The paper analyses the group's development from an institutional evolution perspective. This analysis focuses on the simultaneous deepening of political, technical, and financial dimensions. Using a qualitative research method, this paper examines Leaders' declarations, Energy Ministers' Meeting decisions, and data from the New Development Bank (NDB) and the BRICS Energy Research Cooperation Platform (ERCP) covering the period 2009-2025. The findings show that energy cooperation is built on three core pillars. First, institutional resilience that sustains the energy agenda despite political tensions. Second, technical capacity that produces original data and strategies through the ERCP. The third is the financial infrastructure that provides resources for national development priorities through the NDB. Consequently, the paper argues that, rather than aiming to dismantle the current energy order, BRICS has evolved into a pragmatic and functional governance model that addresses the infrastructure and technology needs of member states through the mechanisms it has established.

## Keywords

BRICS, Energy Governance, New Development Bank, Technological Neutrality, Just Transition.

## Resumo

As transformações estruturais nos mercados globais de energia estão a redefinir as necessidades de cooperação e financiamento energético das economias emergentes. Neste contexto, o grupo BRICS, em expansão, está a tornar-se um interveniente cada vez mais eficaz na governação energética global. A literatura considera geralmente a estrutura do grupo como uma plataforma de diálogo limitada a declarações políticas. No entanto, este artigo demonstra que a cooperação energética do BRICS foi além da mera retórica política e evoluiu para um mecanismo operacional dotado de ferramentas técnicas e capacidade financeira. O artigo analisa o desenvolvimento do grupo numa perspetiva de evolução institucional. Esta análise centra-se no aprofundamento simultâneo das dimensões política, técnica e financeira. Utilizando um método de investigação qualitativa, este artigo examina as declarações dos líderes, as decisões da Reunião de Ministros da Energia e os dados do Novo Banco de Desenvolvimento (NDB) e da Plataforma de Cooperação em Investigação Energética do BRICS (ERCP), abrangendo o período de 2009 a 2025. Os resultados mostram que a cooperação

energética assenta em três pilares fundamentais. Em primeiro lugar, a resiliência institucional que sustenta a agenda energética apesar das tensões políticas. Em segundo lugar, a capacidade técnica que produz dados e estratégias originais através da ERCP. O terceiro é a infraestrutura financeira que fornece recursos para as prioridades de desenvolvimento nacional através do NDB. Consequentemente, o artigo argumenta que, em vez de visar o desmantelamento da atual ordem energética, o BRICS evoluiu para um modelo de governação pragmático e funcional que responde às necessidades de infraestruturas e tecnologia dos Estados-Membros através dos mecanismos que estabeleceu.

**Palavras-chave**

BRICS, Governação Energética, Novo Banco de Desenvolvimento, Neutralidade Tecnológica, Transição Justa.

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# FROM RHETORIC TO REALITY: THE INSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION OF BRICS ENERGY COOPERATION (2009–2025)[1]

**FEVZI KIRBAŞOĞLU**

## Introduction

The global energy landscape in the 21st century is undergoing a fundamental transformation driven by rising demand, geopolitical competition, and climate change. In this new era, where Western-centric governance structures are being questioned, the BRICS[2] group has expanded to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates, in addition to its existing members. This expanding structure has the potential to reshape the global energy architecture, now that it has reached a level of maturity capable of challenging established powers like the European Union and limiting the dominance of Western-centric global governance through instruments such as summit diplomacy (Kırbaşoğlu & Tüfekçi, 2020; Dağ & Tüfekçi, 2025). Given the group's significant share of global energy production and consumption, collective action in sustainable development, energy security, and energy access is of great importance. In this context, analyzing the foundations and current status of BRICS' institutional policies in the energy sector is essential for future global energy projections, particularly during this transformation process where conceptual uncertainties in global politics and new forms of diplomacy signal a transition from an unsettled structure to a new order (Tüfekçi & Dağ, 2022; Dağ & Tüfekçi, 2022).

The international relations literature examines the role of the BRICS in global energy governance from various perspectives. On the one hand, skeptical authors such as Downie (2015) argue that the group's economic and political heterogeneity prevents the establishment of a concrete cooperation regime. In particular, the asymmetric interests between energy importers (China and India) and exporters (Russia and Brazil) contribute to this situation. Similarly, Cecchi (2025) and Mboya & Arun (2025) highlight the

[1] In this paper, AI tools such as DeepL and Gemini were used solely for translation support and grammatical correction. Suggestions provided by these tools were reviewed and finalized by the author(s). The scientific content, analyses, and results were independently developed by the author(s), who accept full ethical responsibility for the originality of the paper.
[2] Following the 2024 expansion, terms such as "BRICS+," "Expanded BRICS," and "BRICS+5" have become common in the literature. However, this paper prefers the acronym "BRICS" to emphasize the group's historical and institutional identity.

competition between China and India in the maritime domain. The authors argue that this competition complicates energy security cooperation. The literature addresses this competition from a soft balancing perspective (Pape, 2005; Hall, 2025). This perspective shows that India's BRICS strategy is based on limiting China's hegemony. Particularly after the 2020 Galwan Valley clashes, India has distanced itself from projects such as China's proposed Global Energy Interconnection for national security reasons. Furthermore, India has positioned the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor initiative as an alternative to the Belt and Road Initiative. These developments clearly reveal the limitations of cooperation in the realm of low politics (Quimbre et al., 2023; Hall, 2025; Yurchenko & Tüfekçi, 2025; Rizzi, 2024). Beyond these debates over geopolitical competition, Ramluckun et al. (2024) highlight significant structural differences in the energy production profiles of member countries. The paper emphasizes that, unlike Brazil's largely renewable-based structure, South Africa and India continue to rely heavily on coal-based production models. The authors empirically demonstrate that these differences create technical asymmetry and complicate the establishment of a common policy ground.

In contrast, Lagutina (2019) emphasizes that the group has developed institutional resilience despite geopolitical competition. The author draws attention to the group's capacity to create an alternative to the Western-centric liberal order. Furthermore, the author notes that technical cooperation has deepened through institutional learning. Similarly, Wso & Mahmood (2025) focus on the group's motivation to create normative consistency against Western hegemony. The authors state that this motivation suppresses internal tensions stemming from national interests. Stuenkel (2020) expands on this perspective. The author notes that BRICS does not directly challenge the existing order, but instead builds its own institutions, as exemplified by the New Development Bank (NDB), and follows strategies of competitive multilateralism or institutional entrepreneurship. Thus, the group establishes alternative structures that are integrated into but complementary to the system. Cooper (2016), conceptualizing this institutional flexibility as club culture, considers the group's adoption of an informal, flexible operating model rather than a rigid charter or permanent secretariat a strategic choice. According to Cooper, this flexible structure allows for the compartmentalization of high-politics tensions, such as border disputes between China and India. Thanks to the pragmatic foundation this strategy establishes, cooperation in low-politics areas such as energy, infrastructure, and development financing can continue uninterrupted even if political competition persists. Turning to the recent waves of expansion, Griffin (2024) posits that BRICS has transformed into an energy super-bloc controlling 42% of global oil production. Liu & Papa (2022) examine the consequences of this transformation. The authors argue that the process has accelerated de-dollarization, including the petroyuan and trade in local currencies.

Carvalho et al. (2025) go beyond this binary opposition. The authors integrate Amitav Acharya's concept of multiplexity with Susan Strange's framework of structural power. The paper offers a more nuanced middle ground by proposing a structural-multiplex analytical framework. According to the authors, BRICS' role in energy governance is not a revolutionary movement that completely overturns the existing order. Nor is it a passive adaptation that fully integrates into the system. Instead, the group balances

systemic constraints with the pursuit of strategic autonomy. The group has followed a more complex route, which the authors describe as tempered incremental revisionism. According to this approach, the group is subject to Western-centric constraints at the systemic level, such as dollar hegemony and the established financial architecture. Therefore, the group has continued to exhibit structural dependence. However, the situation is different at the networked level. Instead of rigid institutional structures, the group has developed minilateral diplomacy and flexible, issue-specific coalitions. Thus, it has created a pragmatic sphere of influence in energy markets. Particularly after the expansion, a strategic overlap has emerged between BRICS membership and the OPEC+ structure. This has allowed the group to act as an informal but effective caucus in managing global oil supply. This networked pluralism strategy has enabled the group to act as an energy actor controlling 42% of global oil production, despite its internal differences. Consequently, this outcome shows that the group is following a sophisticated middle path aimed at transforming the system from within.

This paper aims to contribute to the post-expansion order debate highlighted by Patrick & Hogan (2025). The paper makes this contribution through the evolution of intra-group energy norms. Furthermore, the paper aims to fill an essential gap in the literature. This gap is the lack of a comprehensive paper assessing the financial and technical implications of these policies in the field. The paper essentially seeks to answer the questions: "How did BRICS energy cooperation evolve from a declaration-based political dialogue to an operational management mechanism during the period 2009-2025?" and "Through which institutional tools was this transformation achieved?" Based on these questions, the paper argues that BRICS energy cooperation did not remain merely rhetorical. The cooperation aligns with the parallel governance model. The group does not aim to dismantle existing energy institutions or completely break away from them. Instead, the group has evolved into a sui generis and concrete regime. This regime is based on mechanisms such as the NDB, the BRICS Energy Research Cooperation Platform (ERCP), and Energy Ministers' Meetings. This structure operationalizes the political vision set out in the summit declarations. Furthermore, the structure reflects the priorities of sovereignty, technological neutrality, and the right to development. This strategy grants member states the flexibility to act within the framework of their own just transition pathways. This flexibility eliminates the requirement for full compliance with Western-centric norms, such as restrictions on coal financing (BRICS Think Tanks Council, 2024).

The theoretical basis of the paper is a hybrid approach. This approach examines the evolutionary process of BRICS energy cooperation from a multi-layered perspective. The initial phase of cooperation is evaluated within the framework of the soft balancing concept defined by Pape (2005). This concept envisions the formation of coalitions through non-military diplomatic means to challenge the hegemony of the United States and the dollar's status as a reserve currency. However, energy projects require high capital intensity and long-term commitments. Diplomatic rhetoric alone has been insufficient to meet the growing energy and infrastructure needs of member countries. This situation has compelled the group to adopt a more organized, rule-based structure. The institutionalization process, in which cooperation has evolved into concrete mechanisms, is analyzed using Keohane's (1984) approach. Keohane views international regimes as a means of overcoming political market failure. According to Keohane,

cooperation is possible even in the absence of a hegemonic power. Institutions reduce transaction costs. They also address quality uncertainty by mitigating asymmetric information among members. In this context, the paper approaches the BRICS, positioning regional cooperation as a strategic lever, structured as the construction of an energy regime. The group has established technical platforms and financial mechanisms. These tools reduce uncertainty and information asymmetry and increase reputation costs. As a result, this structure enables member states to achieve long-term absolute gains rather than myopic self-interest (Dağ, 2025).

This paper, employing a qualitative research methodology, used document analysis techniques in the data collection and analysis. The paper adhered to Bowen's (2009) methodological framework. In this context, a systematic procedure comprising the stages of "skimming," "reading," and "interpretation" was followed. The paper's data set consists of 17 Leaders' Summit Declarations, Joint Statements from Energy Ministers' Meetings, ERCP technical reports, and NDB project databases covering the period 2009–2025. As Prior (2008) emphasized, these documents are not merely secondary sources. They also constitute primary data on the institutional evolution of BRICS energy cooperation. The paper examined these documents using a descriptive analytical approach. The analysis focused on key themes, including energy security, financing mechanisms, technological orientations, and the just transition. Furthermore, the analysis considers historical contexts. While seeking answers to the fundamental research question, the paper operationalized the phenomenon of institutional evolution. This process was conducted around three key qualitative monitoring parameters. The first is thematic deepening. This parameter tracks the transformation of concepts such as technology transfer and local currency. The analysis focused on how these concepts evolved from abstract aspirations into concrete policy items. The second is institutional functionality. This parameter measures the capacity of ERCP technical reports. The reports' capacity to inform decision-making mechanisms was evaluated. The third is financial consistency. This parameter interrogates the strategic alignment of NDB financing. The alignment of financing with committed clean energy and national development goals was examined. The data obtained was analyzed within this framework. The paper conducted a comparative consistency analysis between diplomatic discourse at the leadership level and technical reports and financed projects. This triangulation strategy provides an analytical basis. This basis addresses whether BRICS energy cooperation is a normative discourse space or an operational governance mechanism.

## Framing Period (2009-2015)

During its incipient phase, BRICS energy cooperation was based on a shared perception of threats and political rhetoric. The primary motivation during this period was to minimize uncertainty in energy markets following the 2008 global financial crisis. The group also aimed to pursue a soft balancing strategy against the Western hegemony over global energy governance.

The BRICS's first concrete vision for energy was presented at the 1st Summit, held in Yekaterinburg in 2009. At this summit, leaders emphasized the need to strengthen coordination and cooperation to reduce uncertainty among energy producers, consumers,

and transit countries and to ensure stability and sustainability (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2009). To this end, the final communiqué published at the summit established the group's energy policy on three main pillars. First, it aimed to ensure diversification of energy sources and supply, including renewable energy. Second, it sought to establish the security of energy transmission lines and encourage new energy investments and infrastructure projects. Third, the communiqué underscored international cooperation on energy efficiency and stated that the fight against climate change should be integrated with socio-economic development goals, based on the principle of "Common but Differentiated Responsibilities" under the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (BRICS Information Centre, 2009).

The 2nd Summit, held in Brasilia in 2010, was built on these fundamental principles. At the summit, energy was defined as a fundamental resource for raising the quality of life, and the critical importance of access to energy for equitable and socially inclusive economic growth was reaffirmed. Leaders at this summit broadened their vision, committing to diversifying the energy mix by promoting the cleaner use of fossil fuels and increasing the share of renewable sources. In particular, the summit expressed a strong commitment to developing concrete cooperation in sustainable biofuel production, R&D, and technology transfer (BRICS Think Tanks Council, 2010). At these summits, leaders re-examined energy security in terms of the interdependence of supply and demand security and, contrary to the importer-focused security approach that dominates Western literature, presented a new vision for dialogue that balances the interests of producers (Russia, Brazil) and consumers (China, India). This approach reframes energy, transcending its status as merely a market commodity and positioning it as an integral component of states' right to development and a strategic public good (Umutlu & Çalışkan Terzioğlu, 2025).

At the 2011 Sanya Summit, where institutionalization deepened and the structure formalized the BRICS configuration with South Africa's participation, support for renewable energy sources was reiterated, and the critical role of these sources in combating climate change was reiterated. However, the key factor distinguishing this summit from previous ones in terms of energy policies was that nuclear energy was included as a concrete agenda item for the first time. The summit communiqué stated that nuclear energy would continue to be an important element in the future energy mix of member countries and emphasized the need for international cooperation in developing peaceful nuclear capacity, strictly adhering to high safety standards (Sekine, 2011; The World and Japan Database, 2011). This move, which marks a critical juncture in the normative evolution of BRICS, is of vital importance because it represents the group's first significant divergence from global norms. Particularly at a time when Germany, one of the driving forces of the EU, is transitioning toward a nuclear-free economy with its Energiewende policies, BRICS's endorsement of nuclear energy as an indispensable part of its energy mix is a declaration of strategic autonomy developed against Western-centric approaches. This situation also supports the contestation literature, which argues that the energy security perceptions of rising powers are shaped by priorities justified by the need for rapid industrialization and developmentalism rather than by Western environmental sensitivities (Ekman & Everts, 2024).

Following this emphasis on nuclear energy and renewable sources, a more pragmatic approach was adopted at the 4th Summit, held in New Delhi in 2012, acknowledging that fossil fuels would remain dominant in the energy mix in the medium to long term. Although leaders reiterated their commitment to expanding clean energy sources to meet growing demand while addressing climate concerns, the summit's main focus was market stability. The declaration emphasized that extreme volatility in energy and food prices threatens global prosperity, and a call was made to strengthen producer-consumer dialogue. Furthermore, in line with International Atomic Energy Agency standards on nuclear energy, it was noted that compliance with safety protocols in the design and operation of power plants is essential for public safety —a stance likely reinforced by the prevailing global concerns following the Fukushima incident (Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Tunisia, 2012).

Following a period in which market stability was prioritized, the 5th Summit, held in Durban in 2013, marked a critical turning point, with energy cooperation taking concrete shape in its financial and institutional dimensions. The inadequacy of the Bretton Woods system in financing infrastructure and energy gaps on the African continent led the BRICS countries to explore the feasibility of establishing the NDB. At this summit, where environmental sustainability was once again placed at the center, commitment to fundamental goals such as universal energy access, supply security, and affordability was reaffirmed. The Durban Declaration stated that the diversity of renewable and low-carbon sources must be increased to strengthen energy security and highlighted the role of public-private partnerships in financing these projects. Furthermore, leaders agreed that the energy transition should not be limited to the supply side (production) but must also be accelerated on the demand side, specifically in consumption sectors such as transportation, heating, and industry (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2013).

In the 6th Summit declaration held in Fortaleza in 2014, this transformation process was framed primarily through an economic lens rather than its environmental dimension. While acknowledging that fossil fuels remain the primary energy source, it was reiterated that renewable energy, R&D, and energy efficiency are the fundamental drivers of sustainable development. The declaration underscored that these elements have the potential to be engines of growth, reduce energy costs, and increase the efficiency of natural resource use. Furthermore, the need to strengthen international cooperation for universal energy access and clean energy incentives, which directly affect standards of living, was emphasized (Law and Business Review of the Americas, 2014).

The 7th Summit, held in Ufa in 2015, represented a pivotal milestone in establishing a concrete, institutional framework for BRICS energy cooperation. The Summit adopted "The Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership," which outlined the main features of the bloc's future economic partnership (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2015). The energy section of the strategy stated that promoting sustainable production and consumption is vital for the economic development of member countries. A number of priority areas were defined within the scope of the document to enhance energy security. These were identified as diversifying sources, developing infrastructure, ensuring universal access, increasing efficiency, sharing clean technologies, and making optimal use of low-emission sources such as natural gas. A regular energy dialogue

mechanism was established to achieve these goals and coordinate long-term strategies. As the first concrete step in this mechanism, Russia was designated to host the inaugural BRICS Energy Ministers' Meeting (Russian Presidency of the 7th BRICS Summit, 2015; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2015). This effort, which marked the beginning of the institutionalization of the energy dialogue at the highest level, was reinforced in the same year by the Memorandum of Mutual Understanding in Energy Saving and Energy Efficiency among the respective ministries. This text stipulated the creation of an inventory of energy-efficient technologies and laid the foundation for technical cooperation mechanisms such as the BRICS Working Group on Energy Saving and Improvement of Energy Efficiency (BRICS Information Centre, 2015).

## Corporate Building Process (2016-2020)

The institutional framework established in 2015, symbolizing the transition from political rhetoric to practical cooperation, acquired operational momentum through actionable projects during India's chairmanship in 2016. The BRICS Working Group on Energy Saving and Improvement of Energy Efficiency, which met in Visakhapatnam, India, on July 4-5, 2016, served as a platform for sharing national strategies and best practices, such as the LED conversion and Performance Achievement & Trade program led by India. The meeting resulted in the adoption of a Joint Statement setting out a roadmap for cooperation and a tangible Work Plan (Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 2016). The 8th Goa Summit, held immediately after the Paris Climate Agreement, was of strategic importance, confirming the key role of nuclear energy in fulfilling commitments and long-term greenhouse gas reduction. In this context, it was emphasized that predictable access to technology and finance is vital for increasing civil nuclear capacity (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2016). Parallel to political and institutional steps, 2016 also stands out as the year in which the NDB approved its first six projects in the field of clean energy and energy efficiency.[3]

This first project package demonstrates the implementation of the Goa Summit's energy transition vision through the NDB. By financing diverse energy modalities, such as solar and wind in China and hydroelectricity in Russia, the NDB has ensured resource diversification, particularly in Chinese projects, by advancing de-dollarization in the financial architecture by using local currencies. In Brazil, channeling funds through national development banks has supported institutional capacity-building. Through this multifaceted strategy, the NDB has become a pivotal actor in financing the energy transition of the Global South, in line with the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement.

Developments in 2017 gained momentum with the Second BRICS Energy Ministers' Meeting held in Beijing on June 7, prior to the leaders' summit. The Joint Statement issued at the end of the meeting codified the common understanding that underpins energy cooperation.

[3] Project areas supported by the NDB include *transport infrastructure, water and sanitation, environmental protection, social infrastructure, digital infrastructure, multiple areas,* and *COVID-19 emergency assistance*. However, this paper focuses on the *energy and energy efficiency* sector, as it represents a concrete indicator of financial commitments to energy transition and signifies the evolution of cooperation from a theoretical framework to practical applications.

**Table 1.** The first clean energy and energy efficiency projects approved/completed by NDB in 2016

| Project Name | Country | Approval Date and Status[4] | NDB Financing Limit | Project Purpose and Summary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lingang Distributed Solar Power Project | China | April 13, 2016 (completed) | RMB 222.6 million | To promote clean energy development with rooftop solar panels in Shanghai's Lingang district. |
| Financing of Renewable Energy Projects and Associated Transmission Project | Brazil | April 13, 2016 (completed) | USD 300 million | To provide a loan to the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES) to reduce reliance on hydroelectric power. |
| Project Finance Facility for Eskom | South Africa | April 13, 2016 (approved) | USD 180 million | To support grid connection infrastructure and reduce dependence on fossil fuels. |
| Beliy Porog Hydro Powerplant Project | Russia | July 20, 2016 (approved) | USD 100 million | To construct two run-of-river hydroelectric power plants with a total installed capacity of 49.8 MW in the Karelia region. |
| Putian Pinghai Bay Offshore Wind Power Project | China | November 22, 2016 (completed) | RMB 1.97 billion | To build a 246 MW offshore wind power plant in Fujian. |

Source: NDB, 2016.

The communiqué acknowledged that fossil fuels remain the dominant energy source, while reiterating that renewable energy and new technologies are the primary drivers of sustainable development. The ministers agreed to promote cooperation in solar, wind, bioenergy, and hydroelectricity, to create strategic reserves for energy security, and to recognize natural gas as a critical bridge fuel in the energy transition. One of the most tangible outcomes of the meeting was the decision to launch feasibility studies for establishing an ERCP that will integrate the resource and technology capacities of member countries. Additionally, the NDB's role, particularly in clean energy and energy efficiency, was acknowledged, and the bank's inaugural RMB green bond issuance was warmly welcomed (Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation, 2017). This technical and strategic framework was also endorsed at the leadership level at the 9th Summit held in Xiamen that same year. Addressing energy in the context of green development, the leaders supported continuing the dialogue on establishing the research platform proposed at the Ministerial Meeting, thereby paving the way for the next institutional milestone (The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 2017).

The year 2018 marked a deepening of the institutionalization of BRICS energy cooperation. While high-level official mechanisms were strengthened on one hand, the bloc's youth structure made substantive contributions to the energy agenda on the other.

[4] To analyze the tangible outcomes and actual financial commitments of BRICS' financial mechanisms, this paper includes only projects with completed and approved status, projects in the cancelled or proposed stage have been excluded.

At the official level, the declaration issued at the 3rd BRICS Energy Ministers Meeting, held in Johannesburg on June 28, outlined the common vision. While confirming their commitment to the UN Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement, the ministers emphasized that a just transition could be achieved through the technological opportunities offered by the fourth industrial revolution. The most concrete outcome of the meeting was the establishment of a Senior Energy Officials Committee to coordinate cooperation (Ministry of Mines and Energy of Brazil, 2018). In addition to developments at the official level, 2018 also drew attention with the work of the BRICS Youth Energy Agency (BRICS YEA). The BRICS Youth Energy Outlook 2018, published by the agency with the main theme of "Energy in the digital future," presented a shared vision of the contribution of digitalization in areas such as cost reduction and network stability (BRICS Youth Energy Agency, 2018). These technical and youth-focused activities received formal institutional endorsement at the 10th Summit held in Johannesburg that same year. The most strategic outcome of the Summit was the official establishment of the ERCP, which will guide future joint efforts, and the adoption of its Terms of Reference (BRICS Information Centre, 2018). Financially, the NDB supported this vision by approving three major projects focused on clean energy and efficiency in 2018.

**Table 2.** Clean energy and energy efficiency projects approved/completed by NDB in 2018

| **Project Name** | **Country** | **Approval Date and Status** | **NDB Financing Limit** | **Project Purpose and Summary** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jiangxi Natural Gas Transmission System Development Project | China | November 16, 2018 (approved) | USD 400 million | To balance the coal-based structure, construct 2,134 km of pipelines and storage facilities in Jiangxi. |
| Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction and Energy Sector Development Project | South Africa | July 20, 2018 (completed) | USD 300 million | To support renewable energy projects and provide loans from the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) for structural transformation. |
| Guangdong Yudean Yangjiang Shapa Offshore Wind Power Project | China | November 16, 2018 (completed) | RMB 2 billion | To prevent 499,500 tons of carbon emissions annually by establishing a 300 MW offshore wind power plant in Guangdong. |

Source: NDB, 2018.

Table 2 illustrates that the NDB has pursued a pragmatic energy financing strategy aligned with the national realities of its member countries. In particular, the acceptance of natural gas as a transition fuel in the Jiangxi project in China and the DBSA-focused model in South Africa demonstrate the equilibrium between energy security and climate goals. Wang (2019) characterizes the NDB's rejection of the conditionality principle inherent in Bretton Woods institutions as a model of multilateral development. The Eskom and BNDES loans in South Africa and Brazil, respectively, corroborate this characterization. The NDB financed public institutions in fiscal distress with these projects

and, contrary to the privatization pressure of Western institutions, aimed to strengthen the state's institutional capacity.

The year 2019 marked a period during Brazil's presidency when energy cooperation gained an operational foundation. The 4th BRICS Energy Ministers' Meeting held in Brasilia on November 11 represented a critical milestone in the institutionalization process with the adoption of the ERCP's Terms of Reference. This step provided the platform with the necessary institutional framework for joint research in technology and innovation. Ministers also reached consensus on the role of natural gas and nuclear energy in line with Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG 7-Affordable and clean energy) (BRICS Information Centre, 2019a). The BRICS Youth Energy Outlook 2019 report, which provided intellectual impetus to the formal process, addressed topics such as hydrogen and digitalization under the theme of Energy 4.0 (BRICS Youth Energy Agency, 2019). This report is significant because it is the first comprehensive international study to reflect the energy vision of youth. Technical and academic preparations throughout the year culminated in political approval at the 11th Leaders Summit, and the ERCP officially commenced operations (BRICS Information Centre, 2019b). In the financial sphere, the NDB approved four projects focusing on battery storage technologies and renewable energy infrastructure, which are critical for grid stability.

**Table 3.** Clean energy and energy efficiency projects approved/completed by NDB in 2019

| Project Name | Country | Approval Date and Status | NDB Financing Limit | Project Purpose and Summary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| IDC Renewable Energy Sector Development Project | South Africa | March 31, 2019 (approved) | ZAR 1.15 billion | As part of the coal phase-out strategy, finance wind, solar, and biomass projects through the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC). |
| Development of the Renewable Energy Sector in Russia Project | Russia | September 12, 2019 (completed) | USD 300 million | Provide credit for renewable energy projects through the Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) to diversify the energy mix. |
| REC Renewable Energy Sector Development Project | India | October 14, 2019 (completed) | USD 300 million | Finance a 655 MW power plant and transmission lines to reduce thermal power dependency. |
| Battery Energy Storage Project | South Africa | December 16, 2019 (approved) | ZAR 6,000 million | Establish large-scale battery storage systems with a capacity of 1,440 MWh within Eskom to ensure grid stability. |

Source: NDB, 2019.

The project distribution in Table 3 indicates that the NDB's 2019 financing strategy focused on system integration. In particular, the battery storage project in South Africa is an important initiative that addresses the intermittency profile of renewable energy

and ensures grid stability, in line with the Energy 4.0 vision. Furthermore, the NDB's use of intermediary institutions such as IDC and EDB to allocate resources demonstrates that its strategy of spreading financing to channel finance and strengthening local institutional capacity has become an institutionalized strategy.

Under Russia's chairmanship, and notwithstanding the challenging conditions precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 was a period in which the strategic framework for energy cooperation was deepened. At the 12th Summit in Moscow, leaders approved critical documents that will shape the bloc's future vision. The pivotal document was the "Roadmap for BRICS energy cooperation up to 2025," adopted at the end of the 5th Energy Ministers' Meeting. This roadmap aims to establish a strategic partnership by promoting coordination across energy policies, trade, investments, and technological cooperation. The document delineates a three-phase approach to cooperation. The first phase involves continuing joint analyses and institutionalizing the ERCP; the second phase focuses on identifying energy security needs and solutions, and the third phase envisions concrete areas of cooperation for the diffusion of advanced technologies and investments (Ministry of Mines and Energy of Brazil, 2020). The document "Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership 2025," adopted in the same year, also positions energy as one of the main pillars of sustainable development (Russian Presidency of the 12th BRICS Summit, 2020).

2020 also marks the year in which the ERCP yielded its first tangible results. Two important reports, prepared within the framework of the platform and welcomed at both the Ministerial Meeting and the Leaders' Summit, were published. The "BRICS Energy Report" revealed that while the bloc accounts for 40% of the global population, it only contributes 37% to global energy consumption, with coal dominating the current energy mix (49%). However, it is projected that this balance would shift in favor of renewables and natural gas by 2040 (BRICS Energy Research Cooperation Platform, 2020a). The "BRICS Energy Technology Report," aimed at identifying areas of mutual interest in energy technologies, mapped 547 different technologies, including digitalization and smart grids. According to the report's findings, smart grids, digital twins, grid monitoring technologies, and autonomous processing of seismic data emerged as the most promising avenues for cooperation (BRICS Energy Research Cooperation Platform, 2020b). On the youth engagement front, BRICS YEA published the BRICS Youth Energy Outlook report, prepared with more than 180 young experts, and sought answers to critical questions such as emission reduction in the context of Industry 4.0 and the post-pandemic period from the perspective of youth (BRICS Youth Energy Agency, 2020).

This period served as a critical litmus test for the rival explanations adopted in the paper. The approval process of the roadmap revealed that the issue was more than just a technical procedure. Despite the high politics crisis between China and India in the Galwan Valley that resulted in casualties that same year, the parties' agreement on the roadmap and ERCP reports demonstrate that institutional mechanisms can be insulated from political conflicts. This resilience confirms Cooper's (2016) compartmentalization hypothesis and refutes skeptical arguments that geopolitical competition would end cooperation. In parallel, the NDB's portfolio during this period highlights the difference between its financing strategy vis-à-vis Western institutions. Neunuebel et al. (2025) highlight that the NDB's model, characterized by non-conditionality, aligns with national

priorities and is sensitive to local issues. Unlike commercial banks, this development-oriented approach has mitigated currency risk by using local currencies and increased the feasibility of green projects.

## Deepening and Norm Production (2021-2025)

In the post-2020 period, the global climate regime that consolidated around the Paris Agreement and the increased geopolitical fractures following the Ukraine War have enabled the BRICS to evolve from a defensive position to a norm-entrepreneurial role. The most tangible manifestation of this strategic transformation was seen in 2021, under India's chairmanship, with a shift in energy cooperation to a more practical and strategic footing. The Joint Declaration adopted at the 6th Energy Ministers' Meeting held within the framework of the 13th Summit in New Delhi has established a new norm against Western-centric prescriptions, asserting the sovereign rights of member countries to determine the pace of energy transition in accordance with their own national conditions. For the first time in the history of the Summit, a vision for an inclusive energy system encompassing fossil fuels, hydrogen, nuclear, and renewable sources was presented, while the concept of energy security was expanded beyond supply stability to include the secure supply of critical minerals and the necessity of material recycling. (Ministry of Power, Government of India, 2021).

This normative consensus is the result of contentious intra-group negotiations rather than a spontaneous, smooth process. While India and Russia, heavily reliant on fossil fuels, resisted Western pressure for rapid decarbonization, China and Brazil aimed to strengthen their leadership in renewable energy. In this context, just transition served not only as an environmental goal but also as a strategic variable balancing conflicting interests. Indeed, instead of completely excluding fossil fuels, the parties managed to transform friction into cooperation by agreeing on the principle of technological neutrality, which includes hydrogen and Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (CCUS) technologies.

Under India's leadership, this consensus has catalyzed the way for an expanded agenda, leading to the publication of two key documents on CCUS and Circular Carbon Economy technologies. First, the BRICS Energy Technology Report 2021 prioritized clinker substitution and direct-reduced iron technologies in industry, as well as transportation and building automation, within the scope of deep decarbonization (BRICS Youth Energy Agency, 2021a). The second document, the BRICS Energy Research Directory, aggregated more than 50 research institutions to create an inventory for scientific cooperation (BRICS Youth Energy Agency, 2021b). On the financial front, the NDB has approved a critical LNG project for China's transition from coal to gas, transforming the discursive cooperation, which extends to strategic areas such as hydrogen and deep decarbonization, into concrete investment.

**Table 4.** Clean energy and energy efficiency projects approved by NDB in 2021

| Project Name | Country | Approval Date and Status | NDB Financing Limit | Project Purpose and Summary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beijing Gas Tianjin Nangang LNG Emergency Reserve Project | China | March 9, 2021 (approved) | EUR 436 million | As part of the "transition from coal to gas" policy, an LNG terminal and storage facility are being constructed in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region to meet peak demand during the winter months. |

Source: NDB, 2021.

The 14th Summit, held in Beijing in 2022, took place amidst geopolitical tensions and concerns about energy supply security. The summit emphasized the central role of energy security in achieving sustainable development goals, recognizing each country's right to an energy transition specific to its national circumstances, and reiterated the importance of access to modern and reliable energy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2022a). This political framework was subsequently translated into the technical domain with the 7th Energy Ministers Meeting, held virtually on September 22, 2022. At the meeting, consensus was reached on the future of the ERCP and the low-carbon transition, resulting in the publication of three critical reports prepared by the ERCP: the BRICS Energy Report 2022, the BRICS Renewable Energy Report 2022, and the BRICS Smart Grid Report 2022 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2022b). These efforts have been confirmed at the leadership level, securing top-level political support for technical cooperation. In parallel with the formal processes, BRICS YEA has expanded its work to the BRICS+ format. The BRICS Plus Youth Energy Outlook 2022 report, focusing particularly on energy access, climate risks, and clean cooking opportunities in Africa, highlights one of its most striking findings: 68.7% prefer electrification as the fuel of the future in transportation and cooking technologies. Reflecting the vision of young stakeholders amidst the uncertainty created by the pandemic and political tensions, the report indicates that young people believe the current energy crisis will accelerate the transition to renewable energy despite the costs. Notably, 70% of young participants support nuclear energy as a solution to climate change, while seeing SDG 7 and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) as closely linked. With the planned presentation of this report at the UNFCCC in Egypt (COP27), the bloc's youth voice was effectively amplified on the global stage (BRICS Youth Energy Agency, 2022).

The 15th Summit held in Johannesburg in 2023 placed the concept of a just, affordable, and sustainable transition at the center of the energy agenda. The Summit communiqué emphasized that, given the dual status of BRICS countries as both major producers and consumers, energy security and transformation processes must be managed in a balanced manner. While the need for full participation in clean energy value chains and increased supply chain investments was noted, the role of fossil fuels in supporting energy security was also confirmed (South African Government, 2023a). The foundation for this agenda was laid at the 8th Energy Ministers Meeting held on August 18, 2023, where host South Africa's just (energy) transition priorities for the continent were

articulated (South African Government, 2023b). The most concrete outputs of the year were two comprehensive reports prepared by the ERCP, which substantiated the concept of just transition with empirical data. First, the BRICS Energy Security Report 2023 was published, proposing that the bloc, which consumes 40% of global energy, manage the balance between fossil fuel dominance and renewable energy through resource diversification and joint trade (South African National Energy Development Institute, 2023a). In addition, the BRICS Energy Transition Skills Report 2023, which addresses the human dimension of the transition, emphasizes that the process is not only technological but also a profound workforce restructuring transformation for member countries, which account for 80% of the global coal sector workforce; it has identified a serious skills gap, particularly in the areas of digital network management and cybersecurity (South African National Energy Development Institute, 2023b).

The 2023 studies have shown that BRICS no longer confines its energy future exclusively to the traditional paradigm of supply security. With this summit, the bloc has solidified its commitment to a transformation that protects the workforce and is inclusive and equitable. This normative orientation, cultivated under South Africa's chairmanship, is far from arbitrary. Indeed, Ramluckun et al. (2024), in their analysis of BRICS members' Nationally Determined Contribution documents, found that South Africa was the only member to categorically include the concept of Just Energy Transition in the context of protecting the workforce and social dialogue. This reality not only elucidates why the country sought to transform this vision into a bloc norm during its 2023 presidency, but also explains the creation of an alternative to Western-centric Just Energy Transition Partnership models. In this context, Csanadi & Helmeci (2025) note that the Western model tethers financial aid to the condition of a rapid exit from coal, whereas the BRICS approach, led by South Africa, advocates a more flexible, gradual transition that prioritizes energy security and economic growth.

In 2024, under the chairmanship of the Russian Federation, the energy policies of the expanding bloc were concretized around the twin pillars of technological neutrality and just transition. At the 16th Leaders' Summit in Kazan, it was emphasized that BRICS members are the world's largest producers of natural resources, and a call for cooperation across the value chain was made (President of Russia, 2024). This vision was further detailed in the Communique issued at the 9th Energy Ministers' Meeting in Moscow on September 26, 2024. The ministers confirmed that the bloc's expansion creates complementarity in energy systems and prioritized the issue of using national currencies in energy trade. The Communique emphasized that ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable, and modern energy, in line with SDG 7, is a priority of the global energy agenda. The most strategic element of the text was adopting the principle of technological neutrality. This principle envisages the non-discriminatory use of all sources that reduce emissions, such as renewable energy, nuclear energy, low-emission hydrogen, and fossil fuels with carbon capture technology. Furthermore, terrorist attacks against cross-border energy infrastructure were condemned, and attention was drawn to market stability (Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation, 2024). A seminal deliverable of 2024 was the BRICS Just Energy Transition Report 2024, prepared by ERCP. The report advocated for each country's right to access energy, essential for national security and social stability, through country-specific transition pathways rather than a

single, uniform prescription (South African National Energy Development Institute, 2024). On the youth front, the BRICS Youth Energy Outlook 2024, reflecting the voice of the Global South and featuring over 120 young experts, offered analyses across a wide range of areas, from a just and sustainable energy transition and resource management to critical minerals and nuclear energy (BRICS Youth Energy Agency, 2024). On the financial front, the NDB continued its energy commitment in 2024 by approving three critical infrastructure projects in Brazil and India focused on clean energy and energy efficiency.

**Table 5.** Clean energy and energy efficiency projects approved by NDB in 2024

| Project Name | Country | Approval Date and Status | NDB Financing Limit | Project Purpose and Summary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Electricity Distribution Infrastructure Modernization Project | Brazil | October 23, 2024 (approved) | RMB 1,425 million | Modernizing infrastructure in São Paulo to provide access to electricity for households without power and to increase efficiency. |
| Brasilia Capital of Solar Lighting Project | Brazil | December 26, 2024 (approved) | EUR 77 million | Replacing 129,000 lamps with LEDs in public lighting and building a 100 MW solar power plant. |
| SAEL 300MW Renewable Energy Project | India | December 27, 2024 (approved) | USD 63 million | Constructing a 300 MW solar power plant and transmission line in Andhra Pradesh. |

Source: NDB, 2024.

Table 5 illustrates the tangible financial operationalization of the technological neutrality and just transition vision articulated at the Kazan Summit. In 2024, the NDB moved beyond the traditional approach focused solely on increasing production capacity, directly linking SDG 7 goals to social welfare through public lighting and grid modernization projects in Brazil. The preference for RMB financing, particularly for the São Paulo project, serves as empirical evidence that the strategy of using national currencies, emphasized at the Ministerial Meeting, is being effectively implemented in infrastructure financing. When considered alongside the solar energy investment in India, this demonstrates the Bank's establishment of a flexible financing regime that respects country-specific transition patterns. However, to maintain analytical rigor, it is essential to note the challenges in implementing these projects. In particular, the restrictions on the NDB's access to international capital markets following the Ukraine War constrained its financing capacity. As Neunuebel et al. (2025) point out, the bank's shift towards local currencies in its São Paulo and India projects is not merely a preference, but a necessary and pragmatic adaptation strategy developed in response to the tightening of dollar liquidity. This demonstrates that the collaboration is not immune to external shocks but can develop institutional resilience against them.

2025 marked a historic turning point for energy cooperation under Brazil's presidency, attaining a level of institutional maturity. Transcending the phase of mere rhetorical reiteration, the bloc adopted fundamental documents defining its medium-term strategy

(Department of International Relations and Cooperation, Republic of South Africa, 2025). At the heart of this process was the 10th Energy Ministers Meeting, convened on May 19, 2025, and the Joint Communiqué adopted. The Communiqué formally endorsed the Roadmap for BRICS Energy Cooperation 2025-2030, prepared by the BRICS Committee of Senior Energy Officials, outlining the vision for the next five years. While acknowledging the role of fossil fuels in developing economies, the ministers called for a just, orderly, and equitable energy transition. The process is built upon the SDG 7 goals, technological neutrality, and the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. The most strategic innovation of the Communiqué is the promotion of local currencies in energy trade and the recording of concerns against unilateral sanctions. Furthermore, the secure supply of critical minerals for low-emission technologies has been prioritized, and constructive engagement towards the COP30 summit in Brazil has been confirmed (Ministry of Mines and Energy of Brazil, 2025; Ministry of Mines and Energy of Brazil BRICS Committee of Senior Energy Officials, 2025a). The 2025-2030 Roadmap, which translates this political framework into concrete actions and is technically implemented by the ERCP, focuses cooperation on four key objectives: strengthening BRICS cooperation and coordination on the international energy agenda; expanding the scope of cooperation based on energy security and equitable and inclusive energy transitions; improving governance, decision-making, and implementation processes for cooperation initiatives; and increasing trade in energy-related goods and mutual investment. To achieve these objectives, the cooperation structure is divided into two main branches: Sectoral Cooperation and Cross-cutting Areas. Sectoral Cooperation covers sectoral issues such as renewable energy, bioenergy, hydrogen, and CCUS, while Cross-cutting Areas details priorities such as financing, critical minerals, digitalization, and skills development for a just transition (Ministry of Mines and Energy of Brazil, BRICS Committee of Senior Energy Officials, 2025b). The NDB, which forms the financial component of the roadmap, has approved two critical projects in 2025 that are fully aligned with current targets.

**Table 6.** Clean energy and energy efficiency projects approved by NDB in 2025

| Project Name | Country | Approval Date and Status | NDB Financing Limit | Project Purpose and Summary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shanxi Taiyuan Wusu Zero-Carbon Airport Project | China | July 14, 2025 (approved) | RMB 1.448 billion | Installation of solar, geothermal, smart energy, and storage systems to reduce the airport's net CO2 emissions to zero. |
| Serra da Palmeira Wind Power Project | Brazil | September 17, 2025 (approved) | RMB 1,400 million | Construction of a 648 MW wind power plant in Paraíba Prefecture. The use of Chinese-made turbines exemplifies intra-BRICS technology trade and the use of local currencies. |

Source: NDB, 2025.

The projects in Table 6 demonstrate that the 2025-2030 Roadmap has moved beyond a theoretical framework and has been operationalized through the NDB. The project in

China presents a comprehensive model integrating renewable energy, storage, and digitalization under the Sectoral Cooperation heading defined in the Roadmap. However, the profound strategic significance lies in the Serra da Palmeira project in Brazil. The use of Chinese-made turbines and financing in RMB for this project directly implements the goals of increasing energy-related goods trade and promoting local currencies outlined in the Ministerial Declaration. This is fully consistent with Liu & Papa's (2022) thesis of de-dollarization. With this move, the NDB has moved beyond being merely an infrastructure financier to assume the role of a market and rule maker governing technology transfer and trade integration within BRICS. This emerging picture indicates that intra-group trade is shifting away from a raw-materials-focused structure toward a South-South Technology Ecosystem, and that the energy transition is being used not only as an environmental necessity but also as a means of geo-economic autonomy.

## Conclusion

This paper analyzed the evolution of BRICS energy cooperation during the 2009-2025 period from an institutional perspective and revealed that the group has transformed from a consultative platform into an operational mechanism with concrete tools. The findings show that BRICS' institutional development in the energy sector is predicated on three pillars: institutional flexibility, technocratic knowledge production, and financial infrastructure.

Firstly, the soft balancing strategy discussed within the theoretical framework of this paper has given way to functional institutionalization in the post-2015 period. The analyzed Leaders' Summit and Energy Ministers' declarations demonstrate that cooperation is not merely a reaction based on a shared perception of threat, but also the construction of a sui generis regime that prioritizes the energy security and development imperatives of member states. The unabated persistence of energy cooperation, particularly amid geopolitical tensions between China and India, and the adoption of the 2025-2030 Roadmap empirically validate that the group has successfully executed its compartmentalization strategy and developed institutional resilience against high politics crises.

Secondly, the paper's empirical data show that BRICS has produced not only rhetorical but also practical alternatives to Western-centric energy governance. Technical reports produced through the ERCP demonstrate that the group has gained epistemic autonomy by generating its own data and strategy; financing provided through the NDB, meanwhile, reveals the group's concrete pursuit of financial autonomy. The NDB's promotion of local currencies in its projects and its adoption of a flexible, development-oriented financing model rather than the Bretton Woods institutions' conditionality principle have opened up a new normative space in global energy finance.

The third and perhaps most critical finding is the normative consensus developed to manage the group's heterogeneous structure. The paper shows that the concepts of technological neutrality and just transition are used as strategic tools to bridge the differences in interests among member countries. Instead of imposing a uniform decarbonization prescription, BRICS has institutionalized a flexible transition model

covering a wide range from fossil fuels to renewable energy and from nuclear to hydrogen, offering a more inclusive governance model for the Global South.

Ultimately, the process that began as a declaration of intention in Yekaterinburg in 2009 has matured under Brazil's presidency in 2025, evolving into a structural force that is characterized by financial autonomy, indigenous technological development, and that prioritizes national currencies in energy trade. In this context, BRICS energy cooperation should be conceptualized not as a revisionist movement aiming to completely dismantle the existing global energy order, but rather as a transformative and complementary governance model that integrates into the system through parallel mechanisms while protecting the sovereign rights and development priorities of member states.

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# THE LIMITS OF REGIONAL AUTONOMY: BRAZIL AND THE MULTISCALAR POLITICS OF EMERGING POWERS

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## Abstract

The appeal of regionalization can best be understood as much a reaction to marginalization within the institutions of global governance as a gravitation toward the benefits of proximity-enabled cooperation with neighbouring states. Building on insights from Hirschman's concept of institutional exit and Buzan's regional security complex theory, this article conceptualizes regionalization as a process driven by both centrifugal and centripetal dynamics. Accordingly, global institutions privilege the interests and norms of the established core, thereby constituting the primary push factor in this process. By contrast, regional platforms exert pull effects by offering greater policy autonomy, normative convergence, and issue proximity among economies sharing similar structural attributes. The article treats Brazil's regional strategy from the early 2000s through the mid-2010s as an instance of this global transformation. During this period, MERCOSUR and UNASUR functioned as the primary vehicles for fostering a post-neoliberal alliance among South American nations centred on collective industrialization and autonomy. This endeavour, however, failed to deliver the desired outcomes and ultimately lost economic viability. The superior returns offered by China's ever-growing demand for Brazil's agribusiness redirected Brazil's priorities beyond its immediate region, revealing the structural limitations inherent in South–South partnerships.

## Keywords

Global Governance; Emerging Powers; Brazil; Regional Security Complex Theory.

## Resumo

O apelo da regionalização pode ser melhor compreendido tanto como uma reação à marginalização no seio das instituições de governação global, como uma atração pelos benefícios da cooperação facilitada pela proximidade com os Estados vizinhos. Com base nas ideias do conceito de «saída institucional» de Hirschman e na teoria do «complexo de segurança regional» de Buzan, este artigo conceitua a regionalização como um processo impulsionado por dinâmicas tanto centrífugas como centrípetas. Assim, as instituições globais privilegiam os interesses e as normas do núcleo estabelecido, constituindo, assim, o principal fator de empurrão neste processo. Em contrapartida, as plataformas regionais exercem efeitos de atração ao oferecer maior autonomia política, convergência normativa e proximidade temática entre economias que partilham atributos estruturais semelhantes. O artigo aborda a estratégia regional do Brasil desde o início da década de 2000 até meados da década de 2010 como um exemplo desta transformação global. Durante este período, o MERCOSUL e a UNASUL funcionaram como os principais veículos para fomentar uma aliança pós-neoliberal entre as nações sul-americanas, centrada na industrialização coletiva e na

autonomia. Este esforço, no entanto, não conseguiu produzir os resultados desejados e acabou por perder viabilidade económica. Os retornos superiores oferecidos pela procura cada vez maior da China pelo agronegócio brasileiro redirecionaram as prioridades do Brasil para além da sua região imediata, revelando as limitações estruturais inerentes às parcerias Sul-Sul..

**Palavras-chave**

Governação global; Potências emergentes; Brasil; Teoria do complexo de segurança regional.

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## Introduction

The sudden end of the Cold War set in motion a gradual yet decisive reordering of the global power hierarchy. Thus, the intellectual lenses through which the world capitalist system had long been seen began to lose much of their analytical purchase. One of the most ingrained of these was the binary division between a Western core and a Southern periphery. The dramatic surges in the industrial and financial strength of China, India, and some other states, such as Brazil, have already undermined those mental frames that once comfortably structured both scholarly analysis and policy practice. While few doubt that these developments testify to the presence of a structural transformation, there remains far less consensus on whether regionalist endeavours will deliver the desired outcomes and persist as durable components of the global order in the future. Brazil offers a particularly useful entry point to evaluate both the limits and promise of regionalism as a developmental policy for emerging states.

This article advances three overlapping claims. First, it proposes that emerging powers' proclivity to build regional institutions reflects eroding trust in the self-proclaimed universality of the liberal international order. It is increasingly less disputed that global governance, with its established institutions, lacks the ability to evolve in accordance with changing power balances. Second, it argues that regionalism may help emerging powers achieve economic development only if it coincides with a favorable global economic climate and with political leadership committed to the cause of South–South cooperation. This point is particularly relevant to the case of Brazil's regionalist endeavour, which reached its zenith during the global economic boom of the early 2000s and under the guidance of Lula. Third, drawing on Brazil's brand of regionalism, it posits that regionalism is not immune to reversals and, in fact, has contested viability in the face of the structural restraints of global capitalism.

One influential strand of scholarship construes the regionalization associated with the rise of new economic hubs as a form of competitive institutional pluralism. This view stands in sharp contrast to that of its pessimistic contemporaries, which, as will be elaborated, predict the ascendance of new players as the opening phase of an inevitable systemic rupture. Proponents of the optimistic side of this debate downplay these

concerns, arguing that, even if what has been observed signals a period of power transition, the liberal international order could still provide space for accommodation, incremental reform, and negotiation. Bernal-Meza (2016, p. 22) opines along the same lines, substantiating that the systemic disorder resulting from power transitions does not deterministically cause systemic collapse. As Katzenstein (1996, p. 130) proposes, enabling reforms for the selective incorporation of new players and their divergent interests can conceivably culminate in greater stability and cohesion.

More sceptical accounts take issue with this deep confidence in the ability of liberal institutions to adapt to ongoing change. Realist perspectives, for instance, problematize the view that regionalization will cause no trouble and instead function as a non-disruptive extension of global governance. Following Schweller (2011, p. 287), the long-term degradation of the old guard's power base will inevitably pave the way for a world order no longer "anchored in predictable and relatively constant principles." Accordingly, what lies ahead is not a retreat of emerging powers from existing global rules, but a gradual decomposition of the mechanisms that once facilitated interstate cooperation—as Western dominance wanes (Schweller & Pu, 2011, p. 45). From this pessimistic vantage point, regionalization results in neither a final dissolution of global governance nor a smooth adjustment; rather, disagreement is expected to become both persistent and institutionalized.

As is apparent from the landscape, present scholarship on regionalism offers a polarized view, either framing regional institutions as compatible additions to the liberal international order or labelling them as precursors to chaos and rupture. This article takes an alternative approach. It instead defines emergent power regionalism as a selective retention and partial relocation. It is a calculated effort to transfer certain issue areas to regional sites but, critically, without fully relinquishing representation in existing institutional arenas.

This paper argues that contemporary regionalism means neither a retreat from nor a "discursive conflict" (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 13) against the existing norms of global governance, but it is still far from being an adaptive extension of the post–World War II world order. This article reads these alternative, regional institutional scales through Albert Hirschman's concept of "exit," conceived not as abandonment but as relocation. Hirschman (1970; 1978) held that actors disaffected by prevailing institutions may choose to "vote with their feet" by reallocating their involvement to arenas perceived as more attuned to their values, preferences, and priorities. Contextualized within international politics, the regionalization of governance is indicative of a *partial* exit from extant institutions regarded as culturally skewed, ineffective, and inflexible.

This retreat from institutions with a global reach coincides with a no less powerful pull toward region-specific institutions. As Barry Buzan observed shortly after the end of the Cold War, security relations and policy interactions tend to cluster regionally rather than globally (Buzan, 1991). This insight later became the main tenet of his infamous Regional Security Complex Theory. It theorizes that geographical proximity determines the frequency and the strength of security interdependence among states (Buzan & Wæver, 2003, p. 44-45). Although military issues were the primary concern when this theory initially developed, it has since been extended to include issues as wide-ranging as

economic vulnerability, cross-border immigration, and environmental degradation—some of the matters thhat are spatially concentrated and inaptly managed at the global level.

Brazil's experience with regional integration yields several lessons. The most consequential one of them, as this article shows, is that by coordinating regional states toward common goals, lowering transaction costs, and constructing region-specific institutions for development, regional integration may indeed expand possibility horizons. Yet, despite the growth that MERCOSUR and UNASUR helped spur, Brazil's regional development plan failed to reduce structural dependence on global financial flows and export markets. In Brazil's case—which may extend to other regionalisms to a certain extent—regional institutions did not replace the role of their global counterparts in a durable fashion, instead functioning as mechanisms contingent on domestic political support and favorable extra-regional circumstances.

## Emerging Powers and the Regionalization of Global Governance

The emerging powers' revisionist discourse has roots within the historically constituted inequalities of the global political economy. In dialogue with this argument, Thomas Piketty (2014) states that today's material wealth and power distribution among nations is not accidental but corresponds to structural asymmetries that can be traced back to the first Industrial Revolution. Therefore, it is exceptionally difficult for late-comers to catch up with core economies, especially for those that firmly comply with the declared rules. This select group had to endure significant shortfalls on their path to convergence, given that those rules have more to do with preserving existing power asymmetries than enabling vertical mobility. Consider that the IMF has yet to set foot on the soil of one country—China—which also happens to be a success story for late developers.

Ascendance, thus, demands not only material expansion but also the will to problematize path dependencies of dependency. To clarify, emerging powers of our age, however in different magnitudes, posit similar behavioural dispositions, with seeking greater voice in managing global affairs being the most definable one among them (Acharya, 2018). Whether through membership in forums such as the G20, accession to elite clubs like the OECD, or increased staffing influence within institutions such as the IMF, this exemplifies the same norm-challenging and recognition-directed posture (Menegazzi, 2019: 141). The qualifying aspect of an emerging power is identifiable by its growing capabilities and, equally importantly, by its readiness to reinforce, resist, or reform the existing order in any way that serves national interests. As the last sentence implies, behaviourally, an emerging power goes between the extremes of compliance and defiance.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, China, India, Brazil, and Turkey, with their movement up the ladders of the global economy, received a favorable reception from the liberal school of international politics. Liberal scholars cast their economic expansion as a clear validation of institutional liberalism (Lake & Morgan, 1997). In their interpretation, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which "removed the only global counterweight to Western influence" (Stephen, 2017: 484), finally laid the groundwork for a long-overdue convergence around liberal politics and economics. International institutions, the primary vessels of the now victorious structural liberalism, began to diffuse at an unprecedented scale—only comparable to the immediate aftermath of the post–World War II era. The

foundation of the World Trade Organization, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Rome Statute are some of the platforms created to govern this newly emerging global arena. As Keohane (2012: 125) once highlighted, the prevailing ethos of this brief moment was that cooperation could be "enhanced through the construction and support of multilateral institutions based on liberal principles."

The financial meltdown of 2008, similar to a corrective shock, unsettled this Kantian image of the world. Another way to understand the crisis is as a contraction of what had previously been relatively expansive, to the extent that compromise and flexibility became the first victims of the emergent uncertainty. Yet, even if the previously offered welcome to emerging economies was reconsidered, this did not occur before it was already too late. By the late 2000s, emerging powers were too established and too indispensable to a vast number of supply chains. Fully ignoring these new powerhouses was either impractical or simply not sustainable. In 2000, the combined GDP (PPP) of China and India amounted to less than a quarter of that of Japan, Germany, and the United States; by 2024, it exceeded that combined figure by a substantial margin (IMF, 2024). Gramsci's concept of "passive revolution" convincingly captures the essence of the established core's reaction to this situation. He employed this term to describe circumstances in which hegemonic groups, in a bid to diffuse revisionist pressures without altering the underlying power asymmetries, chose to incorporate peripheral actors rather than exclude them (Gramsci, 1971). Stated differently, granting access helps mitigate the risk of structural disruptions while safeguarding normative and material privileges against the prospect of expanding the zone of equal representation and voice (Rodrik, 2011).

To this nominal acceptance, which became more tangible after the global economic upheaval, there transpired no uniform reaction among emergent powers. Their behaviour instead varied within the spectrum of adaptation and resistance, taking shape according to the nature of the subject area. China and India, for instance, are supportive of measures against unilateral trade barriers, while staunchly opposing any regulation that challenges the notion of state sovereignty. Yet, neither these nor any other emerging power that could be added to the list has ever shown any intention to dismantle the existing international system upon which their well-being sits (Kahler, 2013: 713). As Chin and Thakur (2010) argue, Beijing's occasional objections arise from a position deeply entrenched in existing institutions, revealing an awareness that the longevity of the overall system is indispensable to its prosperity.

Yet, the dichotomy of compliance and resistance does not exhaust all of the emerging power responses. A third path, which has appealed to almost every late-developer, has been to assemble regionally anchored institutions. Interestingly, these new structures do not necessarily fill governance vacuums but often replicate, overlap with, or subtly contest the mandates of global institutions. Hettne and Söderbaum (2000) persuasively express that global economic integration is both constitutive of and constituted by various regional integrations, so much so that they are contemporaries of each other. Yet, this simultaneity should not amount to the presence of a smoothly working distribution of labour. As Brazil's case demonstrates, what has so far emerged is institutional multiplication, co-existence, and even latent competition.

Regionalizing matters of security, environment, or economic development has roots in a combination of push and pull factors. One can deduce from all the foregoing points that push factors arise from the perceived inflexibility of globalized institutions in making space for the needs of the latecomers (Hurrell, 1995; 2007, p. 128). The historical experiences of the advanced economic club, perhaps not surprisingly, have a lopsided representation within the normative architecture of global institutions (Ruggie, 1982: 382). In other words, the governing logic of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the UN corresponds with the preferences of Western states. More critically, these normative foundations have progressively taken on neoliberal undertones in step with pro-market transformations since the 1970s (Ruggie, 1982: 386). Overall, finding that delicate balance between the late developers' need for greater policy latitude and flexibility and the developed core's aspirations to preserve the status quo is an inherently difficult task. Circling back to an earlier point, the 2008 financial crisis further cut down the space for mediating these differences, heightening the legitimacy crisis of these institutions.

Acharya (2014, p. 647) echoes this argument, noting that the liberal international order has never achieved the universal acceptance its rhetoric implied, but instead operated as a historically contingent Western project. This putative universality has been tested by the current crisis of legitimacy, which, rather than producing a coherent alternative international order as its proponents anticipated, has resulted in a fragmented terrain of overlapping institutions. Hurrell (2007; 2012) raises a similar concern in his reflections on the growing friction between the expanding universe of institutions and enduring asymmetries of power and representation, which undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of global governance. Taken together, these dynamics suggest that global forums may indeed be facing a deepening credibility crisis as venues to which the non-Western world can look for development, justice, and security.

Invoking Albert Hirschman's "exit" and "voting by foot" concepts (1970; 1978), this article typifies the regionalization of governance as a form of institutional translation. In his words, "voice is just the opposite of exit. It is any attempt at all to change, rather than to escape from, an objectionable state of affairs" (1970, p. 30). One demands voice in a social setting so long as one believes that change is still possible. Voice is the only mechanism that provides "…rich and detailed information, as compared to the bareness and blankness of silent exit" (1980, p. 437). When the conversation no longer promises the desired change, Hirschman contends that mobility becomes the sole "…substitute for formal politics" (1980, p. 448). His insights travel well beyond the original case. Instead of trying to fix the problem, especially in rigid domains that cannot be settled in their favour, emerging powers move to alternative venues perceived as better aligned with their priorities. All things considered, regionalization articulates a partial exit from institutions viewed as inflexible and culturally skewed, while stopping short of full disengagement.

Whereas disaffection with the way present institutions operate is the outward push driving institutional exit, the primary pull force can be seen through Barry Buzan's Regional Security Complex Theory. It places security interdependence among spatially proximate states as the source from which both inter-state conflict and cooperation arise. Buzan and Wæver reject the conventional realist role assigned to the international system as a flat, unified realm in which states interact—much like atoms. Instead, to them,

"...security is clustered in geographically shaped regions" (Buzan & Wæver, 2003: 4). Proximity increases the frequency of interactions, amplifies threat perception, and the need for collective action. In their perception:

> *A regional security complex is a set of units whose major processes of securitization, desecuritization, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another"* (Buzan & Wæver, 2003: 44).

Regions constitute the main setting where the phenomenon of state interaction takes place because they are imbued with the conditions necessary to connect states with one another—namely, "relatively durable patterns of amity and enmity" (Buzan & Wæver, 2003: 50). Neighborliness generates these emotive dynamics, which, in turn, predispose states to perceive either security or insecurity in relation to one another. Security interdependence emerges from the high frequency of interactions across short distances. Vulnerable to military risks and economic fragilities that travel more rapidly within their respective regions, states are consequently compelled to prioritize their proximate environments. In sum, "the regional level is where the extremes of security interdependence are most clearly visible" (Buzan & Wæver, 2003: 51).

Brazil's regionalist enterprise under Lula exhibits the same complex interplay between pull and push factors, notwithstanding all those qualities unique to it. The institutional inertia and resistance to reform in the governing bodies of the global order executed an outward pressure on Brasília. The prospect of managing issues with neighbours sharing the same world of meanings, on the other hand, has been what attracted Brazil toward seeking regional alternatives. Taken together, Brazil's regionalism goes both ways. It is a response to marginalization as much as it is a gravitation toward alternative spaces of governance, with the alleged benefit of being more compatible and efficient as regards emerging powers' developmental and political priorities.

## The Long Road to Regionalism: A Background on Lula

The regionalization of Brazilian foreign policy is the product of a long and still continuing evolution, representing a pattern of branching paths and discontinuities—not a sudden policy innovation. Lula's presidency, during which regional politics occupied a central place in Brazil's foreign policy, therefore represents yet another instance in a long trajectory that can be traced back to WWII. Nevertheless, one pattern that has shaped Brazilian foreign policy since the second half of the twentieth century has been the pursuit of autonomy within and against systemic pressures. This search, in turn, either took the form of privileging engagement within global governance or piecemeal expansion of its regional reach. Finally, two factors determined which side Brazil leaned on in each period: domestic power struggles and the opportunity structure of the global system.

Brazil had to navigate its foreign policy in a US-centric world in the post-1945, which is tantamount to saying that there were powerful restraints on its freedom of action. Due to this constrained systemic environment and the sheer power asymmetry with its



neighbor to the North, Brazil had to seek out influence through the newly emerging institutions of Bretton Woods. International institutions, with their multilateral behavioral standards, promised Brazilian elites the most effective remedy for moderating power disparities. It should be noted that this orientation not only reveals elites' response to the steep global power hierarchies of the time, but also represents a solution to the most enduring domestic problem—economic backwardness. Postwar development and a multilateral foreign policy direction were deemed compatible goals. As part of this logic, an external posture that valued dialogue and cooperation would earn Brazil prestige in the international arena and would also increase the economy's access to capital and markets (Hurrell, 1995; Bethell, 2010). Multilateralism was thus viewed simultaneously as a vehicle for overcoming power inferiority and economic under-development.

Multilateralism once a choice freely adopted, reflecting the preferences of the incumbent elite, subsequently became institutionalized as a governing logic. Thereafter, it turned into a self-reinforcing process, structuring the conditions under which Brazil would pursue development as a latecomer. Foreign financing, export markets, and access to critical technologies became indispensable for the growth of home industry. Pursuing economic development via the import substitution model demanded that the elites of the Global South trade their allegiance in return for stable and predictable economic relations with the advanced core. Brazil's economic development came with the price of privileging its relations with Europe and the USA, often at the expense of solidarity with states of its own region. At its core, so argues Stanley (2018), Brazil is a strong validation of one of the essential tenets of dependency theory—that is, the deeper the integration into global circuits, the sharper the disjuncture between the requisites of development and the state's role conception. Under these conditions, the economic foundations of stable domestic rule set Brazil's priorities as dependent on seeking participation in global, but not regional, forums.

The conditions that are peculiar to the Cold War era further accentuated Brazil's relative aloofness from regional politics. For one, bipolarity was a specific constellation of power that compelled lesser states to choose between the capitalist and communist camps as the primary source of developmental assistance. This limitation also applied to autonomous acts that ignored the boundaries dividing rival spheres of influence and aimed to unify regional states for a common purpose. Furthermore, the era was marked by endemic domestic instability across Latin America, with military coups and political polarization severely constraining prospects for sustained regional coordination. Bandeira (2006) states that Brazil, under these conditions, viewed regional diplomacy as a means for advancing its status in global institutions. Overall, Brazilian elites saw their ability to shape regional politics as complementary to their multilateralist foreign policy and domestic power consolidation.

The military's two-decade-long reign (1964–1985) attempted to regain the foreign policy autonomy lost in earlier decades due to Brazil's mounting foreign debt, the growing cost of energy supplies, and its dependence on Western consumer markets. The doctrine of responsible adaptation served as the strategic blueprint that mapped out this new foreign policy venture. Its most salient aspect was the rebalancing of Brazil's external dependencies through the initiation of new partnerships with peripheral societies in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and China — which the military regime recognized in 1979. This early attempt at repositioning Brazil within a South–South solidarity axis

depicts how military leaders redefined the state's international preferences. Yet, their will to reassert autonomy against systemic pressures, which continued to exert decisive influence, did not deliver the desired outcome (Neto and Malamud, 2015). The demographic transformation of the era further locked Brazil into a globally oriented, non-regional course. Rapid industrialization, population increase, and urbanization urged the military leadership to place greater emphasis on internal economic stability. Their political survival, more so than ever, depended on their ability to offer education, employment, housing, and infrastructure to their people (Perz, 2000). These changes empowered those domestic elites that discounted South–South solidarity and saw global integration as the only feasible solution to Brazil's economic challenges. In aggregate, the necessity of economic modernization and bipolarity came to moderate regionalism into something pragmatic rather than a force capable of reversing globalist currents.

A subsequent development was the end of the Cold War, which on its own reconfigured Brazil's opportunity structure in foundational terms. The bipolar rivalry found a sudden end, along with it the structural limits that bipolarity imposed on regional heavyweights — such as Brazil (Hurrell, 1995; Acharya, 2014). It meant that, for instance, ideological affinity gave way to pure economic concerns in choosing partnerships with regional and extra-regional states. Also, the demise of the Soviet Union propounded neoliberal globalization as the new structural constraint to which every government had to adapt and reposition itself. All these external shifts coincided with the consecutive economic downturns of the 1980s and 1990s, a period of chronic inflation, debt burdens, and dramatic declines in living standards (Baer, 2001; Stanley, 2018). Here, these economic ailments may have given a second lease on life to the regionalist turn of the following decade. MERCOSUR's creation in 1991 belied both systemic opportunity and the emergent necessity of taking an alternative path, given the exhaustion of globalist perspectives (De Oliveira, 2012). In its initial manifestation, MERCOSUR and the regionalist turn were justified not as an identity-driven or ideologically motivated departure from neoliberal or globalist discourses. The dominant narrative backing Brazil's timid regionalism in 1991 drew on market-friendly terms, such as achieving economies of scale, trade liberalization, or competition.

Into the 1990s, globalization gave a great impetus to the region-wide integration of South American economies, with Brazil at its centre, but this prospect stumbled upon domestic economic limits and the counterpedalling of the region's smaller players. Brazil, well aware of its weakened bargaining position vis-à-vis ever-stronger global corporations and emerging trade blocs, saw regionalization as an effective way to improve its hand. Thus, MERCOSUR in the decade obtained an instrumental value as the vehicle for amplifying Brazil's lessening voice in WTO negotiations, trade agreements with Europe, and dealings with major powers (Klom, 2003). Yet the policymaking elites remained vigilant and exercised self-restraint due to two underlying concerns. One of them emerged from the economic crisis of 1999 and lingering fiscal pressures, whereas the other issued from the need to build trust with neighboring states (Burges, 2010). Malamud's portrayal of Brazil as a "leader without followers" (2011, p. 40) conveys the limits of Brazil's shortcomings as a putative regional leader, such as its inability to convert visible power asymmetry into a persuasive discourse.

The 2000s added new incentives and enabling conditions for Brazil to consolidate its regionalist turn. One was the effective expansion of the capitalist system, leaving Brazil

more options to pursue its material development. The commodity upswing of the 2000s, the emergence of new growth poles, and non-Western financial centres broadened Brazil's formerly West-oriented foreign policy outlook. Lula's rise to the forefront of Brazilian politics blended two traditions with deep roots in the country's intellectual environment: developmentalism and autonomy from the capitalist core. As will be explained in the next section, Lula recast regionalism from being merely a tool for further integration with the global markets into a viable method for Brazil to develop economically without sacrificing its strategic autonomy.

Yet this transition of focus, from global to regional, can only partially be explained through pull factors. The perceived failure of the global institutions to compensate Brazil's all-too-real rise as a major power with a corresponding place within global governance has equally prompted the search for regional alternatives (Bernal-Meza, 2022; Christensen, 2013). This resonates with Hurrell's proposition that no emerging power is truly immune from experiencing persistent tensions between formal equality and substantive inequality within international institutions (Hurrell, 2012, p. 8). The stalled negotiations of the Doha Round, resistance to IMF quota reform, and limited progress on UN Security Council expansion were some of the scenes where the divide between the old guard and new players became defined.

## Lula's Regionalist Moment: Growth and Integration

Brazil's regionalization under the guidance of Lula unfolded along two interlinked moments. This article defines the first one, which is the subject matter of this section, as a growth phase. This expansionary period, roughly extending from 2003 to 2016, built hopes around the developmental and political returns from regional integration. The second began to surface following the global financial crisis and gained a more definitive form toward the mid-2010s, once balance sheet constraints reversed the initial momentum (Berringer, 2022, p. 104). Yet this did not completely derail Brazil from its regionalist trajectory. Most conspicuous about this period is that regional institutions could act as agents of economic transformation and political coordination, as well as alternatives to their counterparts at the global level (Mesquita, 2016).

Be it noted that the paradigm that prevailed during the expansionary period was not categorically different from the prior era—but perhaps assumed, through Lula's voice, a more assertive and clear tone. Regional integration during his presidency was reconstituted from a fallback preference into the pace-setting driver of Brazil's development strategy. As Vadell and Giaccaglia (2021) assert, Brasília regarded "regional integration as the basis for further integration into the world economy," stressing that "the Brazilian global projection depended on integrating the South American continent" (p. 36). Echoing this argument, South America features in Lula's foreign policy discourse as more than a neighborhood, but as an ideal space that, if organized and governed properly, could provide Brazil with export outlets for its home industry and enable technological upgrading (Santos, 2015, p. 46; Milani et al, 2024, p. 10). He appears to be among the first Brazilian leaders to introduce South America as integral to the essential pursuit that characterizes the Brazilian state: development, but not without autonomy.

This phase of regionalist undertaking capitalized on exceptionally convenient macroeconomic conditions. That is, thanks to the ongoing boom within the broader capitalist system, a vibrant consumer demand for export commodities furnished regional economies with a steady flow of export revenues, coupled with abundant global liquidity, which eased long-standing refinancing limits. The regional leaders, now partially freed from domestic distributive tensions, could turn this suddenly available fiscal space into what might be called institutional experimentation (Arias et al., 2025, p. 8). The initial stages of this era saw a significant qualitative and quantitative leap in Brazil's regional commerce. The time interval between 2003 and 2008, in particular, registered unprecedented expansion, with MERCOSUR-bound exports expanding by 282.41%, while the bloc's share of Brazil's export portfolio rose by 41.42% (Marcon, 2022). Even though the bloc's weight in the aggregate total was later to follow a flattening trajectory, the magnitude of this increase cannot be overlooked.

Accordingly, the economic mentality driving MERCOSUR was derived from commercial liberalism and mercantilism—an uneasy pairing. On its liberal leg, MERCOSUR was concerned with removing barriers to the free circulation of commodities across the region's borders. Yet, this objective was a function of a broader, if seemingly controversial, aim. This aim was to reserve the benefits of a unified market of almost 300 million people for South American industries, in relative protection from external competition (Manzetti, 1993, p. 112). If this interpretation holds, then MERCOSUR can be seen as embodying that proposition which defines the structuralist school of development. This long-standing strand perceives regional integration as a workaround for relatively small domestic markets with a narrow industrial basis, which, to free themselves from low productivity and chronic external dependence, must pool demand from other regional markets. Raúl Prebisch (1950) and Celso Furtado (1964; 1970), two of the leading proponents of this school, established a causal relationship between the volume of demand and the ability of an economy to expand and diversify its exporting industries. Osvaldo Sunkel (1969, p. 14-18) aligns with this strand, expressing that escaping from the bounds of external dependence requires regional states to act in concert in developing their economic policies. Brazil's developmental journey offers a compelling case in support of structuralist propositions. The vibrant economic periods that Brazil enjoyed often ended as a result of global economic contractions, a pattern which reveals how the country always had to rely on external stimuli for sustained industrial development.

For a brief moment, at least, regional economic integration appeared as an escape route from this cycle, representing a way to enlarge effective market size without subjecting domestic producers to the full disciplinary force of advanced industrial economies. The following data shedding light on how MERCOSUR bolstered Brazilian industry in the 2000s substantiates the aforementioned point. Against a backdrop of renewed concentration of exports in primary products, South America stood as the lifeline for Brazil's capital-intensive industries. In fact, by the late 2000s, industrial products constituted 84% of external shipments to MERCOSUR states (Bernal-Meza, 2022, p. 54). In the same period, Chinese demand was heavily skewed toward soybeans, iron ore, and other resource-intensive products (Yang & Araya, 2022, p. 271; Bernal-Meza & Li, 2020, p. 283). This statistic corroborates that regional economies were the main destinations of Brazil's domestic industry at a time when commodity specialization was reinforced by China-

bound trade. As such, Brazil's commercial geography has been functionally differentiated between global and regional demand. Brazil occupies a semi-peripheral position in the wider global system, yet performs the role of a regional core in its proximate neighbourhood (Vadell & Giaccaglia, 2021). This outcome is far from being incidental but, according to Hurrel (1995), represents a pattern across various other similar cases. Brazil's neighbours, with their similar consumption culture, technological preferences, and, most critically, corresponding regulatory frameworks, were a natural stimulus to Brazil's value-added commodities (Vigevani et al., 2012, p. 517; Medeiros, 2013, p.78).

Before turning to UNASUR and the political dimensions of the Southern Market, it is appropriate to outline the economic rationale of the era—one more time. Lula's developmental and autonomy-seeking approach to regionalism relied on a sequencing strategy. Accordingly, the economic integration of Brazil with the rest of the region was conceived as an adaptive mechanism. The establishment of firm economic ties with neighbours of comparable or lesser developmental levels was expected to enable homegrown industries to acquire competitiveness, diversify production, and achieve economies of scale. Following this phase of adaptation and learning, Brazil would be better positioned to compete within global markets.

Buzan and Wæver's Regional Security Complex Theory, with its broader analytical insight, is relevant here. Recalling their key point, proximity amplifies cross-border interactions of all kinds, ranging from technology diffusion to knowledge spillovers, to economic recessions and violent conflicts. These networks of interdependencies, in return, generate incentives for institutional coordination. The UNASUR provides a useful point of comparison. The stated expansion of intraregional trade seemed to urge greater policy coordination, regulatory harmonization, infrastructural integration, and dispute management among neighboring states (Carranza, 2006, p. 808; Santos, 2015, p. 44).

Whereas MERCOSUR was entrusted with trade and industrial coordination, UNASUR's primary duty was to work as a governance mechanism with the purpose of cohering the South American political space. More specifically, for Brazil, UNASUR undertook the job of facilitating multilateral cooperation, mediating disputes, and helping construct norms that the South American nations would willingly abide by (Carranza, 2006; Vadell & Giaccaglia, 2021). In the name of bringing partner states into an institutional setting where they could resolve their mutual vulnerabilities, UNASUR was designed to address crises without reliance on extra-regional institutions. This function is especially tangible in its early phases. According to Schenoni (2016) and Mesquita (2016), it performed its primary function adequately by initiating diplomatic coordination during the 2008 Bolivian crisis, the 2010 Ecuadorian police revolt, debates surrounding US military access to Colombian bases in 2009, and collective responses to Paraguay's 2012 political crisis. Yet, notwithstanding these success stories, UNASUR fell short of performing the duties of its counterparts in the European Union. The major deficiency that restrained UNASUR was that, as a supragovernmental institution, it failed to assert autonomous power above the constituent states. In other words, its efficiency was a product of the level of consensus and political convergence.

The ability of UNASUR to manage the partners' differences started to decline drastically as a direct result of the waning global economic boom in the post-2008 period. As explained before, the economic expansion, which coincided with the beginning of Lula's

presidency, provided the resource-exporting states with financial windfalls and robust economic growth. Such material opulence, in return, made it easier for the regional states to set aside their ideological differences. The commodity supercycle started to erode with the financial turmoil, and so did mutual trust among the MERCOSUR governments. The end of the growth phase diminished export revenues, along with the fiscal comfort that the South American governments formerly enjoyed. Governments' priorities started to move away from funding the post-neoliberal agenda — such as expansive welfare programs, regional initiatives, and infrastructural investments. Their political survival increasingly depended on whether they could expand employment, manage ever-growing debt, and curb inflation.

This article claims the Venezuelan crisis, which deepened after 2013, to be the inflection point that, more than any other incident, exposed the unravelling architecture of South America's regional governance. Regional institutions desperately tried but, in the end, failed to secure a coordinated response as political and economic instability intensified. Instead, ideological fragmentation, coupled with divergent threat perceptions, completely paralyzed UNASUR (Krickovic, 2015). The lessening relevance of intra-regional trade, apparently, already removed the political incentives for leading elites to forge a degree of harmony, leading to what might be called institutional inertia (Bernal-Meza, 2022; Yang & Araya, 2022). As Santos (2015) remarked, commercial interdependence at this point no longer constituted a strong enough bond to contain the centrifugal forces these institutions were designed to contain.

## The Demise of Expansionary Regionalism after 2016

Brazil's regionalist impetus lost momentum starting with the second half of 2010 as a result of domestic power struggles and Brazil's deepening engagement with the China-centred world. The former surfaced when the developmentalist coalition supporting expansionary regionalism during the administrations of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff began to erode. The latter on the other hand resulted from the repositioning of Brazil as the principal supplier to China's rapidly expanding and resource-hungry domestic market.

As stated in the preceding lines, the domestic opposition to the regionalist endeavour assumed a more confrontational position as trade with MERCOSUR started to lose its former volume from 2008 onwards. Silva (2019) noted that the changing economic fortunes, as such, ruined Brazil's hard-won foreign policy consensus, giving way to intensified ideological polarization and institutional discontinuity. Dilma Rousseff's impeachment in 2016 may be interpreted as the culmination of this power struggle (Silva, 2019, p.73). As a direct result of it, the regionalist/developmentalist currents had to abandon their dominant position for their domestic rivals—a loosely formed alliance composed of financial elites, export-driven industries, and those who advocate stronger alignment with the United States. These new elites expanded their power in Brazil's domestic theatre thereafter, persevering even under the rule of the re-elected Lula (Nogara, 2025). Reframing the same point, the contraction of intra-regional trade, in tandem with the growing significance of commodity exports to China, reduced industrial sectors' relevance to a healthy Brazilian economy in 2010s (Basnet, 2013, p. 554). As Bernal-Meza (2022) posits, intra-regional commerce functioned as a stabilizing outlet for

Brazil's higher value-added exports, particularly manufactured goods. Obviously, it also mattered a great deal to the domestic power balances favouring pro-developmentalist currents.

The Temer administration took the first steps in the direction of this paradigmatic shift in Brazil's perception of regionalism. As Santos, Leão & Rosa (2021) note, during his presidency, "post-liberal regionalism was replaced by a renewed approach of open regionalism" (p. 576). This was a clear rejection of imparting any political meaning to regionalism, exhibiting a fundamental rupture from the previous decades. It should then come as no surprise that Temer actively sought to suspend Brazil's membership status in UNASUR. Alvarez (2021) similarly labels the post-2016 turn as a liberal-conservative reorientation, "downgrading regionalism as a non-priority" (p. 14).

The retreat, which Temer initiated in his two-year term, from the ideational foundations of Brazil's regionalist turn gained further speed after the election of Bolsonaro. The official disengagement from UNASUR became formalized during his term as part of his campaign against the ideals of South-South solidarity and post-neoliberal regionalism. He justified the foundation of PROSUR on the grounds that UNASUR had been "moved by ideologies" (Junior, 2022, p.36). In his vision, regionalism had to be confined to bilateral agreements and market-oriented diplomacy, as such arrangements would appreciate a degree of flexibility that regional institutions would deny to Brasília. This article does not conclude that such was tantamount to the disappearance of regionalism in its entirety, but post-2016 governments certainly downgraded its erstwhile prominence within the hierarchy of Brazil's foreign policy priorities. As Krickovic (2015) proposes, the regional schemes may endure fluctuations in terms of their relevance to a country's world of meanings or economic prosperity. Either in tandem or separately, changes in the domestic political scene or global circumstances may cause this outcome. In the end, though, they often persist as latent frameworks running their course in the background.

Lula, upon his arrival, restored certain aspects of Brazil's earlier regionalist discourse. He reanimated diplomatic affairs with South American partners, attempted to revive the governmental functions of UNASUR, and placed long-dismissed rhetorical emphasis on autonomy and multilateralism (Nogara, 2025). Yet, these attempts were less than enough to revitalize Brazil's weakened ties to its neighbours. The context that Lula III has to operate poses markedly different conditions from that of the early 2000s. Stagnated global growth, already well-entrenched export specialization, and altered domestic coalitions hinder the prospect of reinvigorating expansionary regionalism in its prior form.

Concluding, the Brazilian case substantiates a central claim adopted by this article: the complex interplay between national political economy and global order centrally defines a regionalism's feasibility. Brazil's expansionary regional integration coincided with the global economic expansion of the early 2000s and the dominance of post-neoliberal developmentalism in domestic politics. Its subsequent weakening reflected the erosion of these enabling conditions rather than the intrinsic failure of regional institutions alone.

## Conclusion

This article argues that regionalism in its contemporary form represents an attempt by emerging powers to strategically relocate policy engagements across institutional scales. The regionalization of institutions therefore neither corresponds to a complete withdrawal from nor a frontal challenge to the established order. By drawing on Buzan's conception of the Regional Security Complex together with Hirschman's notion of exit, the article describes regionalism as gaining traction from a dual movement. It builds on centrifugal pressures sourced from the rigidities of global institutions, as much as on centripetal forces that attract emerging states to anchor themselves in regional proximity.

Brazil provides a clear vantage point for the contingent nature of this institutional relocation. During the expansionary phase of the early 2000s, Brazil managed to construct a regional international order that proved capable of cohering neighbouring states on matters of development, industrial partnerships, political stability, and cross-border security. Yet, the unravelling of the domestic coalition supportive of regionalism and the outbreak of the 2008 global recession reversed these fortunes, laying bare the structural fragilities underlying expansionary regionalism. The article does not assign this failure to an allegedly inherent weakness within the architectural design of MERCOSUR or UNASUR. They seemed to function satisfactorily in extending Brazil's policy autonomy and enlarging the economic window of opportunities as long as favorable global conditions persisted. As the latter started to transform, though, it became obvious that they were not nearly offsetting the emergent dislocations and asymmetries entrenched in global demand, finance, and production.

This analysis delivers two insights into the likelihood of regionalism(s): they are neither omnipotent structures that can alter the course of global power hierarchies nor intrinsically dead-end endeavours with nothing to offer to emerging powers. Regional institutions are a dependent stratum within a multiscalar order, never truly freed from reversals, reordering, and shifting structures of restraints/opportunities. The logical implication is that emerging powers are facing a significant dilemma: national autonomy through regionalization proceeds within a wider global structure that still determines the possibility horizons of every political project. Regionalization is anything but a pathway beyond 'the global.' It is rather a strategic adaptation that can broaden the bandwidth of emerging states' autonomy, critically, without dissolving structural dependence on it.

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# ENVIRONMENTAL JURISPRUDENCE AT CROSS-ROADS IN INDIA: THE BALANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE AND RIGHT OF HARMONIOUS CO-EXISTENCE

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## Abstract

India passed its first historic judgment on climate change which was made available on 08th April 2024 by recognising its adverse impacts to be a violation of human rights and that of the fundamental right to life as enshrined in the Indian Constitution and interpreted in multifarious dimensions by the courts of law in India. While it is indeed true that it is historic in nature, the paper attempts to raise certain concerns. First, wasn't this aspect already recognised as a right in plethora of decisions already dating back from the times of M.C. Mehta vs. Union of India or M.C. Mehta vs. Kamal Nath or Enviro Legal Action and all such landmark decisions that paved the way for the environmental jurisprudence in India? Second, what is and how is this case different than those earlier decisions and finally, how many really bothered to even glance through the facts of the case and issues involved to note why and how did the apex court pronounce such a remarkable order? In this regard, thus, the paper attempts to meander through the environmental jurisprudence in crossroads in India where the rights of the living beings are contrary to each other and instead of the harmonious existence of the living world, the courts are sticking to the age-old anthropocentric approach to environmental protection. Ultimately, then, the paper raises the larger question of how is this case remarkable when it fails, if so, to keep a balance of human rights and rights of Nature.

## Keywords

Rights of Nature, climate change, fundamental right, human rights, harmonious existence.

## Resumo

A Índia proferiu a sua primeira decisão histórica sobre as alterações climáticas, divulgada a 8 de abril de 2024, ao reconhecer que os seus impactos adversos constituem uma violação dos direitos humanos e do direito fundamental à vida, consagrado na Constituição indiana e interpretado sob múltiplas perspetivas pelos tribunais da Índia. Embora seja verdade que se trata de uma decisão de caráter histórico, o presente artigo procura levantar algumas questões. Primeiro, este aspeto não já tinha sido reconhecido como um direito numa infinidade de decisões que remontam aos tempos de M.C. Mehta vs. União da Índia ou M.C. Mehta vs. Kamal Nath ou Enviro Legal Action e todas essas decisões marcantes que abriram caminho

para a jurisprudência ambiental na Índia? Em segundo lugar, em que consiste e em que medida este caso difere dessas decisões anteriores e, por fim, quantos se deram ao trabalho de sequer dar uma vista de olhos aos factos do caso e às questões envolvidas para perceber por que razão e de que forma o tribunal superior proferiu uma decisão tão notável? Neste sentido, o artigo procura, assim, percorrer a jurisprudência ambiental na encruzilhada na Índia, onde os direitos dos seres vivos se opõem uns aos outros e, em vez da existência harmoniosa do mundo vivo, os tribunais mantêm-se fiéis à abordagem antropocêntrica secular da proteção ambiental. Em última análise, o artigo levanta a questão mais ampla de como é que este caso é notável quando falha, se é que o faz, em manter um equilíbrio entre os direitos humanos e os direitos da Natureza.

**Palavras-chave**

Direitos da Natureza, alterações climáticas, direito fundamental, direitos humanos, existência harmoniosa.

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# ENVIRONMENTAL JURISPRUDENCE AT CROSS-ROADS IN INDIA: THE BALANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE AND RIGHT OF HARMONIOUS CO-EXISTENCE

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## Introduction

Through the recent judgment in *M.K. Ranjitsinh and Ors. v. Union of India* (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023), the Supreme Court has paved the way for climate change litigation in India. It has recognized the 'Right Against Adverse Effects of Climate Change' as a distinct right flowing from Art. 14 and Art. 21 of the Indian Constitution (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023). The *MK Ranjitsinh* judgment can potentially drive more climate litigation, hence a landmark judgment. Additionally, it is one of the first judgments to address the tripartite dilemma of climate change, Human rights, and sustainable development. However, is this judgment truly remarkable? The author in this article attempts to answer the following pertinent questions that have brought India at the crossroads in its journey with environmental law.

1. Wasn't this fundamental rights already recognised as a right in plethora of Supreme Court decisions dating back to the times of 1970s when environmental law was making inroads to India that contributed to the environmental jurisprudence in India?
2. What is and how is this case different from those earlier decisions?
3. Was the order of the Apex Court legitimate considering the issues on which the court was adjudicating?

Before delving into these questions, a short glimpse into the necessity for this decision on Fundamental Rights against Climate Change and, accordingly, its significance will be portrayed transitioning into the next section on international jurisprudence on the subject-matter. The last sections shall be on the landmark and historic case in India and its critcisms.

## Consequences of Climate Change and Pollution

The adverse effects of climate change such as asthma, increase in worsening of cardiac health, pest-related diseases like Lyme Disease and West Nile Virus water- and food-related illnesses, and injuries and deaths (EPA, 2022) are well known today and backed with enough scientific research. However, the first instance of underscoring the consequences on health due to climate change through scientific study was in the IPCC's First Assessment Report (FAR) in 1990 (IPCC), which already included mentions of the potential health impacts of climate change, the main diseases of concern are asthma, rhinosinusitis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and respiratory tract infections. This was followed by the EPA's "Climate Change and the Health of Vulnerable Populations" report in 1997. The Third Assessment Report (TAR) of the IPCC was released in 2001 and focused attention on the impacts of climate change and the need for adaptation. In 2009, EPA's released "Climate Change and Public Health" outlining the various health impacts of climate change, including respiratory diseases exacerbated by air pollution and allergens. Further, in 2016, a study by US Global research program (Beard, 2016) revealed that climate change has also led to increase in Lyme disease by expanding the range of ticks (Beard, 2016). The same study also stated that climate change also contributed tortoise in West Nile Virus by accelerating mosquito development, biting rates, and the incubation of the disease within a mosquito (Beard, 2016).

With regard to environmental pollution, the first instance of an environmental disaster resulting in health consequences is the "Great London Smog in 1952". This severe air-pollution event, caused by a combination of industrial pollution and weather conditions, led to thousands of respiratory illnesses and deaths, highlighting the connection between pollution and respiratory conditions like asthma. Additionally, the discovery of the ozone hole in 1985 was a significant environmental milestone (Discover). British scientists, led by Dr. Joe Farman, Jonathan Shanklin, and Brian Gardiner, published findings revealing a dramatic thinning of the ozone layer over Antarctica. The relationship between the ozone hole and skin cancer is critical. Dr. F. Sherwood Rowland and Dr. Mario Molina, who won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1995 for their work on the ozone layer, also emphasized the health impacts, including the increased risk of skin cancer due to higher levels of ultraviolet (UV) radiation reaching the Earth's surface. Their groundbreaking research in the 1970s demonstrated how chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) break down ozone molecules in the stratosphere. (Ukri, 2021)

In June, a woman in her 70s from western Canada was admitted to a hospital in Nelson, British Columbia, suffering from dehydration, asthma, and diabetes. The record-breaking heat wave in the region, which saw temperatures exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit and was exacerbated by heavy wildfire smoke, led Dr. Kyle Merritt to diagnose her condition as being caused by climate change (Express, 2021). This diagnosis reflects the growing impact of extreme weather conditions on health, with nearly 600 deaths in British Columbia attributed to the heat. The heat wave was followed by severe flooding in November, which resulted in additional fatalities (institute).

Dr. Merritt, who leads the emergency room at Kootenay Lake Hospital, noted that many patients' existing health issues were aggravated by the extreme temperatures. Although

it is challenging to directly link severe illnesses to climate factors, Merritt chose to highlight climate change as the root cause, arguing that treating symptoms alone is insufficient without addressing underlying environmental factors. This case may represent one of the first instances where a doctor has explicitly linked a patient's condition to climate change.

## Developments in the international courts

Recently, the European Court of Human Rights in *Verin vs Switzerland* (Verein KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz and Others v.Switzerland, 2020) also took a human rights perspective on climate change. The ECHR in its judgment links obligations under international agreements concerning climate change with human rights. By holding the Swiss government culpable for neglecting its citizens' rights in relation to climate change, the ECHR sets a precedent that states must take proactive measures to protect their citizens from the adverse effects of climate change. Further, the ECHR places the rights and well-being of citizens at the center of its decisions on climate change. Therefore, making the state authorities obligated to protect its citizens from adverse effects of climate change (Verein KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz and Others v.Switzerland, 2020). This approach ensures that governments prioritize human rights when designing and implementing climate policies.

In the landmark judgment of *Tieota vs New Zealand* (Tieota vs New Zealand, 2020), the UN Human Rights Committee acknowledged the human rights violations caused by climate change. It further stated that the consequences of "climate change, environmental degradation and unsustainable development" will have adverse effects on an individual (and future generations) right to life (Tieota vs New Zealand, 2020). It further affirmed in its report that, both UNHCR and regional human rights tribunals have established that environmental degradation can compromise effective enjoyment of the right to life, and that severe environmental degradation can adversely affect an individual's well-being and lead to a violation of the right to life. (Tieota vs New Zealand, 2020) By taking cognizance of the inherent connection of the adverse effects of climate change on right to life, the UNHCR has set a precedent as consequences of climate change are viewed from the lens of human rights. This opens up avenues for climate change litigation as well. Additionally, the committee also concluded that if national and international efforts are not robust, the effect of climate change may lead to violation of rights under articles 6 or 7 of the Covenant, thereby triggering the non-refoulement obligations of sending States (Tieota vs New Zealand, 2020).

## Indian SC Case on Fundamental Rights Against Climate Change

The facts that the case was about the existential crisis of the Great Indian Bustard (GIB). The GIB is a critically endangered species whose numbers are dwindling in India, owing to multiple threats, one of which is its collision with high-tension power lines in their habitats in Rajasthan and Gujarat. To protect the GIB, the SC ordered in 2021 that all high-tension cables in these areas be laid underground. (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023) However, laying high-tension cables underground could make solar power projects unviable for companies, slowing India's efforts to cut global emissions in the

fight against climate change (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023). Hence, the government sought modification of the 2021 ruling to support power projects in solar-rich Gujarat and Rajasthan — resulting in the current judgment.

The court in the judgment whilst acknowledging the international commitments of India towards climate change, such as the Kyoto Protocol, which requires countries to set emission reduction targets and offers mechanisms like International Emissions Trading and Clean Development Mechanism; the UNFCCC which emphasizes global cooperation to address climate change, outlining responsibilities based on respective capabilities and promoting measures to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations and protect the climate system for present and future generations, culminating in the 2015 Paris Agreement where countries, which also includes India, pledged to limit global temperature rise. Further, the court took cognizance of the existing domestic legislations pertaining to climate change, such as the Wild Life (Protection)Act 1972, the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974, the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1981, the Environment (Protection) Act 1986, the National Green Tribunal Act 2010, amongst others. However, the Court also pointed out that there is "no single or umbrella legislation in India which relates to climate change" (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023). This can be interpreted as the Judiciary's nudge to the executive to draft legislation particularly concerning climate change because climate change litigation is on a steep rise globally particularly in the global south (as per the report by the London School of Economics' Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment) (Times, 2024). Countries such as France, Chile, and Australia are already fighting climate change through legislation (Union, 2024).

## Interpretation drawn by the Apex Court

It is remarkable to note that the court does not equate the lack of legislation as to no rights of Indian citizens against the adverse effects of climate change (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023). In this regard, the court refers and interprets Arts. 48A (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023) and Article 51A(g) (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023) of the Constitution of India. Although these are not justiciable provisions of the Constitution, they are indications that the Constitution recognises the importance of the natural world. The importance of the environment, as indicated by these provisions, becomes a right in other parts of the Constitution. Article 21 (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023) recognizes the right to life and personal liberty while Article 14 stipulates that all persons shall have equality before the law and the equal protection of laws. The SC not only acknowledges the Right against adverse effects of climate change as a distinct right under the scope of Art. 14 and Art. 21 making it fundamental. But also, further elaborates on the inherent relationship between the right against adverse effects of climate change and human rights (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023). The court proclaims the need to view the issue of climate change from a rights perspective and then proceeds to acknowledge the intersection between human rights and climate change (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023).

The nexus between the two concepts primarily flows from international agreements. The judgment substantiates its statement by citing the Paris Agreement's preamble, which

urges parties to consider their human rights obligations while addressing climate action, encompassing rights like health, indigenous rights, gender equality, and development. (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023) This perspective is further supported by the United Nations Environment Programme, which outlines obligations for states in both mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate impacts. (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023) Additionally, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights has affirmed the right to a healthy environment as fundamental, emphasizing state duties to prevent environmental harm that could threaten rights such as life, health, and housing. (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023) Further, the court takes into account Wewerinke-Singh's study emphasizes states' dual responsibility to address climate impacts while upholding human rights, reflecting the growing recognition of a healthy environment as a fundamental global right. (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023)

The court connects climate change with human rights by stressing that countries must reduce climate impacts while protecting basic human rights because of the inextricable link between human rights and the environment, tampering the latter certainly affects the former. The court primarily sources the link between climate change and human rights through international sources of law. The court herein cites the contribution of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to the 2015 Climate Conference in Paris, stating that the consequences of climate change have a direct and indirect impact on "internationally guaranteed human rights". (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023) The report herein referred to in the judgement emphasizes how the consequences of climate change along with altering our ecosystem have an "added feature of undercutting our important rights which include (but not limited to): Right to life- As highlighted by Renan Dalisay, Administrator of the National Food Authority of the Philippines, in his remarks about Typhoon Yolanda (internationally commonly known as an extreme weather event) which *"left a path of death and destruction, claiming no less than 7500 precious Filipino lives, mostly in economically vulnerable communities."* (OHCHR, 2024) This threat extends to both present and future generations- the report further emphasized the detrimental effects of climate change on other human rights such as right to food, health, water, sanitation, housing, self-determination, development. The court further in its judgement made the state obligatory to ensure the fulfilment of these rights emphasizing the fact that the state owes a duty of care to its citizens and is compelled to take effective measures to mitigate climate change and ensure that all individuals have the necessary capacity to adapt to the climate crisis. (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023)

Additionally, the judgment derives the intersection of human rights and climate change from the preamble of the Paris Agreement, which recognizes the interconnection between climate change and various human rights, including the right to health, indigenous rights, gender equality, and the right to development.[1] (Agreement, 2015) The judgement further acknowledged the 2015 United Nations Environment Programme report, which

[1] "Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity".

outlined five human rights obligations related to climate change, including both mitigation and adaptation efforts. (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023) Building on this, in 2018, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment emphasized the necessity for states to establish effective laws and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, aligning with the framework principles on human rights and the environment (Agreement, 2015). The 2017 advisory opinion by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights affirmed the right to a healthy environment as a fundamental human right, delineating state obligations regarding significant environmental harm, including cross-border impacts. This opinion deals with the violation of the right to a healthy environment which can reverberate across numerous rights domains, including the right to life, personal integrity, health, water, and housing, as well as procedural rights such as information, expression, association, and participation rights. (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023) Studies resonate with the growing global recognition of the right to a healthy environment as fundamental to environmental protection and sustainability (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023). Additionally, access to clean and sustainable energy, a critical component of the right to a healthy environment, was first recognized by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment in 1994, underscoring its longstanding significance. (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023)

The judgment highlights how the court has approached the issue of climate change through the lens of rights. In doing so, the court has recognized that climate change has a direct and indirect impact on human rights. The court not only acknowledges the direct impact that climate change has on human rights taking into consideration climate change threatens the right to a healthy environment but also indirect impacts of climate change we include rights such as the right to life, health, adequate housing, and cultural integrity, particularly for marginalized communities like indigenous peoples and migrants. (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023) The court further clarifies that whilst giving effect to this right, other constitutional rights are to be carefully considered. The court further exemplified this need by recognizing in its judgment the need to address climate change while safeguarding other fundamental rights, such as the right against displacement and cultural rights of affected communities (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023). The judgment emphasizes the necessity for courts to carefully weigh various constitutional rights before making decisions on climate-related issues. (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023) This includes considering cases where environmental regulations may impact indigenous communities' cultural rights or their right against displacement due to climate-related developments, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of constitutional rights before reaching legal conclusions on climate issues. (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023) However, it does not specify or employ any particular methods or doctrines to be considered in a scenario (similar to the present case) of competing rights. Taking into account previous cases such as the *Puttaswamy* Judgement (K.S Puttaswamy vs Union of India), applying the test of proportionality can be proposed. Or similar to that of the *Keshavananda Bharati* Case (Kesavananda Bharati vs State of Kerela, 1973) wherein the principle of Harmonious construction (Kesavananda Bharati vs State of Kerela, 1973) - which seeks to interpret constitutional provisions in a manner that harmonizes and accommodates various rights, rather than allowing one right to override another.- was promptly applied. Moreover, by recognizing India’s present international human rights obligations, highlighting the duty



to prevent human rights harm caused by climate change indicates the court's changing perspective on the issue of climate change and the inclination to view it from the perspective of 'Fundamental Rights' (thus, making the application of the doctrine aforementioned more suitable). and At present, the Indian Supreme Court, further acknowledged the right to clean and sustainable energy as necessary to create a healthy environment and gave substantial importance to Solar energy in India's National Action Plan on Climate Change (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023) and takes into account the geographical landscape of Gujarat and Rajasthan which makes it prime for solar power generation. (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023)

The court ultimately converges the tripartite dilemma of the conservation of the Great Indian Bustard, sustainable development, and the right against adverse effects of climate change. This litigation is a perfect example of green versus green legislation, involving a trade-off between climate and biodiversity or other environmental aims. "It is a nuanced interplay between safeguarding biodiversity and mitigating the impact of climate change." With two equally necessary competing claims, it can be questioned whether climate change or sustainable development be subject to the test of proportionality developed by our Supreme Court over the years. In the past decade, the role of proportionality in rights adjudication in India has witnessed a remarkable evolution. The doctrine of proportionality which essentially means that the actions or measures taken by a public authority must be proportionate to the objective pursued. The proportionality test provides a "heuristic tool" to determine the constitutionality of an action that limits a fundamental right. (Chandra, 2021) It requires that a rights-limiting measure should be pursuing a proper purpose, through means that are suitable and necessary for achieving that purpose and that there is a proper balance between the importance of achieving that purpose and the harm caused by limiting the right. (Chandra, 2021) It essentially has four major limbs to it (as recognized in the Modern Dental Case): legitimate State aim, suitability, necessity, and balancing (Bhatia, 2023). The most unique contribution of proportionality is in enabling courts to assess the overall moral and factual costs associated with right infringements in the 'balancing' stage. This stage requires that the infringement of rights by a State measure, should, on balance, be outweighed by the larger public good achieved thereof (Srivastava, 2024).

The test of the proportionality was laid down in the Modern Dental College Judgment in 2016 and the doctrine was later affirmed in the Puttaswamy judgment, where he proclaimed that proportionality represents a transition from a 'culture of authority' to a 'culture of justification.' Further, the application of proportionality in the case of *Anuradha Bhasin vs Union of India* (Anuradha Bhasin vs Union of India, 2020) and the Demonetisation case (Vivek Narayan Sharma vs Union of India, 2023) confirmed that proportionality doctrine was here to stay (Roy, 2023). In the given case wherein there are competing claims- one on conservation of GIB and other sustainable development- the test of proportionality developed by the Supreme Court can be applied overtime to similar cases, to evaluate whether the means used to achieve environmental goals, like reducing carbon emissions through solar energy, are proportionate to the conservation objectives they seek to uphold. However, the court opines the claims in this case are not competing for claims nor do they exist in "disjunctive silos", the Court herein underscores the necessity to strike a delicate balance between the two aims and therefore, in the

ruling states the order passed by this Court on 19 April 2021 needs to be suitably modified. The order stated that a large part of the territory was not to be used for overhead transmission lines, and further gave instructions to convert to underground power lines within a year and appointed a committee to determine whether laying high voltage underground power lines would be feasible (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023). The court appointed an Expert Committee to determine how to protect the Great Indian Bustard the best, but certainly not at the cost of delaying the international commitments that India has towards mitigating climate change (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023). In doing so, the court effectively left the environmental policy to be developed by the experts- an approach often undertaken by the court when they refrain from getting into a confusion.

This judgment answers some fundamental questions on how to approach climate change from a human-centric perspective, instead of a purely developmental or security concern. Domestically, this judgment will enable greater clarity on future litigation on climate change by linking the issue holistically to the basic rights of citizens. (Zaidi, 2024)

## Other cases of human right to environment vis-à-vis MK Ranjith Sinh case

The authors in this section of the paper attempt to provide a brief of the major differences between the landmarking human right to environment cases against the celebrated *MK Ranjithsinh* case to lay down the ground for the last section of the paper on the criticism to the present decision.

The *MK Ranjitsinh* case marks a significant moment in environmental litigation by integrating climate change issues into its framework. This is one of the first instances of environmental litigation being a pathway to address climate change and thus initiating the jurisprudence on climate change litigation. It is remarkable to note that the MK Ranjitsinh case is one of the cases where the claims of environmental change are not separated from climate change, moreover, the Hon'ble Supreme Court clubs the issue under one and underscores the urgency of crafting an "umbrella legislation" to address climate change issues (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023). Moreover, the recognition of the intersection of human rights with climate change makes this a landmark judgment. (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023) Whilst previously in the 2017 case of *Riddhima Pandey vs Union of India* (Riddhima Pandey vs Union of India, 2019), an attempt was made to link human rights with climate change the petition however did not result in its favour. The MK Ranjitsinh is however the first instance of the Supreme Court not only acknowledging the intersection between climate change and Human rights but also engaging in-depth by deriving the legitimacy of the intersection through international sources such as the Paris Agreement (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023). This is also the first instance wherein the Supreme Court overtly acknowledges the development of climate change litigation (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023) and is hopeful by recognizing the constitutional right against adverse effects of climate change, the discourse of climate change litigation can also be encouraged in India.

Additionally, by recognizing the constitutional right against adverse effects of climate change which (as per the judgment) flows from the fundamental rights- Article 14 and Article 21- resulting in significant expansion of the interpretation of these particular fundamental rights distinguishes it from previous environmental law cases. (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023) Previous environmental law cases such as *The State of Telangana vs Mohd. Abdul Qasim* (The State of Telangana vs Mohd. Abdul Qasim, 2024) or the *Bombay Environmental Action* case (Bombay environmental action vs Union of India, 2006), *MC Mehta vs UOI* (concerning the pollution of river Ganga) (M.C. Mehta vs Union Of India, 1987), *Centre for Environmental Law v. UOI* (Centre for Environmental Law v. Union of India, 2005) (dealing with the inadequacy of environmental laws) and such others were focused on the primary concerns of enforcement of existing laws, management practices, adequacy of current policies and codifying and also effective application of principles of environmental law like Polluter Pays[2], Precautionary Principle[3], Prevention Principles[4], Intergenerational Principle[5] and Sustainable Development Principle[6]. However, in the *MK Ranjitsinh* case, a new fundamental right with its roots in human rights has been established indicating a broader, rights-based approach (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023) to addressing climate change and environmental impacts, in contrast to other environmental law cases. However, this celebrated decision needs to be revisited, substantively and procedurally.

## Failure of Environmental laws

Despite these, the authors argue that Environmental laws have failed consistently since the Stockholm Conference in 1972 when for the first time, the anthropocentric dimension of protecting environmental laws were conceived. It is easily conceivable from the disastrous situation in which the world is today. Temperatures have shot (WMO), underground water level has reduced (Jasechko, 2024), desertification is rampant and human beings suffering as a result of all these. The Stockholm Conference was the first axe in severing the otherwise symbiotic relationship between the human and the non-human world. Before 1972, I would argue, there was much better interconnectedness than today because it was unknown to the most of the world that Mother Nature could be commodified or "utilised" or "used" to satiate human needs and desires. Soon

[2] The 'polluter pays' principle is the commonly accepted practice that those who produce pollution should bear the costs of managing it to prevent damage to human health or the environment. For instance, a factory that produces a potentially poisonous substance as a by-product of its activities is usually held responsible for its safe disposal. The polluter pays principle is part of a set of broader principles to guide sustainable development worldwide (formally known as the 1992 Rio Declaration).
[3] The 'Precautionary Pay' Principle (also known as the precautionary approach) was also established in the 1992 Rio Declaration and states- In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by States according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.
[4]This principle allows action to be taken to protect the environment at an early stage. It is now not only a question of repairing damages after they have occurred, but to prevent those damages occurring at all. This principle is not as far-reaching as the precautionary principle. It means in short terms: it is better to prevent than repair.
[5] The principle of intergenerational equity recognizes the rights of each generation to use and enjoy the natural resources of the planet, and the corresponding duty to conserve these resources for the future.
[6] Sustainable development is most commonly defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

thereafter with the discourse on the Right to Development and that being codified into the Declaration of 1986 (41/28, 1986). The objective of attaining "sustainable development" (Affairs) and growth was not really about the sustainability of the living world, but was about sustenance of the present and future human generations by using the minimum amount of natural "resources". Joseph Laitos and Lauren in their article *Why environmental law fail?* (Laitos, 2014) attempts to give a perfect explanation of the consistent failures of environmental laws by analyzing the flawed assumptions (Laitos, 2014) with which the environmental laws have been crafted since 1972.

## India's attempt at protecting environment

India passed its first historic judgment on the climate change which was made available on 08th April 2024 by recognising its adverse impacts to be a violation of human right.

In substantiation to the first issues, a glance at the following paragraph from the case shall make it clear.

> *"24. Despite a plethora of decisions on the right to a clean environment, some decisions which recognise climate change as a serious threat, and national policies which seek to combat climate change, it is yet to be articulated that the people have a right against the adverse effects of climate change. This is perhaps because this right and the right to a clean environment are two sides of the same coin. As the havoc caused by climate change increases year by year, it becomes necessary to articulate this as a distinct right. It is recognised by Articles 14 and 21"* (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023).

The Court has itself opined that it is not new, but only a distinct right in itself, so what is the repercussions of that? To draw an analogy, while Art. 15 of the Constitution of India lays down equality for all human beings in India, Art. 15(3) allows for better protection of certain sections of the society who are more vulnerable than the others. So specific special legislations have been introduced to protect their rights. But, having recognized a human right against adverse impacts of climate change it is as good as human right to clean and healthy environment because invariably the outcomes of both would be to ensure environment is protected so that humans survive in a healthy environment. So, there isn't a lot of value addition in that sense, except for academic and jurisprudential standpoint.

In substantiation of the second issues, the following paragraph is significant:

> *"53… It is imperative to recognize the intricate interface between the conservation of an endangered species, such as the Great Indian Bustard, and the imperative of protecting against climate change. Unlike the conventional notion of sustainable development, which often pits economic growth against environmental conservation, the dilemma here involves a nuanced interplay between safeguarding biodiversity and mitigating the impact of climate change. It is not a binary choice between conservation and*

> *development but rather a dynamic interplay between protecting a critically endangered species and addressing the pressing global challenge of climate change"* (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023).

So, the major difference between the erstwhile environmental case laws in India and the present Ranjithsinh decision is the conflicting interests, in this case, were between protecting the environment itself and was not about human right to development or sustainable development and protecting environment which the court clearly states in the paragraph so quoted. In other words, the choice was between the rights of the endangered species and the human right against adverse impacts of climate change. Now, the follow-up question here then takes us back to the first question of how is this case then different from the earlier judgments because both of them essentially dealt with the human right to be protected against environmental concerns. In other words, it is the same anthropocentric idea of environmental protection, the one that argues for protecting environment for the well-being of the human beings and not for the well-being the Mother Nature.

The following paragraphs as being quoted from the judgment will clearly give an idea of the fact that irrespective of whether the dichotomy is of human rights vis-à-vis environmental protection or development vis-à-vis human rights, it is the Human Rights to HAVE and ENJOY a HEALTHY and CLEAN ENVIRONMENT that takes precedence wherein we tend to read in all petitions for protecting environment to being petitions for protecting human right to environment.

> *"20. Article 48A of the Constitution provides that the State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country. Clause (g) of Article 51A stipulates that it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life, and to have compassion for living creatures……The importance of the environment, as indicated by these provisions, becomes a right in other parts of the Constitution. Article 21 recognises the right to life and personal liberty while Article 14 indicates that all persons shall have equality before law and the equal protection of laws. These articles are important sources of the right to a clean environment and the right against the adverse effects of climate change…"* (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023).

In this case too, finally the court concluded that for the purposes of economic growth the need to have the solar powerplants- a matter of contention in this matter partially, is crucial.

*54. India's commitment to promoting renewable energy sources, particularly in regions like Gujarat and Rajasthan, aligns with its broader sustainable development objectives. By transitioning towards solar power and other renewable energy sources, India aims to not only reduce carbon emissions but also* ***improve energy access****, foster* ***economic***

***growth**, and **create employment opportunities**."* (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023)

This time it was furthermore justified by citing the international commitments of India owing to the Kyoto Protocol and UNFCCC and such others, as explained above, on which a good 10 pages of the judgment has been occupied. It is quite ironic that the Apex Court is concerned that the international commitments that India has made be fulfilled. This also been reflected in the subsequent paragraphs and in the operative part of the judgment in paragraph 52(k):

> *"55. India's commitment to sustainable development is also underpinned by its international obligations and commitments. As a signatory to various international conventions and agreements, including the UNFCCC and the Convention on Biological Diversity, India has pledged to uphold principles of environmental stewardship, biodiversity conservation, and climate action on the global stage. Through partnerships, knowledge sharing, and collaborative action, India seeks to amplify the impact of its sustainable development efforts, contributing to collective efforts aimed at addressing global challenges….*
>
> *58. Beyond mere adherence to international agreements, India's pursuit of sustainable development reflects the complex interplay between environmental conservation, social equity, economic prosperity and climate change. Its national goals in this regard require a holistic understanding of sustainable development that balances immediate needs with long-term sustainability, ensuring that present actions do not compromise the well-being of future generations. It acknowledges that solutions to today's challenges must not only address pressing issues but also lay the groundwork for a resilient and equitable future"* (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023).

But, where did the discussion on the renewable energy and solar panels emerge? That leads to the final question- the pivotal question here that will depict the fact-in-issue and how far from that the *ratio decidendi* it seems to be.

The facts of the case, as explained earlier, were about modifying a 2021 order of the Supreme Court about the decreasing rate of the IUCN recognized "critically endangered species" of the Great Indian Bustard from the regions of Rajasthan and Gujarat where they mostly habit. One of the causes was identified to be the high voltage overhead power transmission from these solar power plants and the Supreme Court ordering for underground channels being made for the same which was in tandem with the petitioner's plea. The Supreme Court had constituted a committee to look into the matter and complete the work in a year. While there has been no reference to that report in the present judgment of the court, the court constituted another committee (citing the matter was of environmental policy voicing in the same manner, like it did in the recent *Supriyo vs. Union of India* (Supriyo v. Union of India, 2023) decision) to chalk out plans of how to protect the bird while maintaining overhead power transmission constantly harping upon the impossibility of such underground channels to be even made citing



several technical arguments focused on the high voltage that runs through those and accusing the bench that passed the 2021 order on their impractical wisdom.

What is alarming here is that the subject-matter of the case was the bird and their protection against these overhead high voltage power transmissions that was causing their death and solutions to protect them from becoming extinct. In other words it was about the protection of the Rights of the birds which is in tandem with Rights of Nature jurisprudence. But the court made it out to be a matter of the importance of solar power and its significance in cutting down on contributors to pollution that causes climate change because human beings have a human right against adverse impacts of climate change. Finally, it also praised the governmental initiatives so taken akin to the international commitments and for reduction of carbon footprint in India which was unnecessary in this regard.

So, was the fact-in-issue in tandem with the famous and news breaking *ratio decidendi* of the case? In fact, the court balanced its rationale stating that-

> *"60. If this Court were to direct that the power transmission lines be undergrounded in the entire area delineated above, many other parts of the environment would be adversely impacted. Other endangered species may suffer due to the emission of harmful gases from fossil fuels. Rising temperatures and the attendant evils of climate change may not be halted in a timely fashion, leading to disastrous consequences for humankind and civilisation as a whole. The existential threat may not be averted"* (M K Ranjitsinh & Ors vs Union of India, 2023).

So, here again we are at no progress made from the erstwhile plethora of judgments that have always played out the human right to pollution-free environment than that of the rights of another sector of living beings- the birds, Mother Nature at large. We forget Mother Nature and consider the environment only by forgetting that Nature is a culmination of all living creatures where humans are only one part.

## Conclusion

India has undoubtedly contributed to the environmental jurisprudence in the world for several decades now. It has mostly abided by the international commitments on the subject-matter, but collectively we have failed in protecting Mother Earth. Taking inspiration from a few scholars who propel us to think beyond Human Right to Environment to a holistic environmental protection, inclusive of all living creatures, the authors argue that the recent Ranjitsinh decision of the Supreme Court of India was yet another missed opportunity to recognise the wholesomeness of Mother Nature. The otherwise historic and landmark judgment of the Supreme Court of India on Human Right against climate change, that made headlines across the world has been critiqued in this article by the authors. In the opinion of the authors, the decision of the Apex Court has been an overreach and futile exercise considering that the main issue was lost midway and priority was given to economic development citing environmental concerns and reiteration of the same principles of environmental law in India took place. The authors

have shown how the impacts of climate change are bothering the human race, however, the approach of protecting humans against climate change as the possibility of causing further damage. The delicate balance between human right to development and a harmonious living is an exercise that needs to be seriously considered in tandem with international best practices as against international commitments for a better future.

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# MIGRATION AND ASYLUM IN INDIA: LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND CASE STUDIES ON THE ROHINGYAS

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## Abstract

Given India's geographic location, historical connections, and complex cultural fabric, migration and asylum have historically played a significant role in the country's sociopolitical environment. India has historically offered sanctuary to a number of groups escaping persecution, despite not having joined the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol. Ad hoc policies, court interventions, and international rules have become necessary due to the lack of a specific national refugee statute. This legal ambiguity frequently results in disparities in how different refugee groups are treated. One notable example of an ethnic group seeking asylum in India nowadays is the Rohingyas, who are from Myanmar. Since the 2010s, a large number of Rohingyas have fled to India due to the harsh persecution they face in their homeland. But their presence has spurred discussions about regional geopolitics, humanitarian responsibilities, and national security. The UNHCR has provided interim relief to certain Rohingya communities, while the Foreigners Act of 1946 threatens to detain and expel others. Citing national security concerns, the Indian government has defended its actions by claiming that unauthorized migrants could be dangerous. India's strategy toward the Rohingyas has been significantly shaped by judicial rulings. The Supreme Court has struck a compromise between international commitments, such as the principle of non-refoulement, which forbids sending refugees back to areas where their lives or freedom are in danger, and the state's security concerns. However, the Court's decisions have allowed room for interpretation, which reflects the larger conflicts in India's system of refugee governance.

Problems with regional cooperation are also brought to light by the Rohingya problem. India's position has frequently been compared to that of Bangladesh, which is home to a far larger and more vulnerable Rohingya minority. This discrepancy emphasizes the necessity of cooperative systems in South Asia to successfully handle refugee crises. As a result, the Rohingyas' situation highlights how urgently India needs a thorough legal framework for refugees. Clear rules and a regional approach to migration regulation are necessary to strike a balance between humanitarian commitments and national security. India's longstanding asylum customs must change to meet contemporary issues with fair and uniform policies.

**Keywords**

Rohingyas, India, Refugee Law, National Security, Non-refoulement.

**Resumo**

Dada a localização geográfica, as ligações históricas e o complexo tecido cultural da Índia, a migração e o asilo têm desempenhado, ao longo da história, um papel significativo no ambiente sociopolítico do país. A Índia tem historicamente oferecido refúgio a vários grupos que fogem da perseguição, apesar de não ter aderido à Convenção sobre os Refugiados de 1951 nem ao seu Protocolo de 1967. Políticas ad hoc, intervenções judiciais e normas internacionais tornaram-se necessárias devido à ausência de uma legislação nacional específica em matéria de refugiados. Esta ambiguidade jurídica resulta frequentemente em disparidades na forma como os diferentes grupos de refugiados são tratados. Um exemplo notável de um grupo étnico que procura asilo na Índia atualmente são os rohingyas, originários de Mianmar. Desde a década de 2010, um grande número de rohingyas fugiu para a Índia devido à perseguição severa que enfrentam na sua terra natal. Mas a sua presença suscitou discussões sobre geopolítica regional, responsabilidades humanitárias e segurança nacional. O ACNUR prestou ajuda provisória a certas comunidades rohingya, enquanto a Lei dos Estrangeiros de 1946 ameaça deter e expulsar outras. Citando preocupações de segurança nacional, o governo indiano defendeu as suas ações alegando que os migrantes não autorizados poderiam ser perigosos. A estratégia da Índia em relação aos rohingyas foi significativamente moldada por decisões judiciais. O Supremo Tribunal chegou a um compromisso entre compromissos internacionais, como o princípio da não repulsão, que proíbe o envio de refugiados de volta a áreas onde as suas vidas ou liberdade estão em perigo, e as preocupações de segurança do Estado. No entanto, as decisões do Tribunal deixaram margem para interpretação, o que reflete os conflitos mais amplos no sistema indiano de gestão de refugiados. Os problemas com a cooperação regional também são trazidos à luz pela questão dos rohingya. A posição da Índia tem sido frequentemente comparada à do Bangladesh, que acolhe uma minoria rohingya muito maior e mais vulnerável. Esta discrepância salienta a necessidade de sistemas de cooperação no Sul da Ásia para gerir com sucesso as crises de refugiados. Consequentemente, a situação dos rohingya destaca a urgência com que a Índia necessita de um quadro jurídico abrangente para os refugiados. São necessárias regras claras e uma abordagem regional à regulamentação da migração para alcançar um equilíbrio entre os compromissos humanitários e a segurança nacional. Os costumes de asilo de longa data da Índia devem mudar para responder às questões contemporâneas com políticas justas e uniformes.

**Palavras-chave**

Rohingya, Índia, Direito dos Refugiados, Segurança Nacional, Não Repulsão.

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# MIGRATION AND ASYLUM IN INDIA: LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND CASE STUDIES ON THE ROHINGYAS

**ISHITA CHATTERJEE**

**P. SREE SUDHA**

## Introduction

Migration and asylum seeking has become characteristic of the twenty-first century, transforming national policies, International relations, and also human rights discourse world over. India-being at the intersection of South and Southeast Asia and traditionally marked by the cultural diversity and mobile populations--plays a peculiar but contradictory role in it. The country has a long history of accepting populations displaced domestically even though it does not have a specific domestic asylum law or even declare itself as a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol. Past examples include Tibetans in 1950s or Sri Lankan Tamils in 1980s. This regulatory uncertainty makes the legal status of asylum seekers and refugees very difficult because now their safety is dependent on the executive will, legal intervention by the courts, and the emerging principles in a constitution that is highly dynamic. The flows of Rohingya, which have been occurring in India over the last ten years as the result of a planned persecution and genocide in Myanmar Rakhine State, have placed such tensions in the limelight[1]. Their presence makes the Indian legal systems of migration and humanitarian defense challenges to their own strength, scope, and flexibility in an age of securitization, geopolitical rivalry, and the growing worry about demographic change.

The Rohingya people, (defined by UN as one of the most persecuted minority in the world) have turned to seek shelter in a number of South Asian and Southeast Asian states. A comparatively low percentage of this population are found in India, but the political and legal controversies concerning their status have been brutally high[2]. Even though international organisations like UNHCR have issued refugee cards and tried to offer simple protection measures, the Indian government has often described the Rohingyas as unauthorized migrants, and this has raised concern about their security

[1] National Human Rights Commission, India, Report on Refugee and Human Rights Issues (2022), available at https://nhrc.nic.in
[2] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, India Fact Sheet (July 2023), https://www.unhcr.org/in.



and demographic issues and extremism penetration. These competing stories highlight a much bigger dilemma, and that then again is how, by what means will India balance its constitutional responsibilities towards human dignity, equality and non-refoulements, and its sovereign capacity to regulate boundaries, provide internal security and control undocumented migration?[3] The judicial reactions especially of the Supreme Court and other High Courts show that efforts have been made to strike a balance between such imperatives, but the results still show inconsistencies, gaps and strains in the existing legal regime.

It is in this context that in the given background, the main purpose of this study is to critically examine the legal frameworks of the Indian migration and asylum policies in reference to the Rohingya case. The paper attempts to transcend the normative debates in an attempt to offer a grounded perspective of how administrative rulings, legislative acts, constitutional values, and interpretations by the judiciary all work together in creating the lived experiences of asylum seekers[4]. A lack of a specific refugee law in India provokes the necessity to turn to such tools as the Foreigners Act, 1946; the Citizenship Act, 1955; the Passports Act, 1967; and the dynamic executive policy. These systems, consisting mostly of the migration management functions, tend to conflict with the humanitarian duties and international human rights standards. Simultaneously, the Indian courts have made judgments periodically to affirm the applicability of Article 21 of the Constitution in respect of the entire population of the country, including non-citizens, an extension of the havens of protection offered to asylum seekers. The review of the interactions between these legal elements in practice whether together or competing is also vital to the current study[5].

To direct this enquiry, the article answers some of the research questions that have been posed by the Rohingya experience as one of the ways to tackle the migration governance in India. The first one, in what ways does the current legal framework of India govern the entry, permanence and departure of asylum seekers without any specific refugee law?

Second, what constitutional safeguards, especially in Article 14, Article 21, and Article 51(c), have been enrolled in court rulings pertaining to the Rohingyas and how have the courts applied such concepts of non-refoul, equality, and procedural fairness to the proceedings[6]? Third, in what ways did executive policies such as identity verification to orders of detention and deportation affect the rights and vulnerabilities of Rohingya refugees in India, and their social-economic status? Fourth, what are the lessons that can be learned in relation to case studies among other Indian states where courts, administrative agencies, and local police have resorted to the application of the law in different ways and in some occasions contradictory? Lastly, is the response of India regarding Rohingya asylum seekers compliant against global practice and international protection indicators and norms of assistance?[7]

[3] B.S. Chimni, Status of Refugees in India: Legal Frameworks and Policy, 23 Refugee Watch 19, 23–25 (2017).
[4] M.P. Singh, Rights of Non-Citizens Under Indian Constitution, 58 J. Indian L. Inst. 34, 45 (2016).
[5] S.K. Das, Rohingyas in India: The Stateless Crisis, in Refugees and Asylum Seekers in South Asia 105, 110 (Oxford Univ. Press 2020)
[6] National Human Rights Commission, India, Report on Refugee and Human Rights Issues (2022), available at https://nhrc.nic.in.
[7] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, India Fact Sheet (July 2023), https://www.unhcr.org/in.



The study has four objectives in accordance with these research questions. The first task is to provide a statutory and constitutionalist resources map of the current instantiations of asylum seekers in India to demonstrate areas of harmony, underdevelopment, and contradiction[8]. The article has brought together legislative provisions and administrative rules and synthesized them with the aim of giving a full overview of the legal environment in which asylum claims are either approved or denied[9]. The second goal is to assess the judiciary in forming the norms of protection of refugees by means of landmark decisions and interim orders, especially in the situation concerning the Rohingyas[10]. This involves evaluation of the manner in which courts weigh humanitarianism against the issue of security and the sovereignty of India. The third goal is to examine particular case-studies of the Rohingya communities throughout India i.e. in Jammu, Hyderabad and Delhi so as to determine the practical implications of executive decisions on the ground[11]. This micro analysis allows one to address the local variations, administrative issues, and discrimination and protection patterns[12]. The fourth aim is to position the Indian legal and policy strategies in a relative international setting, to create the gap, opportunity, and avenue of reform within the international best framework and human rights anticipations[13].

In general, the article finds that India managed the Rohingya problem to show a complicated system of constitutional morality, state security concerns, geopolitics strategy, and administrative expediency[14]. Although the judicial players have been involved in the defence of the fundamental rights, the lack of an effective asylum system has led to inconsistency and legal confusion[15]. The study will aim to make an addition to the existing discussions on whether India needs a specific refugee law, what international norms can be integrated into domestic law and what kinds of protection are possible and even needed within the dynamic global migration process by foregrounding case studies and doctrinal analysis[16].

## Legal Frameworks Governing Migration and Asylum in India

Migration and asylum are complex issues governed by a mixture of domestic laws, policies, and international agreements. In India, despite being a prominent destination and transit country for migrants and asylum seekers due to its geographical, historical, and cultural factors, the legal framework is often criticized for its lack of coherence and dedicated asylum legislation[17,18.] This article examines the various laws and regulations

[8] B.S. Chimni, Status of Refugees in India: Legal Frameworks and Policy, 23 Refugee Watch 19, 23–25 (2017)
[9] M.P. Singh, Rights of Non-Citizens Under Indian Constitution, 58 J. Indian L. Inst. 34, 45 (2016)
[10] S.K. Das, Rohingyas in India: The Stateless Crisis, in Refugees and Asylum Seekers in South Asia 105, 110 (Oxford Univ. Press 2020)
[11] Gaurav Jain v. Union of India, (1997) 3 SCC 308 (India)
[12] Al Jazeera, India and the Rohingya: A Legal Dilemma (Jan. 15, 2022), https://www.aljazeera.com
[13] Priya Pillai, India's Refugee Policy: Protection or Exclusion?, 29 Hum. Rts. Watch 14, 16 (2021)
[14] Supreme Court of India, Order on Deportation of Rohingyas, W.P. (Crl.) No. 764 of 2021 (India)
[15] South Asia Refugee Rights Initiative, Rohingya Refugees in India: Legal Challenges, Policy Brief No. 12, at 5 (2023)
[16] Ministry of Home Affairs, Advisory on Illegal Immigration, F. No. 25022/49/2021-F.III, at 3 (India)
[17] Amnesty International, The Rohingya: Persecuted in Myanmar, Forgotten in India, 18 Refugee Rep. 21, 25 (2019)
[18] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 13, Dec. 19, 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 171

governing migration and asylum in India, providing a detailed analysis of the challenges and opportunities they present.

## Migration Laws in India

India's approach to migration is primarily governed by laws focusing on the regulation of entry, stay, and exit of foreign nationals. The Foreigners Act, 1946, serves as the cornerstone for the governance of foreign nationals in India[19]. It grants the government broad powers to regulate the entry, presence, and exit of foreigners[20]. Under this law, individuals are required to have valid travel documents, such as passports and visas, to enter India. The Act empowers authorities to detain and deport individuals found in violation of its provisions. The Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920, complements the Foreigners Act by mandating that every foreign national entering India must possess a valid passport and a visa. It gives the government authority to impose restrictions on entry and impose penalties for unauthorized entry.

The Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act, 2000, places the responsibility on carriers such as airlines and shipping companies to ensure that passengers traveling to India possess valid documents. This law aims to curb illegal immigration by penalizing carriers that transport individuals without proper documentation[21].

## Citizenship and Naturalization

India's citizenship rules and migration governance are closely related. The legal foundation for obtaining and losing Indian citizenship is provided by the Citizenship Act of 1955 and the Indian Constitution. Citizenship can be obtained through naturalization, registration, descent, or birth. Discussions and disputes have been generated by changes to the Citizenship Act, such as the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA). For non-Muslim migrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan who arrived in India prior to December 31, 2014, the CAA aims to expedite their citizenship[22]. Critics contend that the Act damages India's secular fabric and discriminates against people based on their religion.

## Absence of a Dedicated Asylum Law

Asylum, as opposed to migration, is a particular area of international law that protects those who are escaping persecution. The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, which create the global framework for refugee protection, are not ratified by India. As a result, India lacks a specific national asylum law.

The Foreigners Act, 1946, which does not differentiate between refugees and other foreign nationals, governs refugees in India. Since refugees are governed by the same

[19] UNHCR, Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2022, at 34, https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends
[20] India Ministry of External Affairs, Statement on Rohingya Issue (Apr. 5, 2022), https://mea.gov.in
[21] R. Satheesh, Examining India's Non-Signatory Status to the Refugee Convention, 45 Econ. & Pol. Wkly. 41, 44 (2021)
[22] Singh, India and Refugee Protection: A Critical Analysis, 7 Asian J. Int'l L. 245, 260 (2023)



laws as other undocumented migrants, they frequently lack a unique legal status, making them susceptible to imprisonment and deportation[23]. The government makes ad hoc decisions regarding asylum, frequently impacted by diplomatic and geopolitical factors.

India has long granted sanctuary to sizable populations, such as Rohingyas, Sri Lankan Tamils, and Tibetan refugees, despite the lack of particular laws. To register asylum seekers and ascertain their refugee status, the government typically works with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which has operations in India. The UNHCR's mandate is constrained, nevertheless, and it does not apply consistently to all refugee groups.

## Regional and Bilateral Agreements

India's legal framework for migration also involves regional and bilateral agreements. For instance, the Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1950, allows citizens of India and Nepal to move freely across the border without visas or passports[24]. Similarly, agreements with Bangladesh aim to address cross-border migration issues, such as the deportation of illegal immigrants and cooperation in tackling human trafficking[25].

## International Obligations

India is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol, which are the cornerstone international instruments for refugee protection. These conventions establish key principles, including the definition of a refugee and the obligation of non-refoulement—prohibiting the return of individuals to places where they face persecution[26]. Although India is not legally bound by these instruments, it is committed to the principle of non-refoulement under customary international law, which it is obligated to uphold as a member of the international community.

Furthermore, a number of important human rights accords that indirectly protect refugees and asylum seekers have been ratified by India[27]. The right to life, equality before the law, and protection from torture and cruel treatment are among the fundamental rights guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which India ratified in 1979. All people under Indian authority, including non-citizens, are covered by these regulations. In a similar vein, child refugees are granted protections under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which India adopted in 1992. These provisions include access to healthcare, education, and protection from exploitation[28,29].

[23] "Human Rights Watch: 'All of My Body Was Pain'", HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH (Nov. 16, 2017), https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/11/16/all-my-body-was-pain
[24] U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/39/64 (Sept. 12, 2018)
[25] Amnesty International: 'Caged Without a Roof', AMNESTY INT'L (2017), https://www.amnesty.org
[26] Médecins Sans Frontières, 'No One Was Left': Death Toll in Myanmar, MSF (Dec. 2017), https://www.msf.org
[27] David Mathieson, A Genocide in All But Name, FOREIGN POLICY (Feb. 13, 2018), https://foreignpolicy.com
[28] Bangladesh and the Rohingya Crisis, INT'L CRISIS GROUP, Asia Report No. 267 (2018)
[29] Fortify Rights, 'They Gave Them Long Swords': Preparations for Genocide in Myanmar, FORTIFY RTS. (July 2018)

## Domestic Legal Framework

India lacks a specific legislation pertaining to refugees, and instead, general laws like the Foreigners Act of 1946 and the Passport (Entry into India) Act of 1920 govern how refugees and asylum seekers are treated. Without making a distinction between refugees and other migrants, these rules indiscriminately classify all foreign nationals lacking proper documents as illegal migrants[30]. As a result, refugees who disregard immigration laws risk detention, expulsion, or other legal repercussions.

In reality, how refugees are treated in India differs according on where they are from. For example, under the Tibetan Rehabilitation Policy, Tibetan refugees are given special residency privileges, but Sri Lankan Tamil refugees are housed in camps and have few rights[31,32]. Foreign refugees, like the Rohingyas of Myanmar, frequently live in unstable circumstances without official legal status.

## Administrative Practices and Judicial Interventions

Administrative procedures and judicial actions are essential when there is no formal refugee policy[33,34]. In order to register asylum seekers and offer aid, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has operations in India. In order to defend the rights of refugees[35,36] , Indian courts have frequently cited constitutional precepts. For instance, courts have emphasized the government's duty to uphold humanitarian principles by upholding the right to non-refoulement in a number of situations.

## Case Study: Rohingyas in Delhi – Legal and Social Challenges

The plight of Rohingya refugees in India, particularly those in Delhi, highlights the complex intersection of legal and social challenges. Displaced from Myanmar due to ongoing violence and persecution, the Rohingya Muslims have sought refuge in various countries, including India. Delhi, as one of the largest urban canters, has been home to a significant number of Rohingya refugees, who continue to face hardships in terms of legal recognition, housing, education, and employment[37]. The situation of Rohingyas in Delhi not only underscores their vulnerability but also raises broader questions about India's refugee policy, the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the challenges in ensuring the human rights of displaced populations in urban settings.´

[30] Priya Pillai, The International Criminal Court and Rohingya Accountability, OPINIO JURIS (Mar. 8, 2019), http://opiniojuris.org
[31] Legal Accountability for Atrocities in Myanmar, GEO. J. INT'L L., 50 Geo. J. Int'l L. 1 (2018)
[32] 'Ethnic Cleansing' in Myanmar: U.S. Secretary of State's Remarks, DEP'T OF STATE (Nov. 22, 2017)
[33] JAMES D. SIDDHARTH, ROHINGYA REFUGEES IN SOUTH ASIA 25–27 (2019)
[34] Regional Responses to the Rohingya Crisis, ASEAN TODAY (May 10, 2019), https://www.aseantoday.com
[35] Poppy McPherson, What Happened in Myanmar?, THE GUARDIAN (Sept. 19, 2018), https://www.theguardian.com
[36] Rohingya Crisis: A Timeline, BBC NEWS (Oct. 23, 2018), https://www.bbc.com
[37] U.N. Office on Genocide Prevention, Prevention of Genocide in Myanmar, U.N. (2019), https://www.un.org

## Legal hindrances

One of the most significant barriers facing the Rohingyas in Delhi is their legal status. Unlike many other refugee populations, the Rohingya have not been granted formal refugee status under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) mandate[38]. India, as a non-signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, does not have a national refugee law to address the rights of displaced persons. As a result, the Rohingya live in India without legal recognition, rendering them vulnerable to arrest, deportation, and lack of access to essential services.

Rohingyas in Delhi primarily rely on temporary registration certificates issued by the UNHCR, but these do not provide any legal protection within India. The absence of formal recognition by the Indian government means that they are not entitled to the same legal protections as other refugees or citizens[39]. They are also unable to seek regular work or access public welfare programs, as they do not possess the required documentation. The fear of being detained and deported is a constant concern, especially as the Indian government has been vocal about its intention to expel the Rohingyas from the country, citing national security concerns and the potential threat of terrorism[40].

This lack of legal protection exacerbates their precarious situation, as they are often forced into informal settlements or slums where they are further marginalized. Without the ability to access legal remedies, their cases of exploitation or discrimination often go unreported and unresolved[41,42]. Moreover, the lack of legal status prevents them from obtaining essential identification documents, which in turn limits their ability to access basic services such as healthcare, education, and social security benefits[43].

## Social Challenges

Rohingya refugees in Delhi face a range of social challenges that stem from their legal status, as well as the stigma and discrimination they encounter within Indian society. One of the most pressing issues is inadequate housing. The majority of Rohingya refugees in Delhi live in informal settlements, often in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. These settlements, located in areas like Kalindi Kunj and Madanpur Khadar, are characterized by poor infrastructure, lack of proper sanitation, and limited access to clean water[44]. The refugees often have to share cramped living spaces, which makes it difficult for them to maintain basic hygiene or practice social distancing during health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.

The lack of affordable housing options for Rohingya refugees is compounded by the increasing demand for space in urban areas like Delhi. As a result, they are forced to live in precarious conditions, with limited access to essential services. These settlements are often located in marginal areas on the outskirts of the city, far from canters of

[38] Myanmar Ethnic Cleansing Condemned, INT'L COURT OF JUSTICE, ICJ Press Release (Jan. 23, 2020)
[39] Al Jazeera Investigates, Rohingya Crisis: Hidden Genocide, AL JAZEERA (2018), https://www.aljazeera.com
[40] Rohingya Refugee Policies in Bangladesh, ASIA-PACIFIC J. ON HUM. RTS. & L., Vol. 19 (2020)
[41] LINTNER, BURMA IN CRISIS: ETHNIC CONFLICTS AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY 123–126 (2017)
[42] Rohingya: Stateless at Sea, INT'L ORG. FOR MIGRATION (2019), https://www.iom.int
[43] ASEAN Response to Rohingya Refugee Crisis, BROOKINGS INST. (Dec. 2018)
[44] International Responsibility for Crimes Against Humanity in Myanmar, HARV. INT'L L.J., Vol. 59 (2019)



employment, education, and healthcare, further isolating the community from the resources they need to build a better life[45].

Limited access to education is another significant challenge for the Rohingya in Delhi. Children in these refugee settlements often face barriers to enrolling in government schools due to their lack of legal status and identification documents. Although there are a few schools run by NGOs that provide education to Rohingya children, the quality of education is often subpar, and resources are limited. The absence of formal schooling not only deprives children of basic education but also limits their future opportunities for social mobility and integration into Indian society. Many Rohingya children are forced to contribute to family income by working in informal labour markets, further restricting their educational prospects.

Employment is another major social challenge faced by the Rohingyas in Delhi. Due to their lack of legal status, they are excluded from the formal labour market and are often forced to work in exploitative conditions. Many Rohingyas find employment in low-paying jobs in the informal economy, such as manual labour, domestic work, or working in factories or construction sites[46]. These jobs often come with poor wages, long working hours, and a lack of job security, leaving the workers vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

The inability to access legal work and earn a decent wage creates a cycle of poverty that is difficult to escape. Additionally, the lack of employment opportunities and the constant threat of deportation contribute to the mental and emotional distress faced by many members of the community[47]. The sense of uncertainty about their future in India further exacerbates their sense of powerlessness and isolation.

## Role of NGOs and Legal Aid

Despite these challenges, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups have played a crucial role in supporting the Rohingya refugees in Delhi. NGOs have been instrumental in providing legal aid, education, healthcare, and emergency relief to the community[48,49]. Legal aid organizations, such as the Rohingya Human Rights Initiative and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), have provided legal representation for refugees facing deportation and have worked to raise awareness about their rights under international law. NGOs have also been at the forefront of advocacy efforts, pushing for better treatment of Rohingya refugees and advocating for their right to stay in India.

In addition to legal assistance, NGOs have worked to address the social needs of the Rohingya population by providing access to basic services like food, shelter, and healthcare[50]. Many NGOs have set up community canters that offer educational

[45] KYAW MINN HTAY, INSIDE RAKHINE: STORIES OF SURVIVAL AND DISPLACEMENT (2020)
[46] U.N. Humanitarian Reports on Rohingya Refugees, UNHCR (2018–2020), https://www.unhcr.org
[47] Genocide Watch and Early Warnings in Myanmar, GENOCIDE WATCH (Aug. 2017), https://genocidewatch.net
[48] UNHCR, The Rohingya Emergency, available at https://www.unhcr.org/rohingya-emergency.html (last visited Dec. 29, 2024)
[49] Human Rights Watch, "India: Rohingya Refugees Face Deportation," Jan. 19, 2022, available at https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/01/19/india-rohingya-refugees-face-deportation
[50] Constitution of India art. 14, 21, interpreting fundamental rights applicable to non-citizens

programs, vocational training, and healthcare services to the refugees. These services, though invaluable, are often underfunded and overstretched, limiting their ability to meet the full range of needs within the community.

While NGOs have been able to alleviate some of the challenges faced by the Rohingyas, their efforts are hampered by the lack of state support and the absence of a comprehensive national refugee policy[51]. The reliance on NGOs has created a situation where the Rohingyas' access to essential services is largely dependent on the goodwill of civil society organizations, rather than on the state's obligation to provide protection and support to displaced populations. The challenges faced by the Rohingyas in Delhi reflect a broader crisis of refugee protection in India[52]. Without legal recognition, they are trapped in a cycle of vulnerability, facing barriers to housing, education, and employment[53]. While NGOs have played a vital role in mitigating some of these challenges, the systemic issues that underpin the Rohingyas' plight remain largely unresolved[54]. The absence of a national refugee law and the lack of state support for displaced populations pose significant obstacles to improving the lives of Rohingya refugees in India[55]. The legal and social challenges faced by the Rohingyas in Delhi highlight the urgent need for a comprehensive and humane approach to refugee protection, one that ensures their rights and dignity are respected.

## Integration in Hyderabad

Hyderabad's approach to the Rohingya refugee crisis has been relatively pragmatic compared to other regions in India. The city, known for its diversity and cosmopolitan culture, has witnessed the integration of several refugee communities, including the Rohingyas. Many members of the Rohingya community in Hyderabad have found informal employment in sectors like construction, domestic work, and low-wage jobs in small businesses[56]. These job opportunities have provided them with some financial stability, though they remain trapped in the informal economy, where wages are low and job security is non-existent.

While some Rohingyas in Hyderabad have managed to secure a living, their integration has been far from smooth. One of the main challenges they face is the lack of legal documentation, which severely limits their ability to access public services such as healthcare and education[57]. Without proper documentation, they are unable to avail themselves of government welfare schemes or access formal employment opportunities. Many have had to rely on humanitarian organizations, local mosques, and other charitable groups for basic needs like food, shelter, and medical care.

Despite these challenges, some members of the community have managed to build a sense of belonging in Hyderabad. Social networks within the city, including relationships with other refugees and local Muslim communities, have played a crucial role in

[51] S.P. Sathe, *Judicial Activism in India: Transgressing Borders and Enforcing Limits* 47-49 (2003)
[52] M. Zafar, "The Stateless Rohingyas in India: A Legal Quagmire," 12 Indian J. Int'l Law 92, 98 (2019)
[53] National Human Rights Commission of India, *NHRC Guidelines on Refugees and Migrants* (2021)
[54] Refugee Convention art. 33, July 28, 1951, 189 U.N.T.S. 137
[55] B. Ghosh, "Rohingya Refugees and the Indian State: A Delicate Balance," 34 Econ. & Pol. Wkly. 57, 59 (2021)
[56] Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Advisory on Illegal Migrants, No. 24013/29/Misc./2020-CSR (Nov. 7, 2020)
[57] M. Kumar, "Rohingyas in Jammu: Politics of Refuge and Exclusion," 18 J. S. Asian St. 45, 49 (2022)

facilitating integration[58]. These networks provide emotional support, shared resources, and solidarity. Some Rohingyas have also made efforts to learn the local language, Telugu, which helps them navigate life in the city and build relationships with the broader community.

However, this integration is not without its difficulties. The Rohingya community still faces significant social stigma, and many locals view them as outsiders, contributing to their marginalization[59]. Additionally, the influx of refugees into Hyderabad has led to competition for scarce resources, particularly in low-income neighbourhoods, which has sometimes led to tensions between the Rohingyas and other migrant groups.

## Livelihoods of the Rohingyas in Hyderabad

The livelihoods of the Rohingya community in Hyderabad are shaped by their precarious legal status and limited access to formal employment[60]. Many of the Rohingyas work in low-wage, informal sectors, where they are vulnerable to exploitation. Informal work often means that they are not entitled to labour rights, health insurance, or job security. Many Rohingyas work as manual labourers in construction sites, as cleaners, or in other low-skilled jobs, where wages are minimal and working conditions are poor.

Rohingya women, in particular, face unique challenges in terms of employment. Many women are engaged in domestic work, which is often underpaid and subject to exploitation. They are typically employed informally, without any legal protection or access to benefits such as maternity leave or health insurance. Women's participation in the workforce is also hindered by cultural and social barriers, as traditional gender roles often limit their mobility and ability to seek employment outside the home.

Another aspect of the livelihoods of Rohingyas in Hyderabad is their dependence on aid and charitable organizations. Many Rohingya families rely on local mosques and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for food, healthcare, and education. While some local mosques provide shelter, food, and medical aid, the scale of assistance is often inadequate to meet the growing needs of the community. NGOs working in Hyderabad also provide services such as education and healthcare, but their resources are limited, and they are often stretched thin with growing numbers of refugees.

## Vulnerabilities and Challenges

The vulnerabilities of the Rohingya community in Hyderabad are multifaceted. First and foremost, the lack of legal recognition places them in a precarious position, with little access to legal recourse in case of exploitation or discrimination. Their inability to obtain formal documentation means they are unable to access critical services, including healthcare and education[61]. The lack of a formal education system for Rohingya children is one of the most pressing issues, as many children are left out of the educational system

[58] Press Information Bureau, "Government's Stance on Rohingya Refugees," Sept. 15, 2022, available at https://pib.gov.in
[59] UNICEF India, *Rohingya Refugee Children and Education* (2023), at 12
[60] Delhi High Court, W.P. (C) No. 279/2017, Aug. 15, 2021 (India)
[61] Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, "Registration of Rohingya Refugees," Circular No. HMC/2022/459 (2022)



due to their legal status. As a result, these children grow up without the skills and knowledge required to improve their socio-economic situation, perpetuating the cycle of poverty within the community.

Healthcare is another critical area where the Rohingya community faces significant challenges. Many Rohingyas suffer from various health issues, including chronic diseases, malnutrition, and mental health disorders, due to their living conditions and limited access to medical services. The lack of legal recognition prevents them from accessing government-run healthcare facilities, and their reliance on charitable organizations often means that healthcare is inadequate and inconsistent.

## Case Study: Rohingyas in Jammu – Security Concerns and Displacement

The Rohingya crisis, one of the most tragic human rights violations of the 21st century, has compelled millions of Rohingya Muslims to flee Myanmar due to ethnic violence, religious persecution, and military crackdown. The displaced population has sought refuge in various countries, including India, where the situation remains contentious, particularly in regions like Jammu. The Rohingyas, who have found a semblance of safety in Jammu, face numerous security concerns, challenges related to their legal status, and the constant threat of deportation. This case study delves into the security concerns and displacement faced by the Rohingyas in Jammu.

Over the years, the Rohingya refugees in Jammu have become more of a concern in terms of security in both political, administrative and public arenas. To a great extent, this perception can be attributed to the peculiarities of geopolitical sensitivities of the region. Jammu is an area situated near the Line of Control and with cross-border militancy in the areas around it is regarded as a high security area. Any changes in demographic that can be imagined or effective is therefore subject to the prism of national security[62]. This population of stateless and undocumented Rohingyas has increased concerns regarding the possibility of infiltration, radicalisation, or exploitation by other groups that will exploit and employ them in carrying out their operations in the area.

The other factor is the lack of a formal system of support of refugees in India, and the situation of Rohingyas is conditional upon administrative improvisation. In Jammu, most Rohingyas live in unstructured settlements without identity papers or organized integration processes that heighten fears of tracking and verification. Law enforcement agencies have also raised worry that these illegal populations can end up being channels of carrying out illegal or illegal activities in the country like smuggling, human trafficking or even the way of getting recruited into extremist groups[63]. Even though little meaningful evidence has come out to substantiate the mass participation in such activities, the fact that it is a possibility is causing a sense of danger in an already tense and complicated security arena.

These issues have been increased by political narratives. Some quarters have described Rohingya presence in the country as an intention to change demographic dynamics or as

[62] Khalid Wasim, *"Demographic Anxiety and the Politics of Refugee Settlements in Jammu,"* Economic & Political Weekly, Vol. 57, No. 12, at 42 (2022)
[63] Suhasini Haidar, "India Deports Rohingya to Myanmar Despite UN Objections," *The Hindu* (Oct. 4, 2018)

a possible source of inter-communal conflict. Such arguments though disputed, have been making grounds in the popular imagination, moving to policy actions like detention, verification drives, and suggestions toward deportation[64]. This amalgamation of geopolitical delicacy, administrative uncertainty, and politicisation have consequently contributed to the situating of Rohingyas in Jammu as security menace- despite reality on the ground calling otherwise, a population in search of security and survival instead of being the security hazard.

## The Rohingya Crisis's History

For many years, the Myanmar military and Buddhist extremists have practiced systematic discrimination, violence, and persecution against the Rohingya, an ethnic Muslim minority population mostly from the country's Rakhine State. More than 700,000 Rohingyas fled in large numbers to neighbouring Bangladesh as a result of the 2017 military operation[65]. Since then, a large number of people have sought safety in various nations, such as India, where there is no official policy to provide asylum to refugees, leaving them open to marginalization and exploitation.

## The Rohingya Refugee Crisis in Jammu

Jammu, located in the northern part of India, has become home to a significant number of Rohingya refugees who fled Myanmar to escape violence and persecution. According to estimates, Jammu hosts more than 5,000 Rohingyas, mostly residing in makeshift camps on the outskirts of the city. These camps are a symbol of the refugees' harsh reality, marked by poor living conditions, lack of basic amenities, and a deep sense of insecurity[66].

The presence of Rohingyas in Jammu has been a source of significant tension and controversy. While India has not signed the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, and refugees do not have a defined legal status, the issue of the Rohingyas in Jammu has stirred public debates on security, national sovereignty, and the rights of refugees. These concerns are often exacerbated by local politicians and groups who argue that the influx of Rohingyas poses a threat to national security.

## Discussion

The issue of refugees is one that has gained significant attention in the global arena, with countries grappling with how to balance humanitarian responsibilities with national security concerns. India's approach to refugees has often been described as inconsistent and ad hoc, particularly in relation to the Rohingya Muslim refugees who have sought refuge in the country. While international norms and conventions emphasize humane treatment, non-refoulement, and integration, India's response to refugees often places

[64] A.S. Pundir, "Security Discourses and Refugee Populations in South Asia," *Journal of Asian Security & International Affairs* 9(2): 178, 182–84 (2022)
[65] Amnesty International India, *Rohingyas in India: State of Vulnerability* (2018)
[66] Supreme Court of India, Tehseen S. Poonawalla v. Union of India, (2018) 9 SCC 501.



them in a precarious legal and social situation[67]. The absence of a national refugee law, societal prejudices, political rhetoric, and limited engagement with international organizations exacerbate the challenges faced by refugees, especially the Rohingya, highlighting deeper systemic issues in India's refugee policy.

## Absence of a National Refugee Law

One of the most significant gaps in India's refugee policy is the absence of a formal national refugee law. Unlike many countries that have enacted comprehensive legislation for the protection and rights of refugees, India has not codified a legal framework to deal with the issue. Instead, India relies on ad hoc measures, such as the Foreigners Act of 1946 and the Registration of Foreigners Act of 1939, to manage refugees, but these laws are not designed specifically for refugees[68]. The lack of a clear, dedicated legal framework leads to significant ambiguity in the status and treatment of refugees.

The absence of a national refugee law means that refugees often lack clear and enforceable rights. For instance, they do not have legal recognition or protection in India, which leaves them vulnerable to detention, deportation, and exploitation. In the case of the Rohingya refugees, many are registered under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), but this does not guarantee them any legal protection in India. As a result, they are often treated as illegal migrants by the state, despite being victims of persecution in their home country. Without a proper legal framework, India is unable to ensure that refugees are treated in accordance with international norms, and they remain in a state of legal limbo.

## Societal Prejudices and Political Rhetoric

India's approach to refugees is further complicated by societal prejudices and political rhetoric. The political discourse surrounding refugees is often polarized, and refugees from specific regions or communities face different levels of acceptance. The Rohingya refugees, for example, have faced significant hostility and discrimination in India, not just from political figures but also from certain sections of society. Many of the refugees belong to the Muslim minority community, which is already subjected to marginalization in certain parts of India. This has fueled negative perceptions about the Rohingya, with some seeing them as a threat to national security or as illegal migrants.

Political rhetoric has played a major role in shaping public opinion about refugees. In recent years, political leaders have increasingly used the issue of refugees to appeal to their base, often presenting refugees as a burden or a threat to the country's resources, culture, or security. Such rhetoric not only creates a hostile environment for refugees but also exacerbates the social divide within the country. The Rohingya, in particular, have been portrayed as a security threat by certain political groups, further deepening their exclusion from society. This climate of suspicion and hostility makes it difficult for refugees to integrate into Indian society and find a sense of stability.

[67] The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, No. 47 of 2019, § 2, India Code
[68] R. Singh, "Access to Healthcare for Rohingya Refugees," 10 Health Pol. & Ethics Q. 23, 26 (2022)



Furthermore, there is a widespread lack of awareness and empathy toward refugees among the general population. Many people in India are unaware of the plight of refugees and view them as outsiders who are taking away jobs, resources, and opportunities. This lack of understanding and compassion toward refugees is further compounded by the rhetoric of political leaders, which casts refugees as a problem rather than as victims in need of protection.

## Conclusion

India's migration and asylum policies remain deeply intertwined with the complexities of its legal framework and its geopolitical positioning. Historically, India has hosted migrants for centuries, with diverse communities such as the Rohingyas, Tibetans, and Sri Lankan Tamils seeking refuge within its borders. However, the legal and policy framework governing migration and asylum is fragmented, lacking a comprehensive national law on refugees. While India is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol, it still provides asylum under the principle of humanitarian concern, relying on ad hoc administrative measures.

The case of the Rohingyas, a minority group fleeing persecution in Myanmar, underscores the limitations and challenges faced by India's migration and asylum frameworks. The Rohingya crisis has sparked debates on India's legal obligations and humanitarian duties. Despite facing widespread persecution in Myanmar, the Rohingyas in India often find themselves in a precarious position, without access to formal refugee status or protections under Indian law. This uncertainty is compounded by security concerns, political narratives, and the growing influence of nationalism, which have shaped India's approach toward migrants and refugees, especially those from Muslim-majority countries.

The Indian government has largely opted for a non-committal stance on the Rohingyas' refugee status. While some state governments have offered shelter, others have opted for deportations, citing national security concerns. The absence of a clear refugee law creates a legal limbo for the Rohingyas and other asylum seekers, resulting in a lack of social protection, limited access to healthcare and education, and frequent vulnerability to exploitation and discrimination.

India's approach, characterized by an ad hoc response, has drawn both domestic and international criticism. Human rights organizations have emphasized that India, as the world's largest democracy and a regional leader, has a moral responsibility to uphold international humanitarian standards. At the same time, the broader global community has pressed India to adopt more robust legal protections for refugees and migrants, offering support in addressing these humanitarian challenges.

## Recommendations

### Enact a Comprehensive Refugee Law

India's legal framework for migration and asylum requires an overhaul to ensure clearer, more structured provisions for refugees. A comprehensive refugee law should be enacted



to grant legal recognition, protection, and rights to asylum seekers and refugees. Such a law would also provide a clear distinction between economic migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, reducing the uncertainty that individuals like the Rohingyas currently face. The law should guarantee access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and housing, as well as establish clear procedures for asylum applications and status determination.

## Accede to the 1951 Refugee Convention

India's decision not to ratify the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol has been a point of contention. Accession to these international agreements would bind India to global standards of refugee protection and help mitigate the current legal void. This would not only provide protection for refugees but also promote India's international standing on human rights issues. However, India could also negotiate reservations or modifications to ensure that its national security concerns and regional sensitivities are adequately addressed.

## Humanitarian Approach to the Rohingyas

The treatment of the Rohingyas in India requires a humanitarian approach that emphasizes human rights and dignity. India should avoid policies based on ethnic or religious discrimination and adopt a more inclusive and humanitarian stance toward these refugees. While addressing security concerns is important, deportation should be approached with caution, considering the grave human rights violations they would face upon return to Myanmar. India could offer temporary asylum status while advocating for international resettlement solutions or permanent solutions with Myanmar's involvement.

## Strengthen International Cooperation

The issue of migration and asylum cannot be addressed by India alone. Strengthening cooperation with international organizations like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and regional bodies is essential for creating sustainable solutions. India should work collaboratively with other South Asian countries to establish a regional framework for migration and asylum that balances humanitarian considerations with national security concerns.

## Public Awareness and Inclusion Initiatives

India must foster a greater public understanding of refugees and asylum seekers. Public awareness campaigns can help combat xenophobia and misinformation, especially regarding marginalized groups like the Rohingyas. Initiatives that promote inclusivity, integration, and respect for refugees' rights can help reduce social tensions and build a more tolerant society. Civil society organizations, local governments, and the private sector should also play an active role in providing support for refugees and migrants.

## Protection of Vulnerable Groups

Particular attention should be paid to vulnerable groups within refugee populations, including women, children, and the elderly. These groups often face unique challenges, such as gender-based violence, child labor, and exploitation, which require specialized protection measures. Ensuring that policies account for the specific needs of these vulnerable individuals will enhance the overall effectiveness of India's migration and asylum frameworks.

In conclusion, India's response to migration and asylum, particularly in the case of the Rohingyas, reflects the challenges and opportunities in balancing humanitarian obligations with national interests. By adopting a more structured and compassionate approach, India can improve the lives of refugees and migrants while contributing to regional and global peace and stability.

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# BEYOND CENTRALISM: THE EVOLUTION AND CHALLENGES OF PARADIPLOMACY IN THE UNITARY STATES – A CASE STUDY OF INDONESIA

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## Abstract

Paradiplomacy has emerged as a critical mechanism for subnational governments to engage internationally in response to globalization and decentralization. While extensively studied in federal systems, its dynamics within unitary states remain underexplored. This study examines the evolution and institutionalization of paradiplomacy in Indonesia through qualitative case studies of West Java Province and the City of Surabaya. Drawing on Kuznetsov's multidimensional framework, complemented by theories of multilevel

governance, actorness, and soft power, the analysis highlights how subnational actors navigate legal ambiguities, institutional constraints, and political centralization to assert agency in global governance. Findings reveal that leadership vision, institutional innovation, strategic networking, and adaptive governance strategies, rather than formal legal authority, drive successful paradiplomacy in Indonesia. Despite notable achievements, systemic challenges—such as fragmented coordination, legal uncertainty, and capacity limitations—constrain the full potential of subnational international engagement. This study expands paradiplomacy theory beyond federal contexts, emphasizing the importance of informal mechanisms, networked strategies, and alignment with national development agendas to enable subnational actors within centralized political systems.

**Keywords**

Paradiplomacy, subnational governance, multilevel governance, actorness, decentralized diplomacy.

**Resumo**

A paradiplomacia surgiu como um mecanismo crítico para os governos subnacionais se envolverem internacionalmente em resposta à globalização e à descentralização. Embora amplamente estudada em sistemas federais, sua dinâmica dentro de Estados unitários permanece pouco explorada. Este estudo examina a evolução e a institucionalização da paradiplomacia na Indonésia por meio de estudos de caso qualitativos da província de Java Ocidental e da cidade de Surabaya. Com base na estrutura multidimensional de Kuznetsov, complementada por teorias de governança multinível, atuação e soft power, a análise destaca como os atores subnacionais lidam com ambiguidades jurídicas, restrições institucionais e centralização política para afirmar sua agência na governança global. As conclusões revelam que a visão de liderança, a inovação institucional, o networking estratégico e as estratégias de governança adaptativa, em vez da autoridade jurídica formal, impulsionam o sucesso da paradiplomacia na Indonésia. Apesar das conquistas notáveis, desafios sistêmicos — como coordenação fragmentada, incerteza jurídica e limitações de capacidade — restringem o potencial total do envolvimento internacional subnacional. Este estudo expande a teoria da paradiplomacia além dos contextos federais, enfatizando a importância de mecanismos informais, estratégias em rede e alinhamento com as agendas de desenvolvimento nacional para capacitar atores subnacionais dentro de sistemas políticos centralizados.

**Palavras-chave**

Paradiplomacia, governança subnacional, governança multinível, atuação, diplomacia descentralizada.

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# BEYOND CENTRALISM: THE EVOLUTION AND CHALLENGES OF PARADIPLOMACY IN THE UNITARY STATES – A CASE STUDY OF INDONESIA

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## Introduction

Paradiplomacy—the international engagement of subnational governments—has become an increasingly significant element of contemporary global governance. While the phenomenon is well-documented in federal states, its manifestations within unitary systems have remained underexplored. In Indonesia, the post-New Order decentralization reforms of 1999 granted provinces and municipalities substantial autonomy, enabling them to engage in cross-border cooperation in sectors such as investment, education, climate change, and culture. However, these emerging practices encounter persistent challenges, notably legal ambiguities, institutional fragmentation, and coordination hurdles with central authorities, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As global challenges intensify, necessitating local innovation and international collaboration, the role of subnational actors has become increasingly critical.

This study examines paradiplomacy's evolution and institutional dynamics in Indonesia, focusing on two illustrative cases: West Java Province and the City of Surabaya. It further evaluates how legal and institutional frameworks facilitate or constrain subnational international engagements, providing insights relevant to other unitary states experiencing decentralization.

Paradiplomacy encompasses the participation of subnational entities—including regions, provinces, and municipalities—in international relations, often operating alongside or

independently of national governments (Ciesielska-Klikowska & Kamiński, 2022; Fantoni & Avellaneda, 2022; Smith, 2019). This practice has evolved alongside the intensification of globalization, the deepening of decentralization, and the growing recognition of local governments' distinct capacities to address economic, political, and cultural challenges more effectively than centralized authorities. Initially informal and sporadic, paradiplomacy has developed into a structured and multidimensional domain, bolstered by technological advancements and increasing demands for local autonomy during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Comparative studies highlight the diversity and institutionalization of paradiplomacy across the globe (Ciesielska-Klikowska & Kamiński, 2022; Smith, 2019). In Europe and Latin America, subnational governments have leveraged their geographic, cultural, and economic attributes to build international partnerships and assert their interests on the global stage. Even within unitary systems such as China, innovative strategies have enabled subnational actors to achieve global visibility despite strict central oversight (Liu & Yao, 2019, 2020). These developments reflect a broader shift from hierarchical diplomacy models toward more pluralistic and multilayered forms of international engagement.

A critical dimension in paradiplomacy research is the distinction between federal and unitary systems. Constitutional arrangements in federal states like Canada and the United States formally empower subnational governments to conduct international relations (Lequesne & Paquin, 2017). In contrast, subnational actors in unitary states must often navigate more stringent central controls, relying on informal or ad hoc mechanisms that typically require national approval (Liu & Yao, 2019, 2020). Case studies such as those of Aceh (Indonesia) and Catalonia (Spain) demonstrate how the degree of subnational autonomy and institutional support varies significantly depending on the political and legal contexts.

The evolution of paradiplomacy reflects broader transformations in global governance, wherein local autonomy is increasingly recognized as crucial to practical international cooperation. While federal systems often offer more supportive environments for subnational diplomacy, unitary systems produce more fragmented and experimental practices due to centralized constraints. Understanding this dichotomy underscores the importance of legal and institutional contexts in shaping the capacities and influence of subnational actors (Ciesielska-Klikowska & Kamiński, 2022; Fantoni & Avellaneda, 2022; Lequesne & Paquin, 2017; Liu & Yao, 2019, 2020; Smith, 2019).

Indonesia's decentralization has generated profound legal and institutional consequences for subnational engagement in international affairs. The post-Reformasi autonomy laws devolved fiscal, administrative, and political authority to regional entities, allowing them to initiate international collaborations aligned with regional socio-economic priorities (Diprose, 2022; Susiatiningsih et al., 2018). These reforms encouraged a bottom-up approach to foreign cooperation.

Nonetheless, decentralization also introduced challenges regarding policy coherence and legal clarity. Studies have noted persistent tensions between local autonomy and central oversight (Butt, 2019; Susiatiningsih et al., 2018). Inconsistencies in regulatory authority

and conflicting mandates reveal the pressing need for enhanced intergovernmental coordination to harmonize subnational diplomacy with national foreign policy (Butt, 2019).

Moreover, decentralization fostered legal pluralism, enabling local administrations to create region-specific legal and diplomatic mechanisms that enhanced their international engagement capacities (Butt, 2019; Susiatiningsih et al., 2018). Indonesian local governments have since actively pursued sister-city partnerships, bilateral cooperation initiatives, and participation in transnational policy forums, asserting themselves as contributors to international governance.

Paradiplomacy has proven vital for addressing global challenges such as climate change and sustainable economic development. Subnational actors have complemented national policies by tailoring responses to local conditions and leveraging specialized knowledge. Municipal networks have facilitated the sharing of best practices and joint climate adaptation initiatives (Smith, 2019). Participation in transnational forums has further enabled subnational actors to address institutional gaps left by national mechanisms (Mauad & Betsill, 2019).

Subnational diplomacy also significantly advances economic development through trade promotion, foreign investment attraction, and sustainable innovation (Bouchet, 2022; Smith, 2019), particularly as climate resilience and economic competitiveness increasingly intertwine (Setzer, 2015; Setzer et al., 2020).

Despite its growing relevance, scholarly exploration of paradiplomacy in Southeast Asia remains limited. Much existing research lacks comprehensive comparative analysis and remains narrowly focused, particularly regarding unitary states like Indonesia (Dermawan et al., 2022). This gap highlights the need for a deeper inquiry into how subnational actors in centralized political systems engage internationally.

Paradiplomacy has provided subnational governments with critical mechanisms to respond to globalization through localized, adaptive strategies. However, its theoretical development remains insufficient, especially in Southeast Asia and Indonesia. This study seeks to address this gap by examining Indonesia's legal, institutional, and strategic paradiplomacy dimensions, offering broader insights for other unitary states navigating global governance challenges. Despite existing studies on paradiplomacy, there remains limited understanding of how subnational actors in unitary states navigate centralized governance constraints, particularly in Southeast Asia. This study addresses this gap by examining Indonesia’s subnational diplomacy through two prominent cases.

## Literature Review

The scholarly exploration of paradiplomacy initially concentrated on federal states, where constitutional frameworks grant regional and local governments substantial autonomy to engage in external relations. Foundational contributions by scholars such as Kuznetsov, Lecours, and Cornago developed key theoretical models emphasizing the significance of institutional factors, legal permissibility, and political incentives as critical drivers of subnational international engagement. Kuznetsov’s multidimensional framework, in particular, highlighted the crucial role of internal organizational structures and domestic

political will in shaping paradiplomatic outcomes (Fantoni & Avellaneda, 2022; Jackson, 2017). His model stressed the importance of institutional capacity, including foreign affairs departments, chambers of commerce, and international liaison offices, in facilitating effective global engagement.

Building upon this foundation, later scholarship incorporated a variety of theoretical perspectives, such as institutionalism, network theory, political geography, and, to a lesser extent, realist approaches. Institutionalists argue that decentralization fosters the formal capacity of subnational governments to participate internationally by delegating administrative authority and creating specialized bureaucracies. Network theorists complement this view by emphasizing the empowerment of subnational actors through transnational coalitions and partnerships, allowing them to bypass traditional national diplomatic channels and gain access to knowledge, resources, and political leverage. Political geography adds another dimension, examining how territorial location and regional identity shape paradiplomatic strategies (Fantoni & Avellaneda, 2022; Jackson, 2017).

Despite broadening theoretical perspectives, Kuznetsov's framework remains influential due to its adaptability across different governance contexts. It identifies two primary conditions for successful paradiplomacy: establishing pro-international institutional infrastructures and securing sustained political support from local elites. Empirical applications of Kuznetsov's model consistently demonstrate that subnational entities equipped with dedicated foreign affairs units, stable funding, and political leadership are better positioned to engage internationally. Scholars have further enriched Kuznetsov's model by integrating factors such as globalization pressures, regional identity politics, and normative concerns within international relations (Fantoni & Avellaneda, 2022; Jackson, 2017).

Paradiplomatic activity typically operates along three core dimensions: institutional, legal, and motivational. Institutionally, decentralized governance structures provide subnational governments the autonomy to establish mechanisms supporting international outreach, such as foreign cooperation offices and participation in global city networks. For instance, Indonesian provinces have established international cooperation units, and cities like Surabaya actively participate in transnational climate initiatives (Susiatiningsih et al., 2018). These institutional structures align international engagement with local development goals and foster greater policy responsiveness. Moreover, effective political leadership has proven essential for legitimizing and sustaining support for such initiatives.

From a legal perspective, paradiplomacy remains framed within constitutional provisions that typically reserve foreign policy authority for national governments, particularly in unitary states. Despite formal restrictions, subnational actors often employ pragmatic strategies to navigate legal constraints, exploiting ambiguities or utilizing informal channels. In Indonesia, decentralization laws offer administrative discretion for international cooperation, yet persistent questions regarding authority and policy coherence complicate local initiatives (Butt, 2019; Susiatiningsih et al., 2018). This legal duality underscores the complex interplay between formal limitations and adaptive practices in subnational diplomacy.

Motivationally, paradiplomacy is driven by diverse objectives, including economic development, cultural promotion, identity articulation, and political positioning. Local governments frequently seek international partnerships to attract foreign investment, expand market access, and elevate global profiles. Other motivations include the promotion of regional identities and participation in international norm-setting, particularly in areas such as climate action, education, and public health. Successful paradiplomatic initiatives are often grounded in visionary leadership, elite consensus, and broad community support for internationalization (Cantir, 2019; Susiatiningsih et al., 2018).

Despite its conceptual richness, paradiplomacy scholarship faces several critiques. Its predominantly case-specific and descriptive nature is a primary limitation, which restricts broader theoretical generalization across political and legal systems. Furthermore, research has been disproportionately centered on Western federal systems, resulting in significant gaps in the understanding of paradiplomatic practices in non-Western and unitary contexts. This imbalance has contributed to conceptual blind spots, particularly regarding informal and experimental paradiplomatic activities within centralized political systems. Additionally, persistent conceptual ambiguity surrounding the term "paradiplomacy"—which is inconsistently applied across different levels of governance—continues to undermine its analytical precision (Cantir, 2019; Jackson, 2017).

The literature offers a multidimensional but fragmented understanding of subnational international engagement. Although diverse theoretical frameworks have illuminated its institutional, legal, and motivational aspects, substantial gaps remain, particularly in the operationalization of paradiplomacy in non-Western and unitary states. Kuznetsov's model remains a valuable analytical tool, especially when adapted to centralized systems' specific political and legal contexts. Building on these conceptual foundations, this study examines the evolution of paradiplomacy in Indonesia—focusing on the cases of West Java and Surabaya—to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of subnational diplomacy within unitary states.

While Kuznetsov's multidimensional framework and its subsequent adaptations offer valuable insights into the institutional, legal, and motivational dimensions of paradiplomacy, the majority of existing models have been developed within federal contexts. As this study will demonstrate, the specific challenges and adaptive strategies of subnational actors in unitary states such as Indonesia necessitate a critical reassessment and expansion of these theoretical frameworks.

## Method

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach to investigate the evolution of paradiplomacy within the framework of a unitary state, focusing on Indonesia as the primary context. Following the post-Reformasi decentralization reforms, provincial and municipal governments in Indonesia gained increased autonomy, enabling them to participate in international cooperation initiatives. To capture the diversity of responses to these institutional changes, two contrasting cases were purposively selected: West Java Province and the City of Surabaya. These cases represent distinct levels of subnational governance and diverge in their international strategies—West Java

emphasizes economic and investment diplomacy, while Surabaya leads in sustainable urban development and global city networking.

The case study approach was chosen for its effectiveness in producing in-depth, contextual analyses and facilitating comparative insights between diverse institutional environments. Rather than seeking broad generalizations, this method prioritizes rich empirical understanding of complex phenomena—specifically, how local actors navigate legal, political, and bureaucratic constraints to engage internationally.

Data collection focused on qualitative document analysis. Primary sources included decentralization laws, local regulations on international cooperation, Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), and strategic development plans from both West Java and Surabaya. Supplementary sources such as peer-reviewed journal articles, policy reports, and credible media publications were also reviewed to strengthen the analysis and support triangulation.

The analytical framework is grounded in Kuznetsov's multidimensional model of paradiplomacy, encompassing four key dimensions: legal foundations, institutional capacity, strategic motivation, and external outcomes. This model guided the thematic coding process, which was used to identify recurring patterns and infer the underlying logics shaping each locality's approach to international engagement.

The coding scheme was developed inductively and refined through iterative review, consistent with the methodological guidance of Sinambela (Sinambela et al., 2024). Particular attention was given to formalized international initiatives—such as bilateral agreements and project-based collaborations—to assess their alignment with national policy frameworks and legal mandates.

Performance indicators were also identified, including the creation of foreign affairs units, frequency of participation in international forums, and demonstrable results from global partnerships. These indicators were analyzed with reference to governance benchmarks from Zeemering to assess strategic capacity and institutional maturity (Zeemering, 2017).

Overall, the integration of case study design and thematic document analysis provides a rigorous yet flexible framework for exploring subnational diplomacy in centralized political systems. This approach enables a nuanced understanding of how regional and municipal governments in Indonesia assert international agency within the confines of a unitary state architecture.

## Results and Discussion

### The Growth of Paradiplomacy in Indonesia

Since the early 2000s decentralization reforms, Indonesia has significantly transformed its subnational governance, especially in the capacity of local governments to engage internationally. Regional autonomy, formalized through Law No. 22/1999 and refined in Law No. 23/2014, transferred substantial administrative, political, and fiscal authority to subnational entities. Although the Constitution reserves foreign affairs for the central government, globalization pressures—including the imperatives of attracting investment,

fostering educational exchanges, and enhancing environmental governance—have incentivized local governments to seek international collaborations.

Government Regulation No. 28/2018 on Regional Cooperation introduced procedural frameworks permitting subnational governments to establish international partnerships, subject to approval from central ministries. However, in practice, the implementation of paradiplomatic initiatives has been uneven. While some regions have effectively leveraged the regulatory space to develop sustained international partnerships, others have limited their activities to symbolic engagements. These variations reflect disparities in institutional capacity, leadership vision, and resource availability across different localities.

Significantly, paradiplomatic success in Indonesia has been driven by legal reforms, leadership foresight, institutional innovation, and strategic networking. As Fantoni and Avellaneda (2022) argue, the mere existence of legal frameworks is insufficient; active political commitment and the ability to mobilize networks are crucial to success (Fantoni & Avellaneda, 2022).

Indonesia's decentralization has enabled subnational governments to articulate region-specific development priorities within international forums. Cases such as Semarang City's urban sustainability initiatives (Susiatiningsih et al., 2018), Karawang District's agricultural innovation through sister-city programs, and Aceh's cultural diplomacy leveraging special autonomy (Dermawan et al., 2022) exemplify how localized strategies can enhance global engagement.

Nevertheless, paradiplomacy practices remain highly asymmetrical across Indonesia. Variations in financial resources, bureaucratic competency, and political commitment have created uneven patterns of international engagement. While provinces like West Java and cities like Surabaya have institutionalized paradiplomacy, many other local governments struggle with basic capacity constraints.

## Case Study 1: West Java Province

West Java has emerged as a leading actor in Indonesia's paradiplomatic landscape, demonstrating how strategic vision and institutional innovation can amplify subnational global engagement. Under the "Jabar Juara" framework, the provincial government developed an integrated international cooperation agenda encompassing investment promotion, education, environmental sustainability, and cultural diplomacy.

One of West Java's most notable innovations has been the establishment of the West Java Investment Promotion Center (WJIPC) in Singapore, a strategic hub for foreign direct investment. Mirroring global best practices such as São Paulo's InvestSP, the WJIPC actively promotes the province's competitive advantages—a skilled workforce, modern infrastructure, and strategic geographic position (Dermawan, Azmi, et al., 2024).

At the institutional level, West Java has embedded international cooperation within its administrative structures by creating specialized units and supporting regulations. Local initiatives, such as agricultural collaborations in Karawang and environmental programs

in Cirebon, further demonstrate a clear alignment between global engagement strategies and regional development goals (Affandi & Utami, 2024; Khoerunnisa & Maulana, 2023).

Additionally, West Java's strategic deployment of soft power tools—through educational exchanges, cultural festivals, and targeted digital campaigns—has effectively enhanced its international brand (Dermawan, Alam, et al., 2024). These initiatives showcase how paradiplomacy can operate not only through formal agreements but also by cultivating reputational capital.

Overall, West Java's success highlights leadership, institutional readiness, and network mobilization—rather than formal diplomatic authority—as the principal enablers of effective subnational diplomacy within unitary systems. The figure below summarizes the key components of West Java's paradiplomatic strategies, illustrating how institutional mechanisms, leadership, and soft power are integrated to support international engagement.

**Figure 1.** West Java's Strategies

| Characteristic | Investment Promotion | Institutional Infrastructure | Cultural Diplomacy & Education | Strategic Branding |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Focus | Attracting foreign investment | Embedding paradiplomacy in administration | Strengthening international linkages | Cultivating a global image |
| Mechanism | West Java Investment Promotion Center (WJIPC) | International cooperation units, sister city partnerships | Student mobility, language programs, festivals | International expos, digital campaigns, summits |
| Goal | Enhancing global visibility and appeal | Leveraging cooperation for economic benefit | Strengthening international linkages | Shaping international perceptions |

Source: Authorship

## Case Study 2: Surabaya City

Surabaya has established itself as a pioneer in municipal-level paradiplomacy, characterized by pragmatic, issue-specific international engagements. The city's paradiplomatic efforts center on operational partnerships rather than symbolic affiliations, with sister-city collaborations with Kitakyushu (Japan), Liverpool (United Kingdom), and Busan (South Korea) yielding tangible outcomes in areas such as waste management, public health, and urban innovation (Sinambela et al., 2024; Wardhani & Dugis, 2020).

The Green Sister City Program with Kitakyushu exemplifies how informal yet strategic partnerships can deliver substantial environmental outcomes, including improved waste management systems and enhanced sustainability practices (Dzazira & Pratama, 2023; Utomo, 2022).

Institutionally, Surabaya embedded international cooperation within the mayor's office, ensuring strategic alignment with municipal development priorities (Amiri, 2022). Beyond bilateral relationships, Surabaya's active participation in multilateral networks such as the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group and ICLEI demonstrates how global urban coalitions provide critical platforms for municipal paradiplomacy (Ciesielska-Klikowska & Kamiński, 2022).

Surabaya's experience reveals that informal mechanisms—such as city-to-city exchanges, network memberships, and joint initiatives—are essential for sustaining subnational international engagement under centralized political constraints. Figure 2 presents Surabaya's operational model of paradiplomacy, emphasizing its focus on pragmatic partnerships, issue-specific collaborations, and multilateral urban networks.

**Figure 2.** Surabaya's Paradiplomacy Strategies

| Characteristic | Sister City Partnerships | Multilateral City Networks | City Branding Strategy |
|---|---|---|---|
| Focus | Outcome-oriented collaborations | Peer learning and policy dialogues | Projecting a coherent city identity |
| Examples | Kitakyushu, Liverpool, Busan | C40, ICLEI | Global trade fairs, summits |
| Benefits | Access to expertise and innovation | Technical and institutional knowledge | Enhanced international recognition |
| Implementation | Memoranda of understanding | Participation and engagement | Digital diplomacy and media campaigns |

Source: Authorship

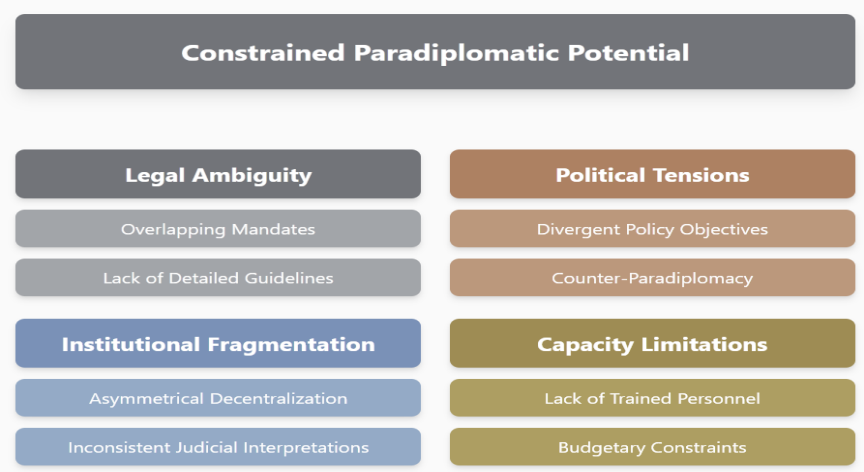
## Challenges in Subnational Foreign Engagement

Despite notable advancements, paradiplomacy in Indonesia faces persistent and multifaceted challenges:

- **Legal Ambiguity:** While decentralization laws permit international cooperation, the lack of detailed procedural frameworks has led to cautious, fragmented practices and inhibited innovation.
- **Institutional Fragmentation:** Uneven devolution of administrative authority creates coordination problems, while limited communication between subnational governments and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hampers policy coherence (Asmorojati et al., 2022).
- **Political Tensions:** Divergent priorities between national and local actors often produce friction. Central interventions sometimes constrain subnational initiatives perceived as deviating from national diplomatic agendas (Bouchet, 2022).
- **Capacity Constraints:** Many local administrations lack trained personnel, sustainabfitle funding, and institutional memory, limiting their ability to initiate and maintain robust international partnerships (Dermawan, Alam, et al., 2024).
- **Ambivalent Central Government Stance:** Subnational diplomacy's simultaneous encouragement and restriction create an unpredictable operational environment (Sharma et al., 2020; Smith, 2019), forcing local actors to rely on ad hoc, negotiated arrangements rather than systematic cooperation.

These challenges reaffirm the need for greater clarity in regulatory frameworks, stronger intergovernmental coordination, and sustained investment in subnational institutional capacities. The challenges discussed above are synthesized in the following figure, which maps the structural and operational barriers faced by Indonesian subnational governments in conducting foreign engagement.

**Figure 3.** Challenges in Subnational Foreign Engagement in Indonesia




Source: Authorship

## Linking Empirical Findings to Theoretical Contributions

The Indonesian experience provides empirical validation for the argument that paradiplomacy theories must be expanded beyond federal contexts. The success of subnational actors such as West Java and Surabaya illustrates that adaptive strategies, informal governance mechanisms, and strategic alignment with national priorities are critical enablers of paradiplomatic agency in unitary states.

Additionally, the findings confirm the significance of informal pathways, multilevel negotiation, and soft power utilization as indispensable elements of paradiplomatic practice under centralized governance structures.

Thus, Indonesia's evolving subnational international engagement demonstrates that even without constitutional authority, subnational governments can act as credible international players—provided they possess leadership vision, institutional adaptability, and strategic network-building capacities.

## Theoretical Reflection

Understanding paradiplomacy within unitary states like Indonesia necessitates a broader analytical lens beyond the legalistic frameworks commonly developed for federal systems. While legal authority remains significant, successful paradiplomacy in centralized contexts hinges more on adaptive governance mechanisms, informal strategies, and the dynamic agency of subnational actors operating within centralized constraints.

Although Kuznetsov’s multidimensional model remains foundational, it requires critical adaptation to accommodate the specific challenges and opportunities present in unitary systems. Federal models, which presuppose formal constitutional authority for subnational diplomacy, often fail to account for the improvisational and negotiated practices that characterize paradiplomacy in unitary contexts. Existing theoretical frameworks must therefore be contextualized, incorporating the unique political, legal, and institutional realities of decentralized but non-sovereign actors.

While Kuznetsov’s multidimensional model provides a valuable analytical foundation, its application to unitary states demands critical refinement based on empirical realities. Experiences from other centralized systems show that subnational international engagement often operates through informal, negotiated mechanisms rather than through formalized institutional pathways. In China, for example, Liu and Yao (2019, 2020) reveal how Yunnan Province successfully expanded its international presence via pragmatic regional initiatives and transborder collaborations without explicit constitutional authority (Liu & Yao, 2019, 2020). These findings highlight the importance of opportunistic and adaptive strategies over rigid institutional infrastructures in centralized settings. Similarly, Sharma et al. (2020) demonstrate that Indian states, despite operating within a quasi-federal but highly centralized framework, leverage partisan linkages, personalized leadership, and policy entrepreneurship to sustain international engagements (Sharma et al., 2020). These cases collectively suggest that subnational actorness under centralized governance structures depends not merely on institutional endowments, but also on political agility, elite networking, and strategic

alignment with national priorities. Accordingly, theoretical models must recognize the informal, dynamic, and context-sensitive nature of paradiplomatic practices in unitary states, beyond the structural assumptions derived from federal contexts.

Integrating multilevel governance, actorness, and soft power theories complements Kuznetsov's framework and provides a more comprehensive understanding of subnational international engagement.

Multilevel governance theory emphasizes the diffusion of authority across multiple tiers. It suggests that subnational actors can assert themselves internationally not by directly challenging central authority but by operating within policy spaces that align local capacities with global agendas (Christie, 2022). In Indonesia, the overlapping spheres of influence among regional, national, and international actors have enabled cities like Surabaya and provinces like West Java to participate meaningfully in global governance processes without infringing on national sovereignty.

The concept of actorness further enriches this analysis by highlighting how subnational governments can cultivate legitimacy, external recognition, and agenda-setting capacity despite lacking sovereign status (Liu & Yao, 2020). Case studies, such as Yunnan Province in China and Surabaya's leadership in global environmental networks, illustrate that strategic specialization, institutional credibility, and international networking enable subnational entities to acquire tangible influence within global governance arenas.

Soft power dynamics also play an increasingly critical role in paradiplomacy. Subnational governments, such as West Java and Surabaya, utilize cultural diplomacy, education exchanges, and city branding to project favorable regional identities, attract investment, and build reputational capital internationally (Dermawan, Alam, et al., 2024; Jiménez-Castillo et al., 2022). This strategic deployment of soft power has allowed subnational actors to enhance their international and domestic legitimacy.

An important distinction must be made between paradiplomacy and proto-diplomacy. While proto-diplomacy often carries secessionist or politically sensitive connotations, Indonesian paradiplomacy remains development-oriented and aligned with the national interest. Subnational engagements prioritize functional objectives such as trade promotion, environmental sustainability, and educational collaboration without challenging the state's territorial integrity or foreign policy prerogatives. This functionalist orientation distinguishes Indonesian paradiplomacy as a collaborative complement to national diplomacy rather than a competitive alternative.

Moreover, legal pluralism and informal strategies emerge as critical mechanisms enabling paradiplomacy within centralized political frameworks. The absence of detailed legal procedures compels subnational actors to navigate constraints through pragmatic and often creative strategies, exploiting legal ambiguities and building informal networks to sustain international partnerships. This flexibility underscores the innovative capacity of subnational governments operating within restrictive institutional environments.

Building upon these insights, this study advocates for developing a revised analytical framework for understanding paradiplomacy in centralized systems. Beyond institutional capacity and political endorsement, successful paradiplomacy in unitary contexts depends on the following factors:

- The degree of legal discretion available to subnational actors,
- The efficacy of informal and networked approaches,
- The strategic alignment between local initiatives and national development agendas,
- The leadership capacity to mobilize credibility and sustain international engagements.

Comparative perspectives further illuminate the structural asymmetries between federal and unitary systems. In federal states, constitutional autonomy offers a relatively secure foundation for subnational diplomacy (Lequesne & Paquin, 2017). In contrast, unitary systems demand more flexible, opportunistic, and context-sensitive strategies due to the absence of formal mandates. Nevertheless, as West Java and Surabaya have demonstrated, subnational actors can exercise considerable agency and contribute substantially to global governance networks even within centralized constraints.

In conclusion, integrating Kuznetsov's model with multilevel governance, actorness, and soft power perspectives offers a more holistic and context-sensitive understanding of paradiplomacy in unitary states. It highlights the dynamic interplay between institutional innovation, strategic adaptation, and political negotiation that defines subnational international engagement in contemporary global governance**.** Building upon this synthesis, this study proposes a recalibrated model of subnational diplomacy for unitary systems—characterized by informal strategic agency, leadership-driven negotiation, and opportunistic alignment with national agendas. Before concluding, it is important to acknowledge several limitations of this study that may influence the interpretation and generalizability of its findings. Figure 4 conceptualizes the core enablers of paradiplomacy in unitary states, integrating legal discretion, informal strategies, strategic alignment, and leadership capacity into a unified analytical model.

**Figure 4.** Paradiplomacy in Unitary States: Key Concept

| Characteristic | Kuznetsov's Model | Actorness | Multilevel Governance | Soft Power & Branding |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Focus | Institutional infrastructure and endorsement | Recognition as coherent international actor | Authority dispersion across government tiers | Projecting positive regional image |
| Key Elements | Legal discretion, informal networks, adaptive strategies | Legitimacy, external recognition, attractiveness, agenda-setting | Subnational participation aligned with global priorities | Cultural diplomacy, attracting foreign investment |
| System | Suited for centralized political systems | Valuable insight into subnational entities | Enriches understanding of paradiplomacy | Strategic function of paradiplomacy |

Source: Authorship

## Study Limitations

While this study offers significant insights into paradiplomacy practices within a unitary state context, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the qualitative case study design, although effective for capturing in-depth dynamics, inherently restricts the generalizability of findings. The focus on West Java and Surabaya provides valuable illustrative examples but may not fully represent the diverse experiences of other subnational entities in Indonesia or other unitary states undergoing decentralization. Future studies incorporating broader cross-regional comparisons could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the variation in paradiplomatic practices.

Second, the reliance on document analysis and secondary data sources may have limited the ability to capture real-time political dynamics, informal negotiations, or evolving intergovernmental relationships that significantly influence subnational diplomacy. Conducting interviews with policymakers, local officials, and international partners could enrich the analysis by providing firsthand perspectives and uncovering latent factors influencing paradiplomacy strategies. Addressing these limitations in future research would contribute to a deeper and more nuanced theorization of subnational international engagement in centralized governance systems.

## Conclusion

Paradiplomacy in Indonesia has evolved as a pragmatic and adaptive response to the dual imperatives of globalization and decentralization. Despite operating within a centralized political framework, subnational governments have progressively asserted international agency by mobilizing local assets, forging strategic partnerships, and institutionalizing foreign cooperation mechanisms.

The case studies of West Java Province and the City of Surabaya demonstrate that effective paradiplomacy in a unitary state depends not primarily on formal constitutional authority but on leadership vision, institutional innovation, strategic networking, and the adaptive exploitation of legal and political spaces. Through proactive strategies—including establishing foreign cooperation units, participating in global city networks, and deploying soft power tools—these subnational actors have successfully inserted themselves into global governance processes.

Empirically, this study reveals that while decentralization laws provided an initial legal foundation for subnational international engagement, the realization of paradiplomatic potential is highly contingent upon local initiative, institutional capacity, and strategic alignment with national development agendas. However, the practice of paradiplomacy across Indonesia remains uneven and fragmented, constrained by persistent challenges such as legal ambiguities, institutional fragmentation, political contestations, capacity deficits, and the ambivalent stance of the central government.

Theoretically, the Indonesian experience underscores the need to expand paradigms of paradiplomacy beyond federal-centric models. Concepts such as multilevel governance, actorness, soft power dynamics, and informal negotiation strategies must be integrated to capture the complexities of subnational engagement within centralized systems accurately. Successful paradiplomacy in unitary states is not merely a function of legal

permission but a product of adaptive governance, relational strategies, and strategic navigation of institutional constraints.

To strengthen the development of paradiplomacy in Indonesia and other unitary states, a series of strategic reforms must be prioritized. First, it is crucial to clarify the legal mandates that govern subnational international activities. Clearer procedural guidelines would reduce uncertainty, provide legitimacy, and create space for innovation in local-level diplomacy. Second, robust intergovernmental coordination mechanisms should be established or enhanced to ensure that subnational initiatives are coherently aligned with national foreign policy objectives. This would help prevent overlap, miscommunication, or policy contradictions between levels of government.

Third, long-term investment in institutional development and human resource capacity is essential. Local governments must be equipped with the technical expertise, organizational infrastructure, and trained personnel needed to engage meaningfully and sustainably on the international stage. Fourth, stronger strategic alignment must be fostered between local development priorities and the broader goals of global governance. Doing so would enable subnational actors to contribute more effectively to shared international agendas while advancing local interests.

Finally, the strategic use of informal mechanisms and networked approaches should be encouraged. In contexts where formal authority remains limited, leveraging informal relationships, transnational city networks, and issue-based coalitions can provide viable pathways for subnational actors to assert influence and sustain global partnerships within centralized political environments.

Beyond its national relevance, this study contributes to the broader academic discourse by demonstrating that subnational engagement in international affairs is viable and impactful even within highly centralized political environments. It challenges the notion that subnational diplomacy is the exclusive domain of federal systems, showing instead that dynamic agency, institutional bricolage, and strategic adaptability are equally critical enablers. This study extends Kuznetsov's model by incorporating informal negotiation strategies and multilevel governance dynamics specific to unitary state systems.

Future research should explore comparative paradiplomacy across regions and political systems, evaluate the long-term policy outcomes of subnational international initiatives, and investigate emerging modalities such as digital paradiplomacy and global city diplomacy. Such efforts are vital for reconceptualizing diplomacy in an increasingly decentralized and interconnected world, where subnational actors are poised to play greater roles in addressing global challenges.

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# NON-ARAB MUSLIM PERSPECTIVES ON PALESTINE AND ISRAEL: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TURKISH AND MALAYSIAN STATE APPROACHES

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## Abstract

This research conducts a comparative analysis of the foreign policies of Turkiye and Malaysia regarding the Palestinian issue and Israel, highlighting both their convergences and divergences in approaches within the broader context of Jewish-Muslim relations. Ankara and Kuala Lumpur maintain extensive and multifaceted connections in various spheres, such as religion, politics, economy, culture, and social issues in the Middle East. The political stances of Turkiye and Malaysia serve as an insightful comparative case study to understand the engagement of Muslim-majority non-Arab countries with the Palestinian cause and the state of Israel. Their diplomatic initiatives consistently advocate for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Additionally, both countries provide humanitarian and developmental aid to Palestinians residing in occupied territories and refugee camps. This study argues that Turkiye's direct support for Palestine is in contrast to Malaysia's indirect approach, with Turkiye's historical ties and formal diplomatic relations with Israel, as opposed to Malaysia's policy of avoiding direct engagement in most-similar case study approach. However, this paper sheds light on how their policies reflect broader trends and tensions in Jewish-Muslim relations in international relations.

## Keywords

Turkiye, Malaysia, Palestine Issue, Middle East, Israel.

## Resumo

Esta investigação realiza uma análise comparativa das políticas externas da Turquia e da Malásia relativamente à questão palestiniana e a Israel, destacando tanto as suas convergências como as suas divergências nas abordagens, no contexto mais amplo das relações entre judeus e muçulmanos. Ancara e Kuala Lumpur mantêm ligações extensas e multifacetadas em várias esferas, tais como a religião, a política, a economia, a cultura e as questões sociais no Médio Oriente. As posições políticas da Turquia e da Malásia constituem um estudo de caso comparativo esclarecedor para compreender o envolvimento dos países não árabes de maioria muçulmana com a causa palestiniana e o Estado de Israel. As suas iniciativas diplomáticas defendem consistentemente uma solução de dois Estados para o conflito israelo-palestiniano. Além disso, ambos os países prestam ajuda humanitária e ao desenvolvimento aos palestinianos que residem em territórios ocupados e campos de

refugiados. Este estudo argumenta que o apoio direto da Turquia à Palestina contrasta com a abordagem indireta da Malásia, com os laços históricos e as relações diplomáticas formais da Turquia com Israel, em oposição à política da Malásia de evitar o envolvimento direto numa abordagem de estudo de caso mais semelhante. No entanto, este artigo esclarece como as suas políticas refletem tendências e tensões mais amplas nas relações entre judeus e muçulmanos nas relações internacionais.

**Palavras-chave**

Turquia, Malásia, Questão da Palestina, Médio Oriente, Israel.

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# NON-ARAB MUSLIM PERSPECTIVES ON PALESTINE AND ISRAEL: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TURKISH AND MALAYSIAN STATE APPROACHES

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## Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains the most persistent and complicated issue in modern international relations. International actors, including countries with a majority of Muslims, have strong approaches to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Since the beginning of the problem has been principally regarded as an Arab issue, non-Arab Muslim states have usually remained passive observers due to geopolitical distance and ideological alignments during the Cold War. However, the 1969 Al-Aqsa fire spurred non-Arab Muslim states' involvement in Palestine via the newly formed Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) (Hossain, 2012). Although these states primarily deal with the issue through the OIC, they became increasingly sidelined after the 1990s (Rubin and Laquer, 2008) due to the Oslo Accords, predominant by Arab states, diminished the role of non-Arab Muslim nations in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. During this time, Malaysia also presented symbolic support for Palestine, while Turkiye, driven by regime security, shifted towards Israel. However, Turkiye and Malaysia, as two non-Arab modern Muslim-Sunni states have historical, geopolitical, ideological, and cultural deep ties with Palestine. On the other side, they have divergent diplomatic strategies towards the Palestine issue and Israel.

This study argues that Turkiye adopts a pragmatic and direct approach, balancing its diplomatic and economic ties with Israel while strongly supporting Palestine. In contrast, Malaysia maintains an uncompromising stance against Israel, providing indirect support to Palestine through ideological and humanitarian advocacy, primarily leveraging soft power and international platforms like the OIC. By examining these disparate approaches, the research offers a sophisticated understanding of how non-Arab Muslim nations navigate the complexity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This study did not select Indonesia, Pakistan, and Iran because Turkiye and Malaysia offer more distinctive perspectives on the Palestinian issue.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to be a significant foreign policy challenge for many nations due to the following three factors: its religious background, entanglement

with regional geopolitical rivalries, and the social and humanitarian repercussions of the conflict, such as displacement and persistent violence. (Bayraktar, 2019). Khalidi (1985) and Disntein (1994) examine the Arabs' views of the Arab-Israeli tension, while Mansab (2024) and Nonneman (2003) explore European approaches to the disputed issues between hostile sides. Slater (2002) focuses on American perspectives in the ongoing conflict. Pipes (1987), Kazziha (1985) and Brown (2003) analyzed Arab approaches to conflict. However, this study aims to investigate the two non-Arab Muslim nations regarding the Palestine-Israel conflict over time.

This article is divided into four sections: Navigating Complexities explores their broader Middle East policies; Turkiye's Policy examines its balance between ties with Israel and support for Palestine; Malaysia's Policy analyzes its firm opposition to Israel and consistent pro-Palestinian stance; and Diverging Paths, Common Ground compares their approaches, highlighting both differences and shared commitments. This paper allows for a comprehensive comparison of the convergences and divergences of how these two non-Arab Muslim countries navigate the complexities of the Palestinian question.

## Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This study aims to analyze the Palestine policies of these two (Turkiye and Malaysia) non-Arab Muslim nations, examining the political commonalities rooted in their historical connections and the distinct priorities shaping their roles on the issue. Specifically, the analysis will explore how each country's interpretation of the Palestinian struggle and its perspective on Israel's presence in the region influence their respective policies. Using a most similar systems design (MSSD) (Lijphart, 1971), this study considers Malaysia and Turkiye as two non-Arab, middle-power, Muslim-majority nations with similar normative identities, major pro-Palestinian stances, and membership in Islamic international organizations. Despite these similarities, they differ in their approaches to Israel, which makes them suitable for systematic comparison.

This study employs Role Theory (Holsti, 1970) as its main analytical tool to look at Malaysia's and Turkiye's foreign policies regarding Israel and the Palestinian conflict. The growing field of Foreign Policy Analysis gave rise to Role Theory, which highlights how state self-perceptions, identity constructions, and socially grounded assumptions impact their foreign policy (Hudson, 2005; Hermann, 1980; Breuning, 2007). Role Theory emphasizes the importance of national role conceptions in influencing decision-makers' opinions, policies, and diplomatic behavior rather than considering foreign policy only as a response to material interests or systemic restrictions (Harnisch, 2012). Role theory, which facilitates our understanding and interpretation of states' foreign policies, focuses on the thoughts of elites who determine national policies, their understanding of the international system, and other states' perceptions of their own state's role (Aggestam, 2004, 82). Within the framework of role theory, the identities that states possess are assumed to be a component of politicians' beliefs and domestic politics, rather than a result of their interactions with other states. (Wendt, 1999, 280)

This analytical perspective is particularly important when considering Malaysia's and Turkiye 's approaches to the Palestinian issue and Israel. Both countries are non-Arab, predominantly Muslim countries that actively engage in Islamic multilateral organizations

like the OIC and constantly express their support for Palestinian rights. Despite these similarities, their diplomatic strategies toward Israel and the Palestinian issue are quite distinct. Role theory, which highlights how each state develops and carries out its international role, provides a suitable framework for understanding this divergence.

## Navigating Complexities: Turkiye and Malaysia's Foreign Policy to the Middle East

During World War II, Turkiye adopted a policy of non-intervention in Middle Eastern affairs and focused instead on domestic modernization and forged new foreign alignments, primarily with Western nations (Khan, 2015). Following the war, Turkish foreign policy pivoted towards containing Soviet influence. The ideological and territorial ambitions of the USSR posed a significant threat to Turkiye's independence. To counter this, Ankara sought alliances with Western powers. Western anti-communist initiatives, such as the Truman Doctrine (1947) and the Marshall Plan (1948), profoundly impacted Turkish foreign policy. Confronted with Soviet demands regarding the Turkish Straits and the northeastern provinces of Ardahan and Kars (Shamir, 2008), Turkiye sought security guarantees from Western powers. This shift made Ankara the first Muslim-majority country to recognize Israel's independence in 1949 (Smith, 2000). Motivated primarily by concerns over Soviet expansionism, Turkish policymakers also recognized the potential advantages of fostering relations with the American Jewish community to lobby for Turkish interests within the Western power structure. However, this realpolitik decision, which prioritized national security over regional solidarity, alienated Arab states and strained Turkiye's relations with the Middle East for decades.

Throughout the Cold War, Turkiye, as a secular state, viewed the Palestinian cause primarily through a humanitarian lens, eschewing radical political involvement in the Middle East (Aykan, 1993). This stance was further shaped by its participation in the 1955 Baghdad Pact with Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan to counter Soviet influence. However, the pact's fragmentation with Iraq's withdrawal in 1959 and its subsequent transformation into the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) headquartered in Ankara strained relations with Arab states like Egypt and Syria, who viewed Turkiye with suspicion as the West's gendarme in the region (Dinc and Yetim, 2012). For instance, during the 1956 Suez Crisis, Turkiye navigated the competing interests of the United States and Britain regarding Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal (Sever, 1998). Rather, Turkiye's approach to the Arab-Israel conflict prioritized maintaining a balancing act between both the West and the Arab world.

In contrast, events like the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), the Johnson Letter (1964), and the Cyprus Issue all played a role in reshaping Turkiye's Cold War policies and its approach to the Palestinian question. To comprehend Turkish foreign policy toward the Middle East and the Palestinian issue, it is essential to consider both domestic and international factors. Historically, Turkish-Arab relations have been influenced by external factors. Notably, the Arab-Israeli conflict and Turkish-Western disputed views over the Cyprus issue in 1965 have served, at times, to bring these regional actors closer together in pursuit of their respective interests. Arguably, a decline in trust towards Western powers coincided with a gradual improvement in Turkiye's relations with the

Arab world. As Volk (2013, 27) observes, "*Whenever Israel was in direct confrontation with Arab states and whenever Israel was directly humiliating Palestinians,* Turkiye *was on the side of the Palestinians. Likewise, whenever Arab countries were intimidating Turkish concerns, Turkiye returned to Israel's side*". So, following the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, Turkiye began to diverge from the U.S. Middle East position. It refused Western requests to use the Incirlik airbase for military aid to Israel and instead supported UN resolutions calling for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories (Abadi, 1995). This shift continued during the 1973 Arab-Israel War, as Turkiye extended support to Palestine and other Arab states.

The domestic politics of Turkiye have played a crucial role in shaping Ankara's foreign policy towards the Middle East and Palestine in particular. Two significant factors in this regard are securitization and the ideology of political elites (Tür and Han, 2011). For instance, the 1980s saw further development under Turgut Özal's economic liberalization policies. Moving beyond the isolationist Kemalist approach, Turkiye adopted a conservative perspective, fostering closer economic ties with the Arab world (Dal, 2012). However, the post-Cold War era introduced new challenges. Turkiye's domestic politics, including securitization and the strategic relationship with Israel, formalized in the 1997 Security Pact, strained relations with some Arab states, particularly Syria (Şafak, 2024). The rise of the Justice and Development Party (JDP) in 2002 initially promised a new era of cooperation with its multi-pronged diplomacy and focus on the East. While this period did see increased cooperation, it was also marked by complex dynamics of competition, particularly evident during the Arab Spring uprisings and the 2017 Qatar crisis.

Malaysia's foreign policy prioritizes autonomy and national interest, guided by principles of peace, justice, and equality. The main objective of Malaysia's foreign policy is to carry out the country's mandate, which serves as an important capacity to protect the country's sovereignty and interests as well as make significant contributions to a just world community through professional diplomatic relations (Dollah, 2020).

Historically, Malaysia's foreign policy has undergone significant transformations. In the aftermath of World War II and the onset of the Cold War (1947-1991), the complex geopolitical environment, particularly the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, significantly influenced Malaysia's political and diplomatic stance (Iannone, 2023). During this period, Malaysia adopted a pro-Western alignment, integrating itself into the US-led anti-communist strategy. However, a shift towards greater neutrality emerged with the establishment of diplomatic relations with China in 1974.

Within the Islamic world, as one of the founders of the OIC, Malaysia, since 1969, has played an important role in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). Its first Prime Minister, the late Tunku Abdul Rahman (1957-1970), was the first Secretary General of the OIC (OIC, 2023a). One of the major steps taken by Malaysia was the signing of the OIC Islamic Charter in 1972. This strategy aimed to project Kuala Lumpur's image on the international stage and indirectly place Malaysia as one of the main and important countries in the third world (Dollah, 2020). Through the formation of the OIC, Malaysia began to collaborate closely and intensely with countries in the Middle East. The OIC is considered an important instrument for increasing multilateral cooperation, which can have a positive impact on the development of Malaysia's foreign policy towards the Middle

East. Malaysia became one of the mediator countries in resolving the Iran-Iraq war (Pertahanan, 2020). In addition, Malaysia also provides full support to the Palestinian people in their struggle to regain their land, which was occupied by Israel.

Malaysia's involvement in world diplomacy, especially in the Middle East region, is evidence that Malaysia takes an important role and participates in resolving problems and conflicts that often occur in the Middle East region. Malaysia is one of the countries in Southeast Asia that has been vocal in calling for Palestinian independence and condemning the brutal Israeli attacks. In this case, OIC has been an important platform for Malaysia since its founding. Through OIC, Malaysia uses its foreign policy to strengthen relations with countries in the Middle East. Furthermore, Malaysia also took part in several important things, such as hosting the OIC Conference in 1974 and 2003 (OIC b) and hosting the Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers on Terrorism in Muslim countries in 2002 (Moktal, 2022).

Under the leadership of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad (1981-2003) as Prime Minister, Malaysia underwent several dynamic changes in its international relations. Recognizing the importance of an active role in fostering closer ties with Islamic nations, particularly those in the Middle East, Mahathir pursued policies to enhance these connections. He notably implemented the Look East Policy, aimed at strengthening economic cooperation with East Asian nations (Hua, 1984). Serving the longest term in Malaysian history (1981–2003), Mahathir capitalized on this tenure to further improve Malaysia's relations with various countries, including those in the Middle East (Jaafar, 2022). Abdullah Ahmad Bedevi (2003-2009) developed the Kuala Lumpur image and initiatives in the Middle East. Malaysia's economic success and image as a modern Muslim nation have fostered closer ties with Saudi Arabia and the Middle East. While religion and history play a role, Malaysia's well-defined foreign policy and shared interests across the region are key drivers of these strong relationships (Harun, 2009). During the tenure of Najib Razak (2009-2018), in contrast to the foreign policy trends observed during Dr. Mahathir's era, he pursued a more moderate stance, emphasizing the importance of improving relations with all countries in the Middle East. This can be evidenced by the implementation of a number of policies with other GCC countries to combat extremism, radicalism, and terrorism over politics and economic relations (Castlereagh Associates, 2019). 24 November 2022, Political Islamist and Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Anwar Ibrahim ascended to office as prime minister in Malaysia. It is important to acknowledge that, alongside the religiously oriented diplomacy, there is a strategic venture to refrain aligning with or being categorized within any certain political or ideological bloc in the Middle East. Despite his past association with the Muslim Brotherhood, there is no indication that Prime Minister Anwar has faced significant obstacles with the influential regional states in the Middle East (Togoo, 2024).

## Turkiye's Policy on the Palestinian Question and Relationship with Israel

Turkiye's engagement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was far more closely tied to its relations with Western nations and the Arab world. In 1947, the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine was rejected by Turkiye together with Arab states (Aykan, 1993). Turkiye recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in June 1975 as the only

authorized representation of the Palestinian people. Turkiye was also backing the UN General Assembly resolution in November of the same year, which denounced Zionism as a form of racism and the "fruit" of "this era of power" (Shamir 2008). Moreover, the Turkish government did not accept Israel's annexation plan of Jerusalem in 1980 and criticized and condemned it very seriously (Hale, 2013). Following 1980, the Turkish public's interest in Palestine began to grow. One of the major causes for this is the National Vision Movement (Milli Görüş Hareketi) in Turkiye, which was led by Necmettin Erbakan and takes a political Islamist stance on the regional issues (Uzer, 2017). Turkiye was the fifth country in the world and the first NATO member nation to recognize Palestinians' right to exist on November 15, 1988, when the PLO declared an independent state in exile and adopted all UN resolutions mentioning Palestinians' right to exist (Bayraktar, 2019). On the other side, Turkiye and PLO relations were always reluctant because the PLO sided with the Greek thesis in Cyprus and supported radical leftist terrorists and revolutionary groups such as The Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP-C), Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) and Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in the Palestine and Lebanon Camps (Makovsky,1999 and Aras, 1997).

At the beginning of the 1990s, the U.S. had grown less willing to sell weaponry to Turkiye, which led the latter to forge ties with Israel to get a new supply of weapons for its battle against the PKK in southeast Turkiye. National security threats by neighboring countries like Iraq, Syria and Iran shifted Turkish foreign policy to Tel Aviv. Ankara also considered Israel a partner in allying against Syria, a nation that had become more hostile to support terrorist groups toward Turkiye (Walker, 2006). Turkiye also attached importance to her relationship with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), which was established in 1996 within the framework of the Oslo-I (1993) and Oslo-II Agreements (1995), as well as the cooperation that was focused on improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people. Turkiye supports the efforts of the State of Palestine to be recognized as a state in international forums (MFA, 2023).

When Pro-Islamic Justice and Development Party (JDP) under the Erdogan leadership ascended to power in Turkiye in 2002, Ankara paid attention to the developments in Palestine. Erdogan responded strongly against the assassination of Ahmad Yasin, who was the leader of Hamas (the US, Canada, the EU, and Japan classified it as a terrorist organization, while Iran, Russia, Turkiye, and Malaysia do not) in 2004. His speeches were appreciated by the Muslim world (Atrissi, 2017). In 2008, in Israel's Operation Cast Lead in Gazza, thousands of innocents were killed by Israel's army, and it caused Turkiye and Israel's relations to deteriorate. Turkiye was one of the leading pro-supporters of Palestinians in Gazza and an anti-Israel figure in the international community. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan consistently used harsh language against his Israeli counterpart, accusing Israel of killing civilians. The Gaza War marked a watershed moment in Turkish-Israeli relations in 2008 (Bayraktar, 2019). Turkiye supported Hamas politically and tried to convince Fatah to cooperate with all functions against Israel's pressure in Palestine. Two significant events dramatically changed Ankara's foreign policy toward Palestine. Firstly, on 29 January 2009, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan fought during a panel debate about Gaza at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland (Hale, 2013). The second is Israeli soldiers

attacking and killing nine Turkish citizens on the Mavi Marmara flotilla sailing to break the Gaza blockade in the international waterways (Cagaptay, 2009).

These tragic events increased Turkiye's credibility with the Palestinians because of how costly its strong anti-Israeli position was—bloodshed occurred during the fleet raid, and its strategic partnership with Israel was strained, leading to negative military and economic effects (Bakir and Abu Amer, 2012). Turkiye canceled the joint military training and projects with Israel. In this context, Turkiye actively backed the State of Palestine in its bid for membership in UNESCO in 2011. Moreover, Palestine's upgrade of status to a "non-member observer state" at the UN on 29 November 2012 by the overwhelming support of the members of the UN, including Turkiye, constituted a landmark in the recognition of Palestine as a state (MFA, 2023). Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Muhammed Mursi came to power in 2012 in Egypt; Turkiye considered it as a possible friend related to their shared common history and Sunni identity. This new alliance affected Turkiye's aggressive diplomatic position in the 2012 Israeli-Gaza war, in which it collaborated with Egypt and Qatar. However, Turkiye's position altered once the Muslim Brotherhood was deposed in Egypt in 2013. During the 2014 Gaza conflict, Erdogan chastised both Israel and Egyptian President al-Sisi, undermining Turkiye's influence. The Rabia sign, which represents sympathy with the Muslim Brotherhood, became an important aspect of the JDP's rhetoric, firmly embedded in Erdogan's speeches and eventually becoming the party's motto (Sultan, 2020).

For Turkiye, the Palestinian issue is more than just a historical, religious, or emotional one. Due to its sensitivity, Trump's declaration on December 6, 2017, to transfer the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, the Turkish government criticized the US's president decision to any form of agreement concerning Palestinian areas, will not be oblivious to changes in the Palestinian problem (Bayraktar, 2019). Turkiye opposed the normalization between Israel and Arab states, citing concerns about neglecting Palestinian interests. The Abraham Accords in 2020 were perceived as weaknesses, including hasty timing, contradiction with the international community, notably the UN, and a disregard for the two-state solution (Bayrak, 2021). Turkiye's discourses changed at the beginning of the October War in 2023. Turkiye's Foreign Minister, Fidan, said, "There should be a guaranteed mechanism for monitoring, verifying, (and) when needed, enforcing the obligations of the parties in a just peace," and "We must be unequivocal in condemning and resisting the loss of any single innocent life" (Calli, 2023)

Regarding the post-7th October Israeli war in Gaza, Turkiye has engaged in the conflict crisis in all formal and informal ways. President Erdoğan, speaking at the 5th Conference of the League of Parliamentarians for Al-Quds in Istanbul, saluted the brave Palestinian children stand out against oppression and criticized those who have massacred thousands of Palestinians, comparing them to modern-day pharaohs and Nazis. He specifically condemned Netanyahu as the "Butcher of Gaza," stating that this dark stain will never be removed. Erdoğan emphasized that Turkiye will not label Palestinian resisters as terrorists and will continue to support Hamas as defenders of their homeland. He reaffirmed Turkiye's commitment to the Palestinian cause and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. Highlighting Turkiye's humanitarian efforts, he noted the delivery of nearly 50,000 tons of aid to Gaza and the transfer of 900 Gazans to Turkiye for treatment since October 7

(TCCB, 2024). On the other side, Turkiye has disapproved claims of defense-based cooperation with Tel Aviv, affirming that it will not operate in any activity that harms Palestinians. The Defense Ministry stated on April that it is not possible for the Republic of Turkiye, which has always supported Palestine, to conduct any activities with Israel, including military training, exercises, or defense industry cooperation (TRT World, 2024). On 20 April, 2024, Turkish President, following hours-long talks with Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh in Istanbul, encouraged Palestinians to unite amid Israel's war in Gaza (Aljazeera, 2024). In wake of Israel's increased attacks in Gaza, universities, NGOs, and social-political groups in Turkiye organized mass protests to condemn Israel's military intervention in Gaza and to support the Palestinian people (Gungor, 2024; Daily Sabah, 2024). Turkiye also supported Palestinian victims and condemned Israeli attacks in Gaza on international organizations' platforms.

## Malaysia's Policy on the Palestinian Question and Approach to Israel

Malaysia has consistently supported the Palestinian struggle and opposed the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land post-1948. The Malaysian government has never established diplomatic relations with Israel but supports a peace plan based on Israel's return to the 1967 borders as per the 1949 Armistice Agreements, with East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state (Parliament of Malaysia). Malaysia's support for Palestine is consistently voiced in international forums, regardless of political factions. Both Hamas and Fatah are treated fairly by the Malaysian Government, even though the official Palestinian diplomatic mission in Kuala Lumpur is under Fatah's authority in Ramallah (Abdulrahmana, 2015). Malaysia's endorsement of the Palestinian people and issue is deeply embedded in its foreign policy, which emphasizes the right to self-determination, as outlined in Article 1(2) of the UN Charter and Common Article 1 of both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966). These international legal provisions underpin Malaysia's steadfast support for Palestinians in their quest for their rights (Yusoff, 2019). Since achieving independence in 1957, Malaysia has prioritized support for Palestinians in its foreign policy, with heightened awareness following the Six-Day War in 1967 (Saidin, 2016).

For decades, Malaysia's support for Palestine has remained unwavering, viewing it as a nation oppressed by Israeli violations of human rights. In 2003, Mahathir addressed the UN General Assembly, attributing many global issues to the expropriation of land in Palestine for the creation of Israel. He reiterated this stance in 2018, identifying this issue as a fundamental cause of regional terrorism (Strait Times, 2018). At the international level, Malaysia has actively supported Palestine from a human rights perspective and has vehemently condemned the egregious violations of international law committed by Israel. In response to accusations of anti-Semitism against Malaysia and particularly against Mahathir, the Malaysian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has emphasized diplomatic values and adherence to international law in its public diplomacy messages (Chooi, 2012). Despite the geographical distance from Palestine, Malaysia has maintained its steadfast support by refusing to recognize Israel as a sovereign state. Notably, Malaysia is among the few countries that do not have diplomatic relations with Israel (AP News, 2019). On multiple

occasions, Malaysia has barred entry to Israeli athletes intending to participate in international sports competitions in Kuala Lumpur (Strait Times, 2021).

Another significant motivation for Malaysia's vocal support of Palestine is the humanitarian issue, central to the critique of Israel's indiscriminate actions. Malaysia consistently condemns Israel and highlights the humanitarian violations against Palestinians in international forums. A notable example of this advocacy is the formation of Viva Palestina Malaysia (VPM), a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) dedicated to raising support for the Palestinian people, focusing specifically on humanitarian issues (Koss, 2019). Malaysia-Israel relations are a particularly sensitive issue for Muslims in Malaysia. Malaysia, along with most Muslim-majority countries, has never recognized Israel as a sovereign state and maintains no diplomatic relations with it. Reflecting this stance, former Malaysian Foreign Minister Dato' Sri Saifuddin bin Abdullah, during the 74th anniversary of Nakbah Day (May 14, 1948) in Putrajaya, stated, "*Malaysia will continue to express unwavering support and solidarity with our Palestinian brothers and will not even establish relations with Israel*." (Ahmad, 2022).

At the 15th East Asia Summit in Hanoi in Vietnam in 2020, Malaysia's role in advocating a two-state solution was evident. The summit included participation from the United States, represented by National Security Advisor Robert C. O'Brien. Former Malaysian Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin addressed the forum, where he affirmed Malaysia's solidarity with Palestine (East Asia Summit Document Series, 2020). Additionally, the Malaysian government, alongside Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam, issued a Joint Statement condemning the escalation of violence by Israelis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. They emphasized their support for establishing an independent and sovereign Palestinian state and reiterated their solidarity with the Palestinian people (United Nations General Assembly, 2021). Malaysia, along with these countries, demanded an end to Israel's attacks on Palestinians.

Similarly, on December 6, 2017, when the United States under President Donald Trump recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, significant protests occurred at the US embassy in Kuala Lumpur. Demonstrators called for the US to rescind its statement and urged the Malaysian government to take immediate action to support Palestine (Razif, 2018). During these protests, notable Malaysian politicians such as former Prime Ministers Najib Razak and Mahathir Mohamad participated, condemned Trump's decision and expressed their support for Palestine. These leaders, along with various Malaysian NGOs supporting Palestinian independence, have built a strong transnational network aimed at promoting Palestinian independence and assisting relevant actors in realizing this goal (Ridzuan and Majid, 2023). In coordination with Turkiye, on 27 July 2019, former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad emphasized the need for Malaysia and Turkiye to collaborate to keep the Palestinian issue prominent despite efforts to downplay it (D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, 2019). Similarly, on 12 May 2021, the President of Turkiye discussed the Palestinian issue with the King of Malaysia and the Emir of Qatar, highlighting the need for unity against the oppression faced by Palestinians due to Israeli attacks on the al-Aqsa Mosque (Mulia, 2021).

Malaysia's longstanding anti-Israel stance has intensified in the context of the 7 October Gaza War. Kuala Lumpur's hostility toward Tel Aviv is impacted by both international and domestic reasons. Internationally, the Malaysia supports Palestinian rights in to assist

Islamic values. Domestically, it uses anti-Israel and pro-Palestinian rhetoric to strengthen its influence and position among the Muslim-majority population (Redlich, 2024). On 17 October 2023, the Malaysian Government called on the international community to prevent massacres and ethnic cleansing by Israel against the Palestinian people. During the Ministerial Question Time (MQT) in Parliament, Prime Minister Ibrahim reiterated Malaysia's firm stance on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, demanding an immediate cessation of hostilities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs). He condemned all forms of violence against women, children, and civilians by any party and expressed his dismay at the global silence and inaction in the face of Palestinian suffering in Gaza.

On 22 October 2023, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Istanbul to discuss various issues, including the Palestinian situation. Malaysia, along with other Islamic countries, pledged to support Turkiye's significant decisions and policies to establish a sovereign Palestinian state (Harian Bernama Malaysia, 2023). On 24 October Ibrahim also participated Malaysia Islamic Youth Organization's protest with his 16.000 citizens to solidarity with Palestine and condemn to Israel (Reuters, 2023). He said "*It's a level of insanity …it's the height of barbarism in this world''.*

On 31 October 2023, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim addressed in the parliament that "*Malaysia strongly rejects all forms of terrorism and categorically condemns the actions of killing innocent lives and taking women and children as hostages in Palestine.".* On March 2023 Anwar Ibrahim, during the Germany and Malaysia diplomatic meeting, told that "*"What I reject strongly is this narrative, this obsession, as if the entire problem begins and ends with the 7th of October. It did not begin on the 7th October and did not end with the 7th of October. It began four decades before that and continues daily*" (Lagardien, 2024). Additionally, he condemned Western countries, including the United States, for failing to act against Israeli oppressors in a television program aired on Arab News (2024). As of 2024, the International Criminal Court (ICC) has received complaints from the Palestinian Authority and several international human rights groups alleging Israel of war crimes in the West Bank and Gaza. Following the intensification of the confrontation between Israel and Hamas on October 7, 2023, this judicial process gained quickness (ICC, 2024). Turkiye and Malaysia have closely monitored the ICC proceedings and expressed their support for Palestinian rights under international law. Turkiye supports legal applications to the ICC for Palestine, and Turkish President Erdoğan urged for international action, citing proof of Israeli war crimes (Hürriyet Daily News, 2024). Anwar Ibrahim, Malaysia's prime minister, supported the ICC's probe into Gaza and called for sanctions and a quicker legal procedure (Anadolu Agency, 2024). On 8 June 2024, Malaysia and Turkiye together with other six members of D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation Organization in Istanbul issued a joint declaration to call an immediate ceasefire and lift US veto to full membership of Palestine in at the UN, and enforce international pressure on Israel's violation in Gaza (D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, 2024).

## Different Ways and Common Ground: Turkiye and Malaysia's Policies on the Palestinian and Israel

Two prominent non-Arab Muslim nations, Malaysia and Turkiye, have different but similar stances on the Palestinian problem. Although both nations strongly support Palestinian rights, their strategies for responding to diplomacy are very different. Turkiye's approach is defined by direct engagement and pragmatic diplomacy. Historically, Turkiye continued diplomatic relations with Israel. However, Turkiye has also stood up as a key supporter for Palestinian statehood, supporting international recognition initiatives and providing significant humanitarian aid. Under the President Erdogan's leadership, Turkiye's pro-Palestinian stance has enhanced, particularly following the Gaza wars in 2008. By striking a balance between ideological commitments and strategic goals, Turkiye chose to maintain commerce ties with Israel despite its outspoken criticism.

Malaysia has a strong anti-Israel stance, refusing to recognize Israel or build diplomatic relations. Based on Islamic sympathy and humanitarian campaigns, its foreign policy places significant value on its unwavering support for Palestine. Malaysia employs its position in the UN and OIC to object to Israeli policies and advocate for Palestinian statehood. Global action is encouraged by leaders such as Anwar Ibrahim and Mahathir Mohamad, who argue against Western backing for Israel. Unlike Turkiye, Malaysia uses soft power rather than direct engagement to impose economic restrictions on Israel and organize pro-Palestinian protests. However, with a focus on using international justice systems like the ICC to hold Israel responsible, both nations have increased their diplomatic and humanitarian efforts. The main differences between Turkiye and Malaysia are based on their approaches to engagement. Turkiye's strategy combines pragmatic diplomacy and active engagement, keeping relations with both Israel and Palestinian groups while promoting Palestinian sovereignty. Malaysia's approach is more rigorous and ideological, preferring a total boycott of Israel and prioritizing moral and humanitarian advocacy before direct political action. While both states support the Palestinian cause, Turkiye pursues a more sophisticated, strategic approach, whilst Malaysia pursues a consistent, steadfast pro-Palestinian posture in its foreign diplomacy.

## Conclusion

Turkiye and Malaysia, two non-Arab developed countries in the Islamic world, presented both similarities and differences in their approaches to the Palestinian issue and relations with Israel in this study. *Malaysia usually is a more vocal stance* frequently criticizing Israeli policies towards Palestine**,** *but is more practical than Turkiye, at least does not recognize Israel or have formal* relations with it. While Turkiye plays a more active role for instance, in mediation, hosting Hamas and PLO leaders and providing humanitarian assistance. *However,* Turkiye recognized Israel diplomatically in 1949 to safeguard national interests during the Cold War and largely avoided involvement in Arab world issues until the 1960s.

Turkiye also advocates for a negotiated resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on UNSC Resolutions 242, 338, 1397, and 1515, the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative, and the Road Map, promoting two states living side by side within secure

and recognized borders. Malaysia also endorses these UNSC Resolutions in international forums but refrains from establishing diplomatic relations with Israel to firmly oppose Zionist policies in Palestine. Malaysia's foreign policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is straightforward, emphasizing the ummah, humanitarian concerns, strong leadership, and criticism of the superpowers' handling of the conflict and human rights issues. Both Turkiye and Malaysia, as members of the United Nations, D8, and OIC, vocally support Palestinian independence in various international forums. While Turkiye takes a more confrontational and implement pro-Islamist strategy, Malaysia emphasizes peaceful advocacy through international organizations such as the OIC and ASEAN.

Both countries passionately support Palestinian independence, but their methods reflect varying degrees of participation and ideological objectives. Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East, particularly Palestine, is shaped by its own governments and varies with the ideological orientation of its ruling parties, being more proactive during conservative administrations and more reserved during secular ones. In contrast, Malaysia's position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has remained steadfast and consistent across various administrations, from the tenure of Tunku Abdul Rahman to Anwar Ibrahim. Malaysia actively advocates for a just resolution to the conflict, consistently articulating its stance in domestic and international forums. Additionally, Malaysia supports Turkiye's pro-Palestinian position while upholding non-interference principles in other nations' internal policies. It also engages in bilateral cooperation with countries like Turkiye to address international crises, including the Palestinian issue. Turkiye and Malaysia maintain strong relationships with the PLO and Hamas concerning the Palestinian cause. Both countries' conservative policymakers utilize the Palestinian issue to bolster their positions against secular opposition parties in local political competition. For political Islamist leaders like Erdogan and Anwar Ibrahim, the Gaza conflict is also a significant event for enhancing their stature within the Islamic world. Substantially, Malaysia focuses on strong discursive but keeps a distance, while Turkiye actively and closely engages in the situation.

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# O COLONIALISMO (NÃO) ESTÁ MORTO: UMA ANÁLISE PÓS-COLONIAL DO CONFLITO ISRAELO-PALESTINIANO

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## Resumo

O que é hoje o Estado de Israel nasceu em 1948, num processo mediado pelas Nações Unidas durante a divisão da Palestina. No contexto da primeira revolta palestiniana, o Hamas emergiu no final dos anos 80 com um compromisso à resistência armada contra a ocupação israelita, visando substituí-la com um Estado palestiniano. Após décadas de tensão, os ataques de outubro de 2023 desencadearam mudanças na conjuntura geopolítica da região, causando uma mudança de paradigma no discurso político. Enquanto contribuições académicas anteriores se focam na abordagem colonial a um conflito intraestadual e em propor definições para o mesmo, este artigo interpreta o impacto do colonialismo no conflito Israelo-Palestiniano a partir de uma lente pós-colonial, através da desconstrução de discursos de atores internacionais relevantes após setembro de 2023 e com cinco categorias como guias teóricos

- "Colonialismo de Povoamento", "Preconceito", "Restrição de Liberdades" e "Violência". A análise sugere a conclusão de que, do ponto de vista da maioria dos atores internacionais, a Palestina é a parte oprimida no conflito.

**Palavras-chave**

Estado da Palestina; Nações Unidas; Colonialismo; Conflito; Atores Internacionais.

**Abstract**

What is today the State of Israel was founded in 1948, in a process mediated by the United Nations during the division of Palestine. In the context of the first Palestinian uprising, Hamas emerged in the late 1980s with the commitment to armed resistance against the Israeli occupation, aiming to replace it with a Palestinian State. After decade-long tensions, the October 2023 attacks triggered changes in the regional geopolitical conjuncture, causing a paradigm shift in political discourse. While previous academic contributions focus on the colonial approach to an intrastate conflict and propose solutions to define it, this article interprets the impact of colonialism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a post-colonial lens, deconstructing discourses of significant international actors after September 2023 with five categories as theoretical guides – "Settler Colonialism", "Prejudice", "Segregation", "Restrictions to Freedom", and "Violence". The analysis points to the conclusion that, in the perspective of most international actors, Palestine is the oppressed party in the conflict.

**Keywords**

State of Palestine; United Nations; Colonialism; Conflict; International actors.

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# O COLONIALISMO (NÃO) ESTÁ MORTO: UMA ANÁLISE PÓS-COLONIAL DO CONFLITO ISRAELO-PALESTINIANO

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## Introdução

Em 1948, após a formação do Estado de Israel e do primeiro *Nakba*, iniciou-se o conflito Israelo-Palestiniano. Apesar das décadas de tensão na região, este conflito regressou aos holofotes da atenção mediática internacional após os ataques de 7 de outubro de 2023, perpetuados pelo grupo armado Hamas em zonas fronteiriças na manhã de sabá e que tiraram a vida a mais de um milhar de israelitas (Omer, 2024).

Estados, Organizações Internacionais e a sociedade civil têm demonstrado preocupação face à recente escalada de violência e aos relatos de episódios de violação de Direitos Humanos. Assim sendo, estudos desenvolvidos em torno deste tema são pertinentes (Bashir e Busbridge, 2018, p. 391), particularmente após outubro de 2023, tendo em conta a mudança de paradigma provocada pelos ataques do Hamas no discurso político dos atores internacionais.

Adicionalmente, aparenta existir uma lacuna na literatura no que diz respeito à interseção entre a teoria pós-colonial e a excecionalidade da natureza do conflito Israelo-

Palestiniano. Conforme declarado por Bashir e Busbridge (2018, p. 391), a visão pós-colonial tende a ser marginalizada em detrimento de abordagens teóricas "tradicionais", o que influencia a conceitualização do conflito e conceção de planos de resolução por parte de líderes estatais, meios de comunicação e até mesmo cidadãos comuns. Neste sentido, consideramos que uma análise orientada pela teoria pós-colonial poderá ter um impacto positivo na compreensão e eventuais tentativas de resolução do conflito – pelo que este estudo assume essa lente teórica.

Através da análise de discursos realizados por inúmeros atores entre setembro de 2023 e abril de 2024, o presente artigo tem como objetivo investigar de que forma a teoria pós-colonial pode contribuir para o entendimento do conflito Israelo-Palestiniano como uma forma distinta de colonialismo, atendendo à incompletude das análises oferecidas pelas teorias tradicionais, que negligenciam o legado do colonialismo europeu nas estruturas, identidades, processos e instituições da ordem política contemporânea (Bashir e Busbridge, 2018, p. 391; Sajed, 2022; Veracini, 2019).

Após a análise discursiva, seguiu-se a discussão e análise dos resultados, nas quais procurámos retirar conclusões pertinentes e alinhadas com as atuais circunstâncias geopolíticas. Também neste estágio, retomámos conceitos-base da revisão da literatura realizada, sustentada nos principais estudos da teoria pós-colonial e numa revisão compreensiva de análises previamente realizadas no âmbito da teoria colonialista. Enquanto o processo detalhado de desconstrução do discurso pode ser consultado no Anexo I, os resultados e conclusões são apresentados na secção final do presente artigo.

## Revisão da Literatura

### Colonialismo de Povoamento

A complexidade da ocupação israelita da Palestina tem sido, ao longo das décadas, exaustivamente examinada através de lentes teóricas diversas. Porém, a perspetiva do "colonialismo de povoamento" (em inglês, *'settler colonialism')* é a que reúne maior nível de consenso entre os académicos da área.

Lloyd (2012, pp. 67-68) explica que a manutenção do projeto sionista exige, por natureza, uma hierarquia social divisiva – e, consequentemente, a perceção da presença palestiniana como uma ameaça existencial. Deste modo, a ferramenta utilizada para o domínio territorial é, por excelência, o colonialismo de povoamento (Veracini, 2019, p. 569), que se distingue do colonialismo tradicional na medida em que o principal objetivo dos colonos não é extração de recursos naturais e humanos para benefício próprio, mas sim a conquista permanente do território, expulsando o povo colonizado (Elkin e Pedersen, 2005, citados por Bashir e Busbridge, 2018, p. 391) para regressar à que consideram a sua pátria por direito (Veracini, 2015, p. 270).

Hilal (2015) aprofunda este conceito e afirma que o colonialismo de povoamento e o regime de "apartheid" imposto por Israel não partilham das características de exploração de trabalho indígena presentes na África do Sul. Pelo contrário, assemelha-se mais às

particularidades apresentadas pelo sistema de "reserva" utilizado pelos colonos europeus para dominar os nativos americanos e aborígenes australianos (Hilal, 2015, p. 3). Desse modo, a estratégia de ocupação israelita é singular, posto que opera numa lógica de eliminação da presença indígena (Wolfe, 2006, citado por Bashir e Busbridge, 2018, p. 391).

Enquanto formas tradicionais de colonialismo procuram exercer domínio permanente sobre os territórios indígenas a partir de um centro metropolitano separado, o colonialismo de povoamento visa eliminar a presença do povo indígena através da sua substituição (Veracini, 2013, p. 27), uma técnica denominada de "espacio-cídio" (Sen, 2020, p. 39). Por outras palavras, a meta não é a separação entre colono e colonizado, mas sim da "indigenização" do colono (Veracini, 2013, p. 26), através da negação do indigenismo do povo colonizado (Veracini, 2019, p. 572). Este processo é concluído quando as distinções entre o externo (a metrópole) e o interno (a população indígena) deixam de ser percetíveis.

Este aspeto explica a dificuldade em detetar a ocorrência de colonialismo de povoamento em locais nos quais o colonizador venceu (Veracini, 2013, p. 28). Até certo ponto, este efeito já se verifica em Gaza e na Cisjordânia, uma vez que a identidade palestiniana foi erodida até ao ponto que a aceitação como palestiniano depende dos critérios impostos pelo Estado de Israel. Os restantes – nomeadamente, refugiados e palestinianos indígenas com nacionalidade israelita – são considerados uma minoria étnica e não reconhecidos como grupo nacional (Hilal, 2015, p. 2).

Vale notar que o processo de indigenização do colono nem sempre é simples ou natural. Frequentemente, a construção de uma narrativa de pertença histórica ao território desempenha um papel fundamental na sustentação de movimentos coloniais, conferindo legitimidade à reivindicação de indigineidade do colonizador (Veracini, 2019, p. 578).

Tendo enquadrado a ocupação israelita da Palestina nas óticas do colonialismo de povoamento, "apartheid" e sistemas de reserva, é imperativo mencionar que atores mais progressistas têm vindo a rejeitar as teorias pré-existentes, salientando a importância de forjar termos específicos que definam plenamente a condição geopolítica única que se verifica neste conflito.

Em particular, Merav Amir (2021) expõe a excecionalidade do controlo exercito por Israel, que relega a tradicional gestão populacional e territorial, optando por um conceito híbrido de pós-ocupação (p. 5). No caso de Gaza, esta reconfiguração do domínio substitui a ocupação *per se* pela contenção territorial, o que, consequentemente, limita o futuro político da região. Embora esta nova contextualização procurasse uma aproximação ao contexto de cerco, os ataques de 7 de outubro e a retaliação de Israel constituem uma situação sem precedentes, que exige, tal como explicado em continuação, uma rutura das teorias tradicionais.

## Estado de Exceção

Outros contributos académicos evidenciam a natureza contraditória da ação do Estado de Israel no sistema internacional. Por um lado, Israel reclama normalidade, legitimidade e pertença aos estados ocidentais, que se afirmam bastiões da democracia e civilização e promotores de valores liberais e humanistas. Pelo contrário, em simultâneo, assume o papel de colonizador e alega, face à necessidade emergencial de defesa contra uma "ameaça externa", "carácter excecional", o que lhe confere isenção das normas de direito internacional (Lloyd, 2012, p.65).

O estado de exceção é, de acordo com David Lloyd (2012), uma característica marcante das colónias de povoamento (p. 71), em linha com a lógica de dominação que, para justificar a expropriação de terras indígenas, se tece uma narrativa complexa de moralidade *vs.* imoralidade e civilização *vs.* barbárie, com o colonizador como legítimo protetor da ética e da moral (p. 63).

No contexto em estudo, o estado de exceção não se traduz somente no tratamento discriminatório de palestinianos pela lógica da suspensão da lei por um motivo de força maior. Mais do que isso, normaliza-se através da regulamentação e criação de um "regime de hiperlegalidade" (Hussain, 2007, citado por Lloyd, 2012, p. 75). Em suma, a "proliferação" e "multiplicação de leis" sedimentam a permanência do estado de exceção, legitimando o regime de ocupação (Lloyd, 2012, p. 75).

## Dualidade Anticolonial e Pós-colonial

Autores como Sen (2020) e Hilal (2015) realizaram uma análise inovadora da questão palestiniana, segundo a premissa de que o pós-colonialismo e o anticolonialismo coexistem na Palestina (Sen, p. 10). Num contexto de colonialismo de povoamento, é particularmente incomum a coexistência destas duas dinâmicas, uma vez que existem estruturas que fornecem uma ilusão de pós-colonial (Sem, p. 10) e movimentos pela libertação que promovem a emancipação do povo palestiniano, para que as suas perspetivas sejam preservadas em resistência ao discurso do colonizador (Barakat, 2018, p. 358).

Os Acordos de Oslo de 1993 incentivaram esta dualidade, dada a sua influência na supressão do movimento anticolonial através do estabelecimento de estruturas pós-coloniais como o Governo de Gaza (Sen, 2020, pp. 26-27), que, involuntariamente, aceleraram o ritmo de destruição do movimento colonial (Hilal, 2015, p. 4).

## Solução de Dois Estados, Estado Único ou Binacionalismo

A solução de dois Estados argumenta que a autodeterminação nacional é expressa mais adequadamente de forma territorial. Assim, a formação estatal é necessária para que se alcance a verdadeira transição do período de domínio e ocupação para o período de independência. Embora tenha sido uma das soluções propostas para este conflito, é hoje

considerada desadequada e demasiado simplista pela maioria dos autores, em comparação com a solução do estado único (Bashir e Busbridge, 2018, p. 395 e Hilal, 2015, p. 4).

Adicionalmente, Veracini (2013) menciona que a proposta de uma solução de dois Estados advém de um entendimento do conflito que passa de subjugação colonial para descolonização. Esta perspetiva negligencia a realidade do colonialismo de povoamento e falha em compreender o sionismo como um movimento que o perpetua; ademais, não pondera as experiências do povo palestiniano em diáspora e de grupos minoritários como os árabes israelitas (p. 27).

No seu artigo de 2018, Bashir e Busbridge evidenciam a forte conexão entre as histórias judaica e palestiniana no território histórico da Palestina, o que inviabiliza ainda mais a divisão (p. 389). Além disto, ao manifestar compromisso com a solução de um Estado, Israel ver-se-ia necessariamente forçado a abdicar dos seus privilégios enquanto colonizador e a renunciar ao projeto sionista (p. 396).

A corrente binacionalista, no entanto, afirma que a existência de dois grupos nacionais com direitos iguais à autodeterminação torna exequível a descolonização da Palestina e o reconhecimento mútuo de palestinianos e judeus (p. 398).

## Discursos Pós-7 de Outubro

Os recentes desenvolvimentos motivados pelos ataques de 7 de outubro motivaram autores como George Horațiu Bontea a rever a conceitualização do conflito (Bontea, 2023, p. 209). Através da análise de discursos, Bontea tentou demonstrar o impacto dos discursos políticos como ferramenta para o prolongamento e agravamento da tensão entre as partes, culminando em ação violenta (Bontea, 2023, p. 210).

O artigo conclui com dois elementos que atuam como pilares narrativos, influenciando a perceção internacional do conflito. Por um lado, a abordagem da Palestina relativamente à afirmação da sua identidade política acentuou a já turbulenta relação com Israel (Bontea, 2023, p. 222). De outro modo, esta permitiu também que o Hamas tomasse as rédeas da totalidade da narrativa da causa palestiniana, reduzindo a imagem da Palestina à visão deste grupo específico. Conteudo, o autor declara ainda que as ações de ocupação promovidas pelas forças armadas israelitas podem ter incitado maior hostilidade nas comunicações públicas emitidas pelo Hamas (Bontea, 2023, p. 222).

## Metodologia

A presente pesquisa centra-se na exploração da perceção internacional sobre o conflito Israelo-Palestiniano, através de uma análise de discursos políticos orientada pela tese do pós-colonialismo. De acordo com Sajed (2022), o pós-colonialismo estuda o mundo moderno com base na premissa de que a experiência colonial e a violência não só moldaram como continuam a influenciar as estruturas, identidades, processos e

instituições que compõem o sistema político mundial (p. 62). Esta teoria surge durante os processos de descolonização, com o objetivo de assegurar justiça epistémica – isto é, de reinterpretar a história e as teorias das Relações Internacionais no sentido de incluir vozes, histórias e perspetivas não-ocidentais (p. 73).

A interpretação de discursos pressupõe o conhecimento de conceitos-chave relevantes e relacionados com a base teórica, nomeadamente de "colonialismo", "anticolonialismo", "orientalismo" e "colonialismo de povoamento". Estes são brevemente definidos nos parágrafos seguintes.

O colonialismo pode ser entendido como o processo de conquista e controlo de sociedades com a finalidade de "anexar os seus territórios e controlar os seus recursos" (Sajed, 2022, p. 63). Já "anticolonialismo" corresponde à mobilização histórica erguida por atores locais contra o domínio colonial (Sajed, 2022, p. 64).

O termo "orientalismo" foi cunhado por Edward W. Said (1979), referindo-se à produção tendenciosa de conhecimento sobre o Oriente pelos estados ocidentais, o que legitima o domínio colonial através da construção de narrativas e da hegemonia científica e cultural do Ocidente (pp. 323-330).

Em contrapartida, o colonialismo de povoamento é um sistema de opressão (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388) no qual a eliminação da população nativa é uma condição necessária para a anexação de território e exploração de recursos (Wolfe, 2001, p. 868). A destruição da cultura e legado indígenas são frequentemente apoiadas pela aplicação de legislação discriminatória a favor do opressor.

O presente estudo seleciona um total de 18 discursos compreendidos entre setembro de 2023 e abril de 2024 para análise. Estes incidem principalmente sobre as intervenções após 7 de outubro de 2023, de maneira a refletir a atual conjuntura sociopolítica desencadeada pelos ataques coordenados do Hamas na fronteira israelita. As principais fontes foram jornais internacionais (de onde retirámos citações parciais) e transcrições completas de comunicados partilhadas por Ministérios dos Negócios Estrangeiros e secretariados de organizações internacionais governamentais e não-governamentais.

Após uma triagem inicial, na qual apurámos quais das declarações melhor se encaixavam no enquadramento teórico do artigo, foi elaborado um esquema de codificação. Nesta chave, que se encontra explicitada na Tabela 1 do Anexo, estabelecemos cinco categorias de análise ("Colonialismo de Povoamento", "Preconceito", "Segregação" e "Restrição de Liberdades"), que se desdobram em doze subcategorias com a finalidade de melhor integrar as perspetivas em oposição no conflito. Os discursos escolhidos foram fragmentados em citações e posteriormente organizados na tabela de análise (Tabela 2 do Anexo), conforme a sua correspondência com a definição de cada categoria.

Por último, com base no conteúdo de ambas as tabelas que compõem a análise qualitativa, elaborámos a discussão dos resultados apresentados e respetivas conclusões.

Limitações ao estudo incluem o reduzido número de amostras teoricamente relevantes no período de tempo considerado, a barreira linguística –os discursos de língua original hebraica ou árabe foram analisados na sua forma traduzida, e não no idioma no qual foram proferidos – e a subjetividade e particularidade inerentes aos estudos qualitativos.

## Análise de Discursos

**Tabela 1.** Esquema de Codificação

| Categoria | Subcategoria | Descrição | Unidade de Análise |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Colonialismo de Povoamento** | Realizado por Israel | Esta categoria inclui discursos que demonstram que Israel foi vítima de colonialismo de povoamento. | Frase ou excertos de uma frase |
| | Realizado pela Palestina | Esta categoria inclui discursos que demonstram que a Palestina foi vítima de colonialismo de povoamento. | Frase ou excertos de uma frase |
| **Preconceito** | Contra Israel | Esta categoria inclui discursos que expõem a existência de preconceito contra a população israelita. | Frase ou excertos de uma frase |
| | Contra a Palestina | Esta categoria inclui discursos que expõem a existência de preconceito contra a população palestiniana. | Frase ou excertos de uma frase |
| **Segregação** | Sofrida pelos israelitas | Esta categoria inclui discursos que denotam segregação da população israelita. | Frase ou excertos de uma frase |
| | Sofrida pelos palestinianos | Esta categoria inclui discursos que denotam segregação da população palestiniana. | Frase ou excertos de uma frase |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Restrição de Liberdades** | Liberdade de movimento (Israel) | Esta categoria inclui discursos que delatam restrições à liberdade de movimento da população israelita. | Frase ou excertos de uma frase |
| | Liberdade de movimento (Palestina) | Esta categoria inclui discursos que delatam restrições à liberdade de movimento da população palestiniana. | Frase ou excertos de uma frase |
| | Liberdade de expressão (Israel) | Esta categoria inclui discursos que acusam restrições à liberdade de expressão da população israelita. | Frase ou excertos de uma frase |
| | Liberdade de expressão (Palestina) | Esta categoria inclui discursos que acusam restrições à liberdade de expressão da população palestiniana. | Frase ou excertos de uma frase |
| **Violência** | Sofrida pelos israelitas | Esta categoria inclui discursos que denunciam atos de violência contra a população israelita. | Frase ou excertos de uma frase |
| | Sofrida pelos palestinianos | Esta categoria inclui discursos que denunciam atos de violência contra a população palestiniana. | Frase ou excertos de uma frase |

## Análise dos Resultados

### Colonialismo de Povoamento

A existência desta categoria torna-se imperativa para o enquadramento teórico do pós-colonialismo, no sentido em que não é possível analisar o conflito Israelo-Palestiniano segundo a lente pós-colonial sem abordar a natureza de eliminação indígena que está na sua base (Wolfe, 2006, citado por Bashir e Busbridge, 2018, p. 391).

Na categoria "Colonialismo de Povoamento", todos os discursos foram analisados segundo as duas subcategorias incluídas nas Tabelas 1 e 2: "Realizado por Israel" e

"Realizado pela Palestina". Aqui, procura-se identificar frases que sugiram que colonialismo de povoamento foi realizado por Israel ou, pelo contrário, pela Palestina.

O processo de escolha das frases que integram os discursos foi feito mediante a procura de palavras-chave como: "ocupação", "povoamento", "exílio", "desapropriação", "usurpação", "expansão" ou "expulsão". Isto é, as frases foram selecionadas de acordo com menções à apropriação territorial que está na origem do colonialismo de povoamento.

Dentro da categoria, foram encontradas 24 frases pertencentes à subcategoria "Realizado por Israel". No que diz respeito à subcategoria "Realizado pela Palestina", 0 frases foram encontradas.

## Possíveis Resultados

Dos discursos que foram analisados, nenhum fez menção a colonialismo de povoamento ter sido realizado pela Palestina, sendo que, em todos os discursos abrangidos por esta categoria, Israel é o único ator acusado de praticar colonialismo de povoamento neste conflito.

Esta conclusão vai ao encontro da análise teórica feita na revisão de literatura, na qual a maioria dos autores consideram Israel um Estado intencionalmente colonizador, que tem por objetivo a ocupação permanente do território e a primordial expulsão do povo palestiniano.

## Preconceito

O discurso pós-colonial é inseparável do preconceito de ambas as partes uma em relação à outra. O preconceito não só confere legitimidade às suas narrativas e ações, como está também relacionado com a unilateralidade de perspetivas que resulta da produção hegemónica do conhecimento pelo Ocidente e reconhecimento do mesmo como legítimo (Said, 1979).

Nesta categoria, os discursos foram distribuídos por duas categorias: preconceito contra Israel e preconceito contra a Palestina. Enquanto cinco citações foram atribuídas a Israel, não conseguimos encontrar nenhum discurso em que autoridades da Palestina manifestem ser vítimas de preconceito. Para proceder a esta classificação, focámo-nos na palavra-chave "antissemitismo" – frequentemente utilizada por Israel e pela sociedade ocidental como uma forma de invocar a memória histórica do Holocausto, uma terrível memória histórica que é utilizada para legitimar o estado de exceção exercido por Israel.

## Possíveis Resultados

Embora esta não seja a categoria com o maior número de citações, há uma evidente discrepância entre o número de ocorrências nas distintas partes, com a ausência de menção a ataques preconceituosos contra a Palestina.

A interpretação literal deste resultado indicaria que a população israelita é, em comparação, a que mais sofre de preconceito no contexto do conflito.

## Segregação

A inclusão desta categoria é de igual modo essencial para a realização de uma análise abrangente no âmbito da teoria pós-colonial. As políticas de segregação evidenciam a tentativa de divisão da sociedade conforme uma hierarquia racial que culmina na dominação do povo opressor sobre o oprimido (Sajed, 2022, p. 60-62). Numa lógica pós-colonial, procura-se precisamente denunciar este tipo de práticas discriminatórias, que levam à subjugação e eliminação da população nativa nos espaços, com os discursos como ferramenta de perpetuação (Sajed, 2022, p. 71).

Foram definidas as subcategorias "Sofrida pelos israelitas" e "Sofrida pelos palestinianos", procurando-se nos discursos evidências que expusessem a prática de segregação contra a população israelita ou palestiniana, respetivamente. Para localizar e identificar as frases e excertos que se enquadram nestas subcategorias foram utilizadas algumas palavras-chave, tais como: "apartheid", "segregação", "discriminação" e "racismo". Deste modo, as frases foram atribuídas à categoria conforme a alusão a qualquer tipo de prática segregatória.

Segundo este critério, foram identificadas quatro frases para a subcategoria "Sofrida pelos palestinianos" e apenas uma para "Sofrida pelos israelitas".

## Possíveis Resultados

Apesar de não estar entre as categorias com maior número de ocorrências, a questão da segregação vai estando presente ao longo dos discursos pró-palestina que denunciam o carácter colonizador do Estado de Israel. Por conseguinte, verifica-se um número superior de ocorrências cometidas contra o povo palestiniano, sendo Israel recorrentemente acusado de perpetuar sistemas de apartheid onde práticas discriminatórias e leis de segregação permitem a ocupação eficaz da Palestina.

## Restrição de Liberdades

Para analisarmos o conflito Israelo-Palestiniano, há que prestar também atenção à restrição de liberdades, uma vez que, no enquadramento teórico pós-colonial, entender

de que maneira um povo vê a sua liberdade – em vários sentidos – condicionada pela imposição de outro é fundamental.

De forma a obter um resultado mais preciso, esta categoria foi dividida em duas partes: "Liberdade de movimento" (dividida para restrições impostas a Israel e à Palestina) e "Liberdade de expressão" (novamente dividida para englobar ambas as partes). No caso da liberdade de movimento, quatro frases foram encontradas sobre a Palestina e nenhuma correspondência foi encontrada para a subcategoria "Israel". Quanto à liberdade de expressão, três frases foram encontradas relativamente à Palestina e nenhuma enquadrada na subcategoria "Israel".

## Possíveis Resultados

Nesta categoria observamos um maior número de citações ligadas à restrição de liberdades palestinianas, em ambos os casos. Tal demonstra que Israel tem vindo a condicionar a liberdade do povo palestiniano, o que, à luz da teoria pós-colonial, reflete os meios através dos quais um Estado opressor leva a cabo práticas coloniais que limitam a atividade do povo colonizado e apagam a sua presença física e discursiva.

## Violência

A categoria "Violência" surge devido à necessidade de, à luz do pós-colonialismo, expor a violência sofrida e perpetuada por ambas das partes (Sajed, 2022, p. 69). Assim, para analisar os discursos dentro deste parâmetro, foram designadas duas subcategorias: "Sofrida por israelitas" e "Sofrida por palestinianos".

Para escolher as frases mais adequadas dentro da categoria, houve um foco na procura de palavras-chave como: "violência", "ataque(s)", "morte(s)", "vítima(s)", "extermínio", "massacre", "genocídio" "inocente(s)", "assassinato" ou "crime(s)", bem como respetivos sinónimos ou palavras derivadas. Desta forma, as frases selecionadas refletem os diversos âmbitos em que a violência foi perpetrada.

Dentro da categoria "Violência", foram identificadas vinte e cinco frases referentes à subcategoria "Sofrida por israelitas". No que concerne à subcategoria "Sofrida por palestinianos", trinta frases foram selecionadas.

## Possíveis Resultados

Dentro da categoria "Violência", ainda que existam mais frases que se inserem na subcategoria "Sofrida por palestinianos", os discursos de ambas as subcategorias têm números semelhantes no que diz respeito a referências de perpetuação de violência.

De um ponto de vista pós-colonial e considerando a categoria em análise, ambas as partes do conflito podem ser associadas aos papéis de oprimido e de opressor nos diferentes discursos, uma vez que ambas perpetuam e sofrem violência.

## Discussão dos Resultados

Após uma avaliação dos resultados obtidos para as cinco categorias, é possível observar uma tendência discursiva na qual a Palestina é percecionada como vítima em, pelo menos, quatro das cinco categorias de análise: "Colonialismo de Povoamento", "Segregação", "Restrição de Liberdades" (incluindo de movimento e expressão) e "Violência".

A utilização de termos como "invasão sionista" em discursos enquadrados na categoria "Colonialismo de Povoamento" refletem o reconhecimento, ainda que moderado, de que a Palestina tem vindo a sofrer uma ocupação comparável à colonização. Neste contexto, a lente pós-colonial é a mais adequada para demonstrar que as vozes palestinianas necessitam de espaço para partilharem as suas ideias, uma vez que o seu espaço geográfico se encontra condicionado por outra entidade. Esta interpretação vai ao encontro da literatura existente sobre o conceito, uma vez que os discursos políticos evidenciam a necessidade do colonizador de exterminar a população nativa para exercer pleno controlo sobre o território e os seus recursos (Wolfe, 2006, citado por Bashir e Busbridge, 2018, p. 391).

Por outro lado, dadas as múltiplas menções a regimes de "apartheid" e segregação, a questão racial torna-se primordial para compreender a hierarquização das perspetivas em confronto do ponto de vista pós-colonial. Não só após outubro de 2023, mas ao longo da história do conflito Israelo-Palestiniano em geral, a questão étnica pesa na dinâmica entre as partes, que recorrem a práticas e políticas de segregação, frequentemente denominadas "apartheid". A referência ao regime de segregação racial mantido entre 1948 e 1994 na África do Sul é, mais do que meramente ilustrativa, uma ferramenta utilizada pelos locutores para evocar uma memória familiar de violência. Assim, através da memória, os discursos reforçam a intensidade do nível de segregação aplicado pelas autoridades israelitas a fim de silenciar as vozes palestinianas. Tal resultado corrobora também com as observações de Hilal (2015): o regime de segregação em vigor em Israel não tem por base explorar o povo palestiniano a nível laboral, mas sim eliminar a presença dos nativos.

Do mesmo modo – e com um objetivo idêntico - as liberdades palestinianas são restringidas pelas autoridades israelitas a vários níveis, sobretudo no movimento e na expressão. Tal como mencionado anteriormente, a criação e manutenção de um "regime de hiperlegalidade" normaliza a ocupação e cimenta o domínio israelita sobre a Palestina (Hussain, 2007, citado por Lloyd, 2012, p. 75). A imposição destas limitações torna ainda mais evidente as práticas coloniais e a necessidade de expressão e resistência por parte do povo oprimido, cujo acesso ao espaço intelectual onde o conflito é debatido se mantém

largamente limitado. Assim, os discursos são marcados pela denúncia do silenciamento das vítimas e da sua vilanização pelos meios de comunicação social, tendencialmente controlados pelo opressor, em aliança com os países "civilizados" do Ocidente (Said, 1979).

Em contrapartida, existe uma categoria em que se verificou que Israel se destaca como principal vítima: a categoria "Preconceito". Ainda que não tenhamos encontrado nenhuma menção direta a este tópico na literatura, o surgimento constante deste fator nos discursos políticos é uma mais-valia para compreender a dinâmica do conflito e, em particular, o carácter mediático assumido pela disputa, particularmente desde 7 de outubro de 2023.

Uma interpretação literal dos números, sem acompanhamento teórico, sugeriria que o preconceito contra o povo palestiniano não é um fator a ter em conta ao estudar as motivações por detrás das divergências entre as partes, dado que Israel – nos discursos estudados – é entendido como vítima nesta categoria.

No entanto, conforme descrito na teoria do Orientalismo de Edward Said (1979), a representação do conflito nos meios de comunicação *mainstream* tende a ser enviesada e a difundir a narrativa Ocidental, silenciando as vozes e perspetivas de quem realmente se encontra no terreno. Mas, como tem acontecido com as grandes guerras do nosso tempo, o conflito alastrou-se para o mundo online, onde a não-filtragem de informação permite pintar uma imagem mais clara da disputa. A partilha instantânea de imagens e declarações nas redes sociais não tem resultado somente na polarização da opinião pública, mas também na materialização de preconceitos contra minorias que o mundo para lá das fronteiras do conflito assume serem representadas por duas fações em guerra – a comunidade judaica, da qual o Estado de Israel se considera guardião, e a comunidade muçulmana, do lado palestiniano, representada pelo Hamas no olho público.

Em Berlim, portas apareceram marcadas com estrelas de David (BK, 2023). Porém, é incorreto declarar que apenas a comunidade judaica tem sido alvo de "ataques preconceituosos" – uma palavra-chave na nossa pesquisa – desde 7 de outubro. Pelo contrário, os ataques de ódio contra muçulmanos (islamofobia) dispararam desde o evento, para níveis considerados preocupantes (TellMAMA UK, 2023; VOA News, 2023).

Por fim, a categoria "Violência" trouxe resultados distintos das categorias anteriores. Apesar do superior número de amostras para a subcategoria "Sofrida pelos palestinianos", ambas as partes conflitantes têm um número semelhante de proclamações que indicam terem sido vítimas de violência infligida pelo opositor. Ainda que os tipos de violência relatados tenham motivações distintas, no caso de Israel, os discursos demonstram que as violações e massacres sofridos têm origem em visões antissemitas. No caso da Palestina, acusa-se a existência de um "genocídio" motivado pelo desejo de limpeza étnica em Gaza, e a prática de crimes de guerra por parte de Israel. Deste modo, ambos os povos, segundo a lente pós-colonial, poderiam ser vistos como vítimas pela comunidade internacional.

De facto, na literatura é reconhecida a violência sofrida por Israel, especialmente no que diz respeito aos ataques terroristas cometidos pelo Hamas contra civis israelitas (Bontea, 2023). Também nos discursos surge este reconhecimento; porém, se nos basearmos somente no número de frases identificadas, corremos o risco de retirar conclusões precipitadas. Frequentemente, Israel recorre à memória dos atos históricos cometidos contra o povo judeu, em particular ao Holocausto, para suportar o seu discurso e a necessidade de se proteger para sobreviver. Deste modo, não é possível afirmar que ambos sofram o mesmo tipo de violência e que as suas vozes estejam a ser apagadas da mesma forma.

Quando analisado o conteúdo dos discursos, questões como a da desproporcionalidade da violência devem ser tidas em conta. Os estudos realizados anteriormente indicam que, apesar de Israel constantemente recorrer à ideia do "Estado de Exceção" para justificar os seus atos violentos face à "ameaça palestiniana" (Lloyd, 2012, p. 65), o que é verificado nos discursos é uma violência exacerbada que vai para além da autodefesa, colocando a Palestina como uma vítima nesta categoria e Israel para lá da legalidade no Direito Internacional.

Assim sendo, através desta análise, podemos afirmar que a Palestina é reconhecida pelos principais atores políticas como a entidade oprimida neste contexto. Consequentemente, a lente pós-colonial permite reconhecer o sistema de dominação em vigor e a necessidade do povo palestiniano de se libertar da hegemonia colonial ainda presente, para poder encontrar legitimidade e voz junto da comunidade internacional.

## Conclusão

O presente estudo teve como principal intuito a análise pós-colonialista do conflito Israelo-Palestiniano, através da análise de 18 discursos proferidos por Chefes de Estado, Ministros dos Negócios Estrangeiros, Organizações Internacionais e Organizações Não-Governamentais. Acreditamos que a nossa pesquisa preenche uma lacuna na literatura após os ataques de 7 de outubro de 2023, que causaram uma vez mais profundas alterações na conjuntura geopolítica sensível e volátil de Gaza. Foram estabelecidas cinco categorias para análise, que permitiram determinar que a Palestina é considerada a parte oprimida neste contexto – com especial destaque para o âmbito da violência, onde se verifica uma significativa desproporcionalidade nos meios de atuação.

É importante notar que o estudo foi limitado pelo reduzido número de amostras compatíveis com a nossa base teórica no período de tempo em análise, pela barreira linguística (especialmente nos discursos de língua original hebraica ou árabe) e a subjetividade e particularidade intrínsecos a estudos qualitativos, que dificultam a generalização destas conclusões para além do caso Israelo-Palestiniano. Porém, oferece uma perspetiva renovada em relação a este conflito dinâmico e em constante transformação, através de um regresso a uma teoria crítica frequentemente negligenciada em detrimento das tradicionais.

Dadas as transformações que os ataques do Hamas em 7 de outubro de 2023 provocaram nas narrativas de ambas as partes, pensamos existir espaço para mais investigação, nomeadamente no âmbito das redes sociais, dado o mediatismo do conflito.

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## Anexo

**Tabela 2.** Análise

| Categoria | Subcategoria | Exemplos de unidades de análise | Referência |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Colonialismo de Povoamento** | Realizado por Israel | "returned home and built a national home" (1)<br><br>"A land which welcomed the ingathering of exiles from one hundred different countries." (1)<br><br>"The Zionist Invasion of Palestine (...) to conquer Palestine. They attacked and occupied (…)They depopulated the villages (...) (5)<br><br>"Now Israel occupies all of Palestine." (5)<br><br>"(…) The Zionist purpose of these small settlements was and is to hold the land and set roots for settlements in the Palestinian land to prevent their return. (…) Their homes are occupied by settlers(...)" (5) | (1), (5), (8), (9), (10), (12), (13), (17) |

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| | | "That is the abolishment of Zionism and all its components: (...) dispossession, occupation (...)" (5)<br><br>"(...)in support of the Palestinians, the people of Gaza, and the oppressed people of this region (...) in support of the Palestinian people during these tens of years since the lands of Palestine were usurped." (8)<br><br>"May God curse the usurping Zionist regime!" (9)<br><br>"I come to you, carrying the cause of my people who are struggling for freedom and independence" (10)<br><br>"the continued Israeli occupation of our land" (10)<br><br>"to liberate the land from a colonial occupation that does not believe in peace" (10)<br><br>"The effects of this Nakba continue and are exacerbated by the Israeli occupation of our land." (10)<br>"This occupation challenges your resolutions (...)" (10)<br><br>"This occupation violates the principles of international law and international legitimacy (...)" (10)<br><br>" (...) end to the Israeli occupation of our territory (...)" (10)<br><br>" (...) affirm the illegality of the Israeli occupation, and its settlements (...)" (10)<br><br>"We want to be protected from occupation, from (...) the terrorist Israeli settlers." (10)<br><br>" (...) this hideous occupation that is imposed on us will not last (...)" (10)<br><br>"(...) the continued expansion of Israeli settlements (...) and repeated large-scale Israeli operations in Palestinian areas" (12) | |

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| | | "Declarations that areas now constitute Israeli State land, together with legal decisions that strengthen settlements and potentially increase demolitions and evictions (...)" (12)<br><br>"The demolition and seizure of Palestinian-owned houses and other structures continues" (13)<br><br>"Israel's occupation must end" (13)<br><br>"(...) and the denial of the right to statehood to the Palestinian people (...)" (13)<br><br>"In Gaza alone, 1.9 million Palestinians were forcibly displaced (...) State-backed settler violence increased." (17) | |
| | Realizado pela Palestina | | |
| **Preconceito** | Contra Israel | "Questioning the Jewish people's right to self-determination, is not legitimate diplomacy, it is antisemitism" (1)<br><br>"Vilifying and attacking Jews, whether in Israel, in the United States, or anywhere in the world is antisemitism" (1)<br><br>"(...) Western countries openly showed the evil nature of Western civilization. (...) their civilization is based on evil (...) it was built on separation from and antagonism toward spirituality and spiritual virtues and values. No good can be expected from it." (9)<br><br>"Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas must stop spreading the horrible antisemitic conspiracies against the Jewish people and the Jewish state." (16)<br><br>"(...)the Palestinians must stop spewing Jew-hatred and finally reconcile themselves to the Jewish state." (16) | (1), (9), (16) |

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| | Contra a Palestina | | |
| **Segregação** | Sofrida pelos israelitas | "Jewish communities all over the world lament the beginning of our national exile…" (1) | (1) |
| | Sofrida pelos palestinianos | "That is the abolishment of Zionism and all its components:(...) , Apartheid, racism, discrimination (...)" (5)<br><br>"apartheid policies that they are practicing against our people." (10)<br><br>"(...) perpetuating (...) entrenching apartheid." (10)<br><br>"Israeli authorities maintained their system of apartheid, passing laws that deepened the segregation (...), confined Palestinians to deprived locations, and implementing policies that furthered the systematic dispossession of Palestinians. (...) all intensified forced displacement." (17) | (5), (10), (17) |
| **Restrição de Liberdades** | Liberdade de movimento (Israel) | | |
| | Liberdade de movimento (Palestina) | "They were besieged and blockaded by Israel since 2006 from land, air and sea. Their supplies and movements were severely limited." (5)<br><br>"(...) and with minimal opportunities for patients to exit Gaza (...)" (13)<br><br>"(...) the continued prohibition on nearly all Palestinian workers entering Israel since 7 October, and severe movement and access restrictions across the West Bank (...)" (13)<br><br>"Israeli authorities increased restrictions on freedom of movement across the occupied West Bank." (17) | (5), (13), (17) |

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| | Liberdade de expressão (Israel) | | |
| | Liberdade de expressão (Palestina) | "(...)in the days of touted freedom of expression, the voice of the victim is silenced, denied, condemned and vilified." (5)<br><br>"The control that the Zionists have had over global media outlets throughout these years has not allowed for any voice to be broadcast in favor of Palestine or against the Zionists." (8)<br><br>"Detentions of Palestinians without charge or trial (...)" (17) | (5), (8), (17) |
| **Violência** | Sofrida pelos israelitas | "For one single reason, because they were Jews, just living in the State of Israel with the explicit goal to eradicate Jewish life." (2)<br><br>"52 innocent victims met their death at the hands of islamic terrorists." (3)<br><br>"The UK is unequivocal in condemning all acts of terrorism and we have stood by Israel's side" (3)<br><br>"I commend Israel's taking legal action against those settlers who have perpetrated violence." (3)<br><br>"and I will make it clear that rather than spreading disgusting, anti-Semitic tropes, and outrageous distortions of history, they should be clear in their denouncement of violence." (3)<br><br>"The bloody hands of the terrorist organization Hamas — a group whose stated purpose for being is to kill Jews. (...) This attack has brought to the surface painful memories and the scars left by a millennia of antisemitism and genocide of the Jewish people." (4)<br><br>"(...) Hamas using rape, sexual violence, and terrorism and torture | (2), (3), (4), (6), (7), (11), (12), (13), (14), (15), (16), (18) |

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| | | of Israeli women and girls (...)" (6)<br><br>"(...) want to completely annihilate a neighboring democracy — completely annihilate it. Hamas' stated purpose for existing is the destruction of the state of Israel and the murder of Jewish people." (7)<br><br>"Antisemitism is being seen at demonstrations, in statements, in attacks on Jewish shops, in threats" (11)<br><br>"Hamas does not want reconciliation with Israel, but the extermination of Israel." (11)<br><br>"The horrific terror attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups on 7 October, including mass killings, the use of sexual violence, torture, and the taking of hostages, were an intolerable denial of the most basic values of humanity, and a breach of the most fundamental rules of international law" (12)<br><br>"Over 100 days have passed since more than 1,200 Israelis and others were killed in the horrific terror attacks launched by Hamas against Israel, with over 250 people taken hostage" (13)<br><br>"(...) Hamas killers who committed crimes against innocent Israelis and against humanity" (14)<br><br>"(...) the women and girls who were raped, murdered and mutilated by Hamas murderers" (14)<br><br>"(...) the crimes against humanity committed by Hamas murderers, carried out with the clear approval of their religious leaders to terrorize Israeli society" (14)<br><br>"(...) since October 7, the United Nations has convened 41 times and has neither condemned nor denounced the brutal crimes of Hamas" (14) | |

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| | | " (...) it would be seen as a reward for terror (...)" (15)<br><br>" (...) after the most atrocious attack committed against the Jewish people since the Holocaust." (15)<br><br>" (...) this war has been forced upon us by a cynical enemy that not only targets our civilians, has raped, beheaded, burnt babies alive, killed children in front of their parents (...)" (15)<br><br>" (...) they're committing a double war crime (...)" (15)<br><br>" (...) will live to fight another- to commit another massacre and another massacre?" (15)<br><br>"The Palestinian Authority must stop glorifying terrorists. They must stop its ghoulish pay-to-slay policy of giving money to Palestinian terrorists for the murder of Jews." (16)<br><br>"More than 1,300 innocent Israelis killed (...) by the terrorist group Hamas" (18)<br><br>"Scores of innocents (...) taken hostage" (18)<br><br>"October 7th, which was a sacred (...) became the deadliest day for the Jewish people since the Holocaust" (18)<br><br>"(...) bring home those who are being held captive by Hamas" (18) | |
| | Sofrida pelos palestinianos | "(...) running Genocide in Gaza" (5)<br><br>"(...) Gaza (…) The largest Concentration Camp on earth (...)" (5)<br><br>"Massacres were used as a weapon of ethnic cleansing." (5)<br><br>"That is the abolishment of Zionism and all its components: war crimes, | (5), (7), (8), (9), (10), (12), (13), (18) |

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| | | (...) AND GENOCIDE" (5)<br><br>"I'm heartbroken by the tragic loss of Palestinian life (...) We can't ignore the humanity of innocent Palestinians who only want to live in peace and have an opportunity." (7)<br><br>"(...) some Islamic countries are also helping the Zionist regime! When? When it is busy killing children, women, and infants." (8)<br><br>"(...) Zionist regime! Not only did they not stop their massacre of women, children, and defenseless people (...) but they even escalated the killing." (9)<br><br>"They kill children in the arms of their mothers. They kill patients in hospitals.(...)they resort to attacking families, children, civilians, and elderly men (...)They have killed over 30,000 innocent civilians in the past six months." (9)<br><br>"The Israeli occupation government also persists in its violations of the city of Jerusalem and its people." (10)<br><br>"We want to be protected from occupation, from the constant aggressions of the occupation army and the terrorist Israeli settlers." (10)<br><br>" (...) the Israeli, racist right-wing government continues its attacks on our people and its army and its racist, terrorist settlers continue to intimidate and kill our people, to destroy homes and property (...)" (10)<br><br>"(...) I wonder why remain silent about all the flagrant violations of international law that are being committed by Israel (...)" (10)<br><br>"The occupying power unlawfully withholds our money with no just cause." (10) | |

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| | | "Israel bears full responsibility (...) for the deliberate spread of weapons, drugs, and criminal killings taking place in Arab cities inside Israel (...)" (10)<br><br>"Allow me here to tell you that as long as we continue to suffer under the abhorrent Israeli occupation (...)" (10)<br><br>"In Gaza, six and a half months of Israeli military operations have created a humanitarian hellscape. Tens of thousands of people have been killed. Two million Palestinians have endured death, destruction, and the denial of lifesaving humanitarian aid; they are now staring down on starvation" (12)<br><br>"According to UNICEF, more than 13,900 Palestinian children have reportedly been killed in intense, often indiscriminate attacks" (12)<br><br>"(...) with severe limitations imposed by the Israeli authorities on the delivery of humanitarian aid to people in Gaza, who are facing widespread starvation" (12)<br><br>"More than 450 Palestinians, including 112 children, have been killed in the occupied West Bank since 7 October" (12)<br><br>"Others were killed by armed Israeli settlers, sometimes in the presence of Israeli security forces who reportedly stood by and did nothing to prevent these killings" (12)<br><br>"(...) the reported killing of a 14-year-old Israeli boy over the weekend set off another wave of armed settler attacks against at least 37 Palestinian villages in the occupied West Bank. Four Palestinians were killed, including a 17-year-old boy" (12)<br><br>"I urge Israel to take immediate | |

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| | | steps to end the unprecedented levels of settler violence (...)" (12)<br><br>"More than 25,000 people, mainly women and children, have reportedly been killed in operations launched by Israeli forces. More than 60,000 others have been reportedly injured" (13)<br><br>"The entire population of Gaza is enduring destruction at a scale and speed without parallel in recent history" (13)<br><br>"2.2 million Palestinians in Gaza face inhumane, squalid conditions, struggling to simply make it through another day without proper shelter, heating, sanitary facilities, food, and drinking water" (13)<br><br>"(...) reports of Israel's inhumane treatment of Palestinians detained during military operations" (13)<br><br>"Hamas uses innocents — innocent families in Gaza as human shields (...)" (18)<br><br>"The Palestinian people are suffering greatly as well. We mourn the loss of innocent Palestinian lives" (18)<br><br>"The people of Gaza need food, water, medicine, shelter" (18) | |

## Discursos

**1** – 19/07/2023 - Israeli President, Isaac Herzog, addressing the US Congress

**2** - 19/10/2023 - Speech by European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, at the European Parliament

**3** - 12/09/2023 - Speech by the UK's Foreign Secretary at the International Counter Terrorism Conference in Herzliya, Israel

**4** – 10/10/2023 – Remarks by the US President, Joe Biden

**5** - 14/04/2024 - Speech by activist Salman Abu Sitta, meant to be delivered at the Palestine Conference, to be held in Berlin, Germany

**6** – 11/12/2023 – Remarks by the US President, Joe Biden, given at a Hannukah Reception

**7** – 19/10/2023 – Speech by the US President, Joe Biden

**8** – 10/04/2024 – Speech delivered by Imam Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, in a meeting with Iranian officials and the ambassadors of Muslim countries

**9** – 10/04/2024 – Sermons delivered by Imam Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, after the Eid al-Fitr prayer in Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla

**10** – 21/09/2023 - Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' address to the UN General Assembly

**11** – 02/11/2023 – Speech by German Vice-Chancellor Robert Habeck

**12** – 18/04/2024 - UN Secretary-General's remarks to the Security Council on the Middle East

**13** – 23/01/2024 - N Secretary-General's remarks to the Security Council - on the Middle East

**14** – 11/03/2024 - Speech of the Israeli Foreign Ministry Katz at the United Nations Security Council

**15** – 25/02/2024 - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on "Face the Nation"

**16** – 22/09/2023 – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addresses the UN General Assembly

**17** - Not dated - Amnistia International - "Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories"

**18** – 18/10/2023 – Remarks by the US President, Joe Biden, on the October 7th attacks and "the Resilience of the State of Israel"

*Nota: Após a tomada de posse da administração Trump em janeiro de 2025, a maioria dos discursos publicados no *website* oficial da Casa Branca deixaram de estar disponíveis.

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# CHINA'S IDEATIONAL INFLUENCE ON IRAN: THE 25-YEAR COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP THROUGH ROLE THEORY AND POLITICAL NARRATIVES

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## Abstract

The conclusion of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between China and Iran in 2021 represented a significant milestone in the evolution of their bilateral relations. Framed within the Belt and Road Initiative, this agreement became both a vehicle for cooperation and a shared institutional arrangement. Based on Wendt's Constructivism and on role theory, the analysis contends that China articulates a particular international identity and seeks to shape the ideational environment of its partners, fostering alignment with Chinese norms and policy orientations. To assess the extent to which such influence is reflected in Iran, the study examines the narratives of political leaders and key opinion makers through discourse analysis, focusing on their interpretations of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

## Keywords

Belt and Road Initiative; Comprehensive Strategic Partnership; China; Iran.

## Resumo

A assinatura da Parceria Estratégica Abrangente entre a China e o Irão em 2021 representou um marco significativo na evolução das suas relações bilaterais. Enquadrado na Iniciativa da Rota da Seda, este acordo tornou-se simultaneamente um veículo de cooperação e um acordo institucional partilhado. Com base no construtivismo de Wendt e na teoria dos papéis, a análise defende que a China articula uma identidade internacional específica e procura moldar o ambiente ideacional dos seus parceiros, promovendo o alinhamento com as normas e orientações políticas chinesas. Para avaliar em que medida essa influência se reflete no Irão, o estudo examina as narrativas de líderes políticos e formadores de opinião importantes através da análise do discurso, centrando-se nas suas interpretações da Parceria Estratégica Abrangente.



**Palavras-chave**

Iniciativa «Belt and Road»; Parceria Estratégica Abrangente; China; Irão.

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# CHINA'S IDEATIONAL INFLUENCE ON IRAN: THE 25-YEAR COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP THROUGH ROLE THEORY AND POLITICAL NARRATIVES

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## Introduction

Historically peripheral to China, the Middle East became strategically significant in the 21st century. Early Ming Dynasty interactions waned due to domestic priorities, and Beijing's modern engagement only began in 1949. China's role grew notably in the 1990s and 2000s as an emerging economic power (Kemp, 2012; Elnaggar, 2020).

Since the early years of the twenty-first century - and particularly throughout its second decade - China has advanced three main vectors of interest, stimulated by the opportunities created both by the Arab Spring and by the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The first would assure a secure energy supply, driven by China's sustained dependence on energy imports to support economic growth, particularly oil.(Qian, 2016). The second vector concerns the expansion of trade, the safeguarding of strategic transport corridors, and the development of infrastructures capable of ensuring their security and functionality. Finally, a third, secondary vector concerns security cooperation with the region's States, with the primary goal of combating what Beijing calls the "Three Evils" - terrorism, extremism, and separatism (Castilla, 2016; Kamel, 2018; Hoh, 2019).

Alongside economic and security goals, Beijing developed political ties, establishing the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (2004) and the China-Gulf Cooperation Council Strategic Dialogue. Guided by non-interference, China's "business-first" approach since 2011 fostered efficient ties with rival regional states, offering an alternative model amid the Arab Spring's turmoil and U.S. disengagement (Kemp, 2012; Sidlo, 2020; Hoh, 2019).

Over the last decade, China's growing presence in the Middle East has been most visibly expressed through trade, energy interdependence, infrastructure connectivity, and the expansion of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In this context, Iran occupies a particularly relevant position due to its geostrategic location, energy resources, and the political constraints imposed by sanctions and regional rivalry. The 25-year Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP), formally signed in 2021, marked a turning point in the institutionalisation of Sino-Iranian relations, consolidating a long-term framework for cooperation in economic, infrastructural, and political terms.

Most analyses of China-Iran relations have understandably emphasised material drivers: energy security, sanctions evasion, trade diversification, and geopolitical balancing. These factors are essential and cannot be dismissed. However, if the CSP is treated only as an economic arrangement, an important part of the relationship remains underexplored: the extent to which China also shapes the ideational environment in which Iranian elites interpret, justify, and publicly frame this partnership.

China's "Pivot to the West" strategy strengthened perceptions of its political influence in the Middle East. Through the BRI, Beijing pursued a soft-power approach, in clear contrast to U.S. tactics. In his speech at the Arab League on 21 January 2016, President Xi Jinping stressed peace, cooperation, and mutual benefit, calling on regional states to join the BRI (Sharma, 2019; Lin, 2017). On that occasion, Xi highlighted the distinctive traits of China's engagement in the Middle East, presenting the country as a promoter of peace talks rather than a seeker of power or "any sphere of influence" in the region. He described China instead as a builder of "a cooperative network for mutual benefits and win-win results" and a "circle of friends". However, Xi also called on Middle Eastern countries to join the BRI, presenting it as the main framework for regional cooperation. (China Daily, 2017)

Of China's $770 billion BRI investment since 2013, 14% has gone to the Middle East, making it the fourth-largest regional recipient (Wang, 2021). Initially excluded, states like Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Iraq gradually joined by signing Memoranda of Understanding, with Iran playing a pivotal role due to its strategic oil resources and location (Shariatinia and Azizi, 2017; Githaiga et al. 2019; Cordesman, 2007)[1]. The strengthening of China-Iran ties within the framework of the Initiative comes largely from both states' perception of the objective benefits derived from their engagement. While these material considerations help explain the dynamics of the relationship and, consequently, China's expanding influence over the Tehran regime, they are not sufficient to capture the full scope and depth of that influence. "Influence" as a concept must be

[1] Within the framework of what has been termed the "Asian Energy Security Grid," Iran's geographical position renders it a pivotal actor in ensuring the connectivity of the global energy network China seeks to establish—particularly in West Asia—since it is the only country in the region "with the ability to meet part of China's oil and gas needs through both land and sea." Iran's involvement in a series of pipeline projects, including the Iran-Pakistan pipeline and the interconnection with Turkmenistan, would not only secure China's overland energy supply but also enable Iran to export energy to the Chinese market via land routes. This would provide an alternative to traditional and more volatile maritime corridors. For further details, see Selmier, Travis. "The Belt and Road Initiative and the influence of Islamic economies." Economic and Political Studies 6, no. 3 (2018): 255-277.

understood not only in terms of its material impact - particularly in the economic sphere - but also as the capacity to shape and guide perceptions about oneself, about the other, and about the functioning of the international system.

This article contributes to the literature in three main ways. First, it examines the China-Iran Comprehensive Strategic Partnership not only through its material drivers, but also through its ideational dimension, while recognising that sanctions, trade, and geopolitical pressures remain central to the relationship. Second, it makes "ideational influence" analytically explicit by assessing whether Iranian political authorities and influential opinion makers reproduce and normalise discursive frames associated with China's projected international role. Third, it combines thematic categorisation and qualitative discourse analysis in a focused corpus, offering an empirically grounded approach to the study of ideational alignment in elite narratives.

## Theoretical framework and methodology

This article starts from the assumption that influence in international politics is not exhausted by material dependence or transactional gains. In addition to economic leverage, states may exercise influence by shaping the categories, narratives, and role expectations through which other actors understand bilateral cooperation and the international order. In this sense, China's influence may be observed not only in the practical expansion of cooperation with Iran, but also in the discursive normalisation of specific principles and frames associated with Beijing's international role, such as sovereignty-centered order, non-interference, "win-win" cooperation, civilisational rhetoric, and opposition to Western unilateralism.

Existing literature on China-Iran relations and on China's broader engagement in the Middle East has predominantly emphasised material and strategic drivers, especially energy security, trade expansion, sanctions, and connectivity under the Belt and Road Initiative (Kemp, 2012; Wuthnow, 2016; Conduit and Akbarzadeh, 2018; Hoh, 2019; Shariatinia and Azizi, 2017; 2019). This literature is indispensable for explaining why Sino-Iranian cooperation has deepened over time, particularly under conditions of U.S. pressure and Iran's search for economic alternatives. However, its main focus remains on interests, constraints, and strategic calculations, leaving comparatively less room for a systematic analysis of how influence is also produced through discourse, identity, and role-related meanings.

A second group of academic contributions provides a more suitable basis for that analytical move. Studies on China's international projection increasingly stress that Chinese influence cannot be reduced to material capability alone, and that it must be understood as socially mediated and context-dependent (Fung et al., 2022). In parallel, works on the ideational dimension of China's rise emphasise the role of narratives, symbols, and normative language in shaping perceptions of China and in structuring the political meaning of cooperation, such as Wilson, 2021 and Elmalı, 2022. These texts were especially relevant for the present article because they clarify how discourse may

function not merely as rhetoric, but as a mechanism through which international roles, expectations, and forms of legitimacy are negotiated.

This perspective has also been applied in regional studies. Garlick and Qin (2022) show, in the Central and Eastern European context, that Chinese influence is partly exercised through ideational and interpretive channels, and that these can be traced through comparative analysis of elite and scholarly narratives. Although the geopolitical context differs from the Iranian case, the analytical implication is highly relevant, as Chinese-led cooperation frameworks generate not only material expectations but also discursive contestation and alignment around political meaning.

In the specific case of Iran, the ideational dimension has received more limited and uneven treatment. Forough (2020) offers a particularly important contribution by highlighting the ideational nexus linking Iran and China within the BRI, including civilisational discourse and alternative geopolitical imaginaries. His later work on the 25-year deal (Forough, 2021) also reinforces the need to read the Partnership beyond its economic provisions. At the same time, broader analyses of Iran-China relations and regional alignments remind us that convergence should not be overstated: structural incentives remain central (Shariatinia, 2011), and overlapping anti-Western positions do not automatically produce a fully institutionalised strategic bloc (Grajewski, 2022). Bearing this in mind, the present article addresses a specific gap: the lack of a systematic analysis of how Chinese ideational influence is reflected in Iranian elite narratives on the 25-year Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, by combining constructivism and role theory with a structured discourse analysis of statements by political authorities and opinion makers.

As said, this study uses Wendt's Social Constructivism and role theory to explore how the BRI deepens Iran-China ties through shared ideational factors, including identity-related. Civilisational rhetoric, mutual enmity toward the U.S., and shared foreign policy principles underpin this partnership, drawing on historical and civilisational narratives that both sides mobilise in contemporary political discourse. Moreover, this common perception is reflected in the narratives articulated by Iran's political leadership and prominent opinion makers concerning the 25-year Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

For the purposes of this investigation, "ideational influence" refers to the capacity of one state's projected identity, normative language, and role conceptions to shape the interpretive frames through which political elites in another state publicly describe bilateral cooperation and the international order. This definition does not assume passive imitation or ideological dependence. Instead, it captures a process of selective appropriation, in which domestic actors adopt and rearticulate external narratives in ways that remain compatible with their own political priorities. This distinction is important in the Iran-China case. The existence of strong material incentives (sanctions pressure, trade opportunities, and geopolitical balancing) does not preclude ideational influence; rather, it may create favorable conditions for discursive convergence. The empirical task, therefore, is not to deny material causality, but to assess whether elite narratives about the CSP also reveal a patterned alignment with Chinese strategic and normative frames.

Additionally, role theory helps define China's self-perceived role in the BRI and its influence on Middle Eastern relationships, particularly with Iran. It highlights Beijing's ambitions to expand globally and assert its position in the international system (Harnisch, 2012; Michalski and Pan, 2017). Wendt's constructivism explains how roles in the international system emerge from socially constructed interactions. States' positions are shaped by their perceptions of themselves and others, formed through processes of socialisation in "collective structures" (Wendt, 1992; Knoblauch, 2013). Although the China-Iran bilateral relationship has developed as a collective structure in which both states have gradually constructed convergent identities, for the purposes of this study the BRI and the Comprehensive Strategic Partnerships, most notably the 25-year Comprehensive Strategic Partnership signed in 2021, will be considered the relevant "collective structures." In recent years, these instruments have formed the central basis of bilateral interaction, serving as the channels through which China has projected its own identity and exerted influence on Iran by shaping the latter's self-perception.

The central analytical question is therefore the following: to what extent is China's ideational influence visible in the narratives produced by Iranian political authorities and influential opinion makers regarding the 25-year CSP? By focusing on elite narratives, this article does not seek to measure public opinion in Iran. Rather, it examines how politically relevant actors frame the Partnership and whether their discourse reflects convergent role conceptions and normative assumptions compatible with China's strategic narratives.

The Iranian case is particularly important for assessing ideational influence because Iran's foreign policy combines a strong ideological tradition with a long record of strategic adaptation. Since the 1979 Revolution, the principle often summarised as "Neither East nor West" has occupied a central place in the Islamic Republic's foreign policy doctrine. At the same time, changing international pressures, such as sanctions, regional insecurity, and tensions with the United States, have encouraged a more pragmatic reconfiguration of external partnerships, including a stronger turn to the East.

This tension between doctrinal autonomy and strategic realignment makes Iran a critical case. If Chinese ideational influence is visible in Iranian elite narratives, it is likely to emerge not as simple rhetorical imitation, but as a selective process of appropriation, reinterpretation, and alignment shaped by Iran's own political priorities. For this reason, attention to elite discourse is essential: political leaders, state-affiliated media, and influential commentators play a central role in constructing the public meaning of the CSP and in signaling the terms through which the relationship with China is legitimised domestically and internationally.

This article adopts a theory-led mixed-method design that combines structured qualitative content analysis with interpretive discourse analysis. The methodological choice follows directly from the article's theoretical framework: if ideational influence is understood as the capacity to shape meanings, roles, and expectations, then the empirical strategy must capture both the frequency of recurring argumentative patterns

and the way these patterns are articulated linguistically in elite discourse (Wendt, 1992; Onuf, 2012; Krippendorff, 2018; Schreier, 2012).

The empirical corpus is composed of ten public texts (speeches, interviews, official statements, and opinion pieces) produced by Iranian political authorities and politically relevant opinion makers between April 2020 and April 2021. This period was selected because it corresponds to the final negotiation and formalisation phase of the 25-year Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP), and therefore captures the moment in which elite narratives sought to frame the meaning, legitimacy, and expected effects of the agreement. The sample is purposive rather than representative: documents were included when they (1) explicitly referred to the CSP and/or Sino-Iranian strategic cooperation under the BRI framework, and (2) were attributable to actors with agenda-setting relevance in Iran's political or para-political sphere. This also means that the article analyses a bounded discursive moment, primarily the late Rouhani period, rather than all phases of Iranian foreign policy.

The analysis proceeded in two stages. In the first stage, all ten texts were coded through a deductive coding frame derived from the literature and the theoretical argument of the article. Two dimensions were coded: tone (positive, skeptical, negative) and argumentative frames (economic; cultural/identity; democracy or human rights; security-related; international system/global order; nuclear deal; military cooperation; anti-American). The unit of analysis was the document, but coding decisions were based on explicit textual markers (keywords, expressions, and argumentative passages). A frame was coded as present when it appeared at least once in a substantively meaningful way. To improve procedural consistency, the coding frame and category definitions were fixed before the full coding round, and the corpus was re-read after the initial coding to verify category stability and resolve borderline cases (Bowen, 2009).

In the second stage, the coded material was subjected to discourse analysis in order to interpret how elite actors constructed the CSP as a meaningful political object. This qualitative step focused not only on recurrent themes but also on rhetorical strategies, legitimising narratives, silences, and implicit contrasts. This stage is essential because ideational influence is not exhausted by thematic frequency: it also depends on how language normalises certain role expectations, identities, and geopolitical hierarchies (Fairclough, 2003; Wodak and Meyer, 2015). Methodologically, the article does not claim to measure public opinion in Iran; rather, it examines elite discourse as a politically consequential layer of meaning production, while acknowledging that future research should compare elite narratives across different Iranian political periods and with non-elite or foreign sources.

## The BRI as a reflection of Chinese identity

Wendt describes identity as stable role-specific understandings shaped by shared meanings (Wendt, 1992). Chinese identity reflects both Sinocentric superiority, rooted in its historical view as the world's center, and insecurity stemming from the "century of humiliation" (Weissmann, 2015; Gaddis, 2017). Tensions within Chinese identity



complicate defining its role in the international system (Holsti, 1970). By the 1990s, Deng Xiaoping shaped China as a "responsible power," and the 2000 "Going Global" strategy promoted foreign investment and market interconnection, boosting China's status as an "emerging power" (Goldstein, 1998; Ikenberry, 2008).

In recent decades, Chinese foreign policy shifted toward a revisionist stance, challenging the liberal order. The 2008 financial crisis exposed global systemic weaknesses and inspired Beijing to pursue an alternative economic and political order to counter U.S. dominance (Deng, 2014; Etzioni, 2011; Zhang, 2009). Hu Jintao introduced the vision of a harmonious global order, which Xi Jinping later expanded after assuming leadership (especially from 2012–2013 onward), aspiring to lead an alternative system based on sovereignty, peaceful coexistence, and inclusivity. This order contrasts with Western models, promoting fairness and shared prosperity (Ding, 2008; Breslin, 2009; Michalski and Pan, 2017). This reconceptualisation of China's role in international affairs - and, by extension, of its identity - would be accompanied by new expectations associated with that evolving role. In that sense, Chinese Foreign Policy would reflect those expectations and materialise this role and identity (Thies, 2010; Harnisch, 2012; Michalski and Pan, 2017; Shala, 2021).

Launched in 2013, the BRI exemplifies China's global ambitions. As the centerpiece of Beijing's "Going Global" strategy, it became a legal priority in 2017, aiming to create a trade and investment network that fosters prosperity while cementing China's leadership (Taylor and Zajontz, 2020). In his 2013 speech in Kazakhstan introducing the Initiative, Xi Jinping emphasised its significance, presenting it as inspired by the Ancient Silk Road and aimed at opening a "new chapter of friendship" founded on "solidarity, mutual trust, equality, inclusivity, mutual learning, and win-win cooperation". The Initiative, he argued, would foster the joint pursuit of development and peace among its members. At its core, China was to assume a pivotal leadership role - one not only grounded in the contemporary resonance of a celebrated past, but also regarded as necessary and accepted by the participating states as integral to the Initiative. The justification for this acceptance comes from the fact that this leadership was promoted and seen as a form of connective leadership presented as fair and mutually beneficial (Wang, 2016; Andornino, 2017).

In this sense, the way that this role is conceived and understood is both a result of its promotion by China and of the understanding and expectations created around it by the States participating in the Initiative, being, in that sense, a role born of the sharing and intersubjective meanings of actors in interaction (Wendt, 1992; Harnisch, 2012).

## China and Iran's interaction on the BRI: historical ideational factors and revived material needs

Iran's foreign policy cannot be reduced to a purely economic logic, nor can it be read as a fixed ideological posture. Since 1979, it has been shaped by a persistent tension between revolutionary principles and pragmatic state interests, a duality that has long

been identified in the literature on the Islamic Republic's external behaviour (Ramazani, 2004; Rakel, 2007; Khelghat-Doost, 2022). This tension is also embedded in the constitutional and normative foundations of the regime: the post-revolutionary state formally articulated a foreign policy anchored in independence, anti-domination, and the rejection of subordination to great powers, often summarised in the principle of "Neither East nor West" (Papan-Matin, 2014). In practice, however, this principle has not implied strategic equidistance, but rather a recurring effort to preserve regime autonomy while selectively engaging external powers according to shifting pressures and opportunities (Barzegar and Divsallar, 2017; Ramazani, 2004).

A second point that is essential for this article is that Iranian foreign policy is not produced by a single actor, but through a layered and contested elite structure. The Supreme Leader, the presidency, the foreign ministry, security institutions, and semi-official intellectual networks all shape policy narratives, though not with equal weight across periods (Bazoobandi, Heibach and Richter, 2024). This helps explain why Iran's external discourse has combined continuity with adaptation across different presidencies: pragmatic openings and diplomatic diversification under Rafsanjani and Khatami, a stronger anti-Western rhetorical line under Ahmadinejad, selective re-engagement with Europe during Rouhani's presidency, and a more explicit consolidation of the "Look East" orientation under Raisi (Azizi, 2023; Khelghat-Doost, 2022). Rather than a sudden rupture, the contemporary strategic turn to Asia should therefore be read as the intensification of an existing tendency, made more durable by sanctions, regional competition, and declining expectations regarding the West (Azizi, 2023).

Within this broader trajectory, China occupies a distinctive place in Iranian strategic thinking. The literature shows that Tehran has viewed China simultaneously as an economic partner, a diplomatic hedge, and a symbolically useful pole in a less Western-centered order, especially since the mid-2000s (Shariatinia, 2011; Fan, 2022). Yet this relationship has also been marked by asymmetry and constraint. Even when Iranian elites promoted a "Look to the East" policy, Beijing's approach remained cautious and interest-driven, particularly under the pressure of U.S. sanctions and China's wider global priorities (Shariatinia, 2011; Chaziza, 2020). This is precisely why an ideational approach is useful here: material cooperation alone does not explain why Iranian official and semi-official narratives repeatedly frame China not just as a partner of necessity, but as a legitimate and even civilisationally resonant strategic interlocutor (Fan, 2022).

This context is particularly relevant for interpreting the discourse surrounding the 25-year Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Existing scholarship on Iran and the BRI highlights a dual pattern of expectation and caution ("hope and fear"), in which Iranian actors recognise both the opportunities of Chinese connectivity and the risks of dependency or unequal gains (Shariatinia and Azizi, 2019; Chaziza, 2020). At the same time, more ideationally oriented analyses show that Iranian elite discourse often presents Iran as a civilisational crossroads in an emerging Afro-Eurasian space, a framing that converges with key symbolic elements of China's BRI narrative (Forough, 2020; Fan, 2022). By situating the Iranian case within this doctrinal and elite-political background, the article can better demonstrate that the narratives examined in the empirical section



are not isolated statements, but part of a longer process in which strategic necessity, elite mediation, and ideational alignment intersect (Saleh and Yazdanshenas, 2023; Bazoobandi, Heibach and Richter, 2024).

The BRI reflects China's "interconnected leadership" by advancing shared principles and tangible benefits (Selmier, 2018; Andornino, 2017). Iran and China, whose ties date back to the Ancient Silk Road, find their modern partnership driven by material needs and historical-cultural commonalities (Shariatinia and Azizi, 2017; 2019).

Both countries' revival of formal relationships, since 1971, and especially since 1979, when the Iranian Revolution took place and when Deng Xiaoping's Open-Door Policy was presented and began to be implemented, had in its core the need to correspond to each country's material needs (Scott, 2016). Since the 1980s, China China has become a major purchaser of Iranian energy supplies. Iran became one of China's major purchasers of defense-related goods, military equipment, and nuclear-related technology, particularly since the 1980s due to the Iran-Iraq War, where China became a supplier of conventional weapons (Davis et al. 2012). During the 1990s, energy emerged as the central axis of China-Iran relations, with Beijing increasingly viewing Tehran as a key partner for ensuring its energy security. This partnership continued to evolve in subsequent decades to address those needs. However, its expansion and consolidation also came from shared identity elements and convergent perceptions of common threats.

The collective memory of both nations' humiliation at the hands of imperial and foreign powers, their historical opposition to colonialism, and their mutual concern over losing autonomy and sovereignty rooted in common past experiences, together with a determination to preserve internal cohesion and resist external hegemonism, whether regional or global, "color each country's historical narrative" in strikingly similar ways (Ibid). In the same way, after "centuries of humiliation," both states have shaped their foreign policy, at least rhetorically, by presenting themselves as champions of the non-aligned movement and as committed partners of other developing nations, seeking to reclaim the international influence they believe was taken from them by Western powers since the sixteenth century. The long-standing networks forged through centuries of interaction, communication, trade, and cultural as well as economic exchange are reinforced by a "rhetoric of civilisational solidarity" that "seemed to lubricate the process of Sino-Iranian cooperation" (Garver, 2006).

Given the identity affinities between the two countries, it suggests that they tend to perceive threats in markedly similar ways. These convergent perceptions have, in turn, contributed to bringing Tehran and Beijing closer together over the past few decades. First and foremost, the United States is perceived as a hegemonic and historical threat to both countries (Conduit and Akbarzadeh, 2018; Fulton, 2019). In the 2013 and 2015 Defense White Papers, China states the danger of hegemonism to the country's rise and overall regional stability (The State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2013; The State Council of The People's Republic of China, 2015). Similarly, since the 1979 Revolution, the Iranian regime has depicted the United States as its principal adversary,

the "Great Satan", consistently framing its intentions and actions in the Middle Eastern context in a negative and adversarial light.

Secondly, this perception of a shared enemy has been essential for reinforcing both countries' relationship materially and cultivating a benevolent perception of each other. In the Iran-Iraq War, Iran's Defense needs were answered by China, being Beijing the country's leading arms supplier in this conflict, accounting for 40 to 70 percent of all arms supplied (Conduit and Akbarzadeh, 2018). During the conflict, Iran employed Chinese missiles, including the Silkworm, and in 1987 used one to strike a U.S.-reflagged tanker. As tensions escalated and the international community condemned China for contributing to arms proliferation by supporting Iran, Beijing encouraged Tehran to accept a ceasefire in July 1988, pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 598. China's alignment with Iran during this war contributed to the perception among Iranian officials of Beijing as a dependable partner in safeguarding their interests and, consequently, "a key interlocutor" for Iran in the international arena.

Likewise, Iran's imperative to export energy and China's need to secure energy imports formed part of a broader regional environment in which China expanded strategic coordination frameworks, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in the early 2000s: high-level platforms designed to counterbalance U.S. influence in the Middle East while addressing both regional and Chinese strategic needs in more concrete terms.

China and Iran's perception of America's enmity was "reinforced," especially after the crisis surrounding Iran's Nuclear Program and its consequences, namely the international sanctions imposed, the constant pressure applied by Washington to limit Beijing and Tehran's interaction and the subsequent agreement on the nuclear program, called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) (Shariatania and Azizi, 2017). Iran's isolation did not diminish its strategic significance in Beijing's eyes; rather, it created a window of opportunity for China. Although generally reluctant to support the imposition of sanctions on Iran - and even as pressures accumulated for stricter measures - Beijing "balanced its relations with Iran at points respecting the U.S. led sanctions on Iran while also making the most of the opportunities arising out of Iran's isolation" (Roy-Chaudhury, 2021). The 2015 nuclear agreement subsequently opened the way for greater Chinese engagement in the Iranian economy and facilitated access to its energy market, despite the decline, since 2013, in China's dependence on and prioritisation of Iranian energy supplies.

This reduction came from the sanctions regime implemented by the Obama Administration, which forced Beijing to choose between maintaining access to U.S. financial markets by cooperating with the sanctions and "solely relying on the global energy market," or defying the regime and facing U.S. hostility (Wuthnow, 2016; Harold, 2015). Even so, the resulting status quo offered Beijing renewed opportunities to strengthen its ties with Tehran. Moreover, shifts in Iran's foreign policy behavior, combined with the broader framework of the BRI, created favorable conditions for Chinese influence to expand further.

## The BRI as the framework for a new relationship

In 2016, President Xi Jinping visited Iran and he was the first Chinese head of State to do so for almost 15 years. Together with the establishment of a broader comprehensive strategic partnership framework in 2016, the visit marked a significant step in consolidating Beijing's intentions and long-term objectives with Iran, later deepened through the 25-year CSP in 2021. The visit was interpreted as indicating a "new chapter of high-level exchanges between the two states." During his meeting with President Rouhani, Xi underlined that there were no "fundamental conflicts" between China and Iran, two countries with "no wars or disputes" and a history of "time-honored friendly exchanges and sincere cooperation" that had "stood the vicissitudes of the international landscape" (China Daily, 2016). These acknowledged and valued identity affinities between the two countries set the stage for the positive outcomes of the visit.

Seventeen agreements were concluded during the visit, covering a broad spectrum of areas. These included the strengthening of political relations through the establishment of an annual meeting between the two countries' foreign ministers aimed at deepening "mutual strategic trust"; the promotion of cultural exchanges, notably through tourism; and a joint commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes and opposition to the use of force in international relations. Nonetheless, the majority of the agreements focused on enhancing economic cooperation. Those included a 600-billion-dollar trade deal to be fulfilled until 2026 and the recognition of Iran's participation in the BRI that would allow the development of several areas within that framework, namely infrastructure construction, finance, and energy cooperation (Butch, 2021).

An Iran seeking to create favorable international conditions for economic growth and seeking to have a more cautious and cooperative regional approach after an unprecedented Nuclear Deal promoted by President Rouhani's pragmatic and more rationalist approach to Foreign Policy, one that sought to improve the country's international reputation and dilute, in some sense, its pariah and isolated status, the BRI was presented as a golden opportunity for those goals to be fulfilled (Golmohammadi, 2019; Shariatinia and Azizi, 2017). That is illustrated by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei's statements in a meeting with President Xi Jinping in 2016 when he called the Initiative "very appropriate and wise," welcoming it as a new outline in the relationship of "two ancient civilisations" and as an opportunity for Iran to reach its goals (Sinaiee, 2021). In the same vein, Iran's Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Ali Tayyebnia said in the Belt and Road Initiative Forum in 2017 that Iran's position in the Initiative was "spectacular and ideal," showing enthusiasm for the Iran's participation in the Initiative (Financial Tribune, 2017). Moreover, the aspiration to strengthen ties with a like-minded partner, combined with the prospect of economic gains, thus encompassing both identity-based and material considerations, can be identified as key drivers behind the deepening of bilateral cooperation under the BRI and the broader strategic partnership. In this context, China's foreign policy and rhetoric have played an "increasing role in shaping Iran's international behavior".

This trajectory of closer ties was reinforced by President Trump's announcement on 8 May 2018 of the United States' withdrawal from the Nuclear Deal. Consequently, on 5 November of that year, all U.S. sanctions on Iran that had been suspended under the Agreement were reinstated as part of the "maximum pressure policy". The impact on Iran's economy was severe, with oil production, the cornerstone of its economic system, declining sharply.

Despite the U.S. Administration's reimposition of sanctions, the Chinese Government remained firmly committed to the nuclear deal, consistently defending what it terms Iran's right to the peaceful use of atomic energy[2]. Furthermore, in an effort to mitigate the effects of the sanctions on Iran and on the BRI, Beijing worked closely with the Tehran regime to implement multiple Memoranda of Understanding signed in 2014. Through this continued engagement, China positioned itself as a dependable partner for Iran, capable of facilitating efforts to renegotiate the Nuclear Deal with the United States[3]. This perception of reliability was further consolidated with the signing of the 25-year Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

## The 25-year Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

Although reportedly negotiated during President Xi Jinping's 2016 visit to Tehran, in July 2020 several documents were leaked concerning the expansion and upgrade of the already established Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Subsequently, on 27 March 2021, this enlarged and deepened partnership entered public debate after the circulation/leak of draft documents by Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesperson for the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The leak did not disclose specific details (such as the "financial and monetary resources" or the existence of binding contracts), but suggested a loosely defined framework of Chinese investment in Iran, amounting allegedly to 400 billion dollars over 25 years, in exchange for the supply of Iranian oil to China for the same period. Symbolically, the deal was signed on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two states. Iran refers to it as a "strategic cooperation deal," yet both sides have publicly clarified that it does not constitute an alliance, a pact, or a legally binding agreement. Reza Zabib, a member of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, described the arrangement on Twitter as a "non-binding document". In a press conference on 29 March, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian stated that the agreement "(…) neither includes any quantitative, specific contracts and goals nor

[2] Indeed, Beijing and Tehran continued to advance a number of nuclear-energy-related initiatives, many of which had been discussed during President Xi Jinping's 2016 visit. These included contracts for the construction of two 1,000-megawatt nuclear power plants, the development of an Arak heavy water reactor, and joint scientific research in the nuclear field (Butch, 2021).
[3] In addition, Beijing has contributed to the financing of several research and development parks and innovation hubs in Iran. For further details, see: Sheikhi, Marjohn. "Science VP in China for promotion of tech. coop." MEHR News Agency, October 24, 2016. https://en.mehrnews.com/news/120769/Science-VP-in-China-for-promotion-of-tech-coop; Sheikhi, Marjohn. "Iran's MERC signs scientific MoU with China." MEHR News Agency, December 10, 2016. https://en.mehrnews.com/news/121904/Iran-s-MERC-signs-scientific-MoU-with-China.

targets any third party, and will provide a general framework for China-Iran cooperation going forward" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2021).

According to the leaked document, Beijing was expected to allocate 280 billion dollars to the development of Iran's petrochemical, gas, and oil industries, and a further 120 billion dollars to the modernisation and upgrading of the country's manufacturing and communications infrastructure connected to the BRI. Encompassing both public and private actors from each side, the deal purportedly envisaged close to 100 projects across a broad range of sectors beyond those already mentioned, including vaccine provision, pharmaceuticals, banking, consumer goods, and trade, with Chinese companies with Chinese companies expected to play a central role in implementing these projects. Tehran would primarily offset the costs of these large-scale investments through guaranteed oil exports to China at discounted prices (Dudgeon, 2021; DW, 2021).

With regard to nuclear issues, the document states that it "contributes towards guaranteeing the peacefulness of Iran's nuclear activities" and affirms Iran's legitimate right to the "peaceful use of nuclear energy according to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)". It also specifies that the JCPOA should be implemented in "good faith and in an inclusive and balanced manner," reinforcing both countries' commitment to the agreement. Consequently, if the United States were to rejoin the JCPOA, it would have to accept the Agreement's "existing scopes and parameters." This framing underscores a perceived decline in U.S. influence in the region and a loss of leverage in any potential future nuclear deal negotiations (Islamic Republic News Agency, 2021).

Although Iran's official news agency refers only to the "economic and cultural" dimensions of the cooperation, the leaked plan allegedly includes provisions for military collaboration. One reported element is the possible deployment of Chinese military personnel to Iran for training purposes and to enhance the interoperability of the two armed forces. This aspect, along with the JCPOA-related provisions, could serve as a deterrent to potential hostile military actions or threats against Iran in the region (Vatanka, 2021).

Despite the nature of the Partnership and what both countries publicly admit of it, this reflects the gradual intensification of Tehran and Beijing's relationship not only materially but also in ideational terms, being a result of their constant interaction on specific "collective structures," while demonstrating at the same time both countries' detachment and friction with the United States, and thus a "common" definition and perception of the structure of the International System and the roles played by certain States in it—functioning of the International System (Harnisch, 2012).

## Data Analysis and Results

The strengthening of Sino-Iranian ties through the CSP illustrates China's influence on the narratives articulated by the Iranian elite. Although public opinion data remain scarce, an analysis of elite discourse sheds light on how their framing shapes collective

perceptions of the partnership. For this purpose, ten speeches and written statements[4] from political leaders and opinion makers, delivered between April 2020 and April 2021, were examined. These were coded under two analytical dimensions: tone (positive, skeptical, or negative) and arguments used at least once (economic; related to the international system; security-related; concerning democracy or human rights; cultural or identity-based; anti-American; related to the nuclear deal; or enhancing military cooperation).

Beyond the uniformly positive tone identified across all ten documents, the corpus reveals a more structured pattern of discursive alignment. The convergence is not limited to official statements by the presidency or the foreign ministry (Docs. 1–4), but also extends to diplomats, university professors, media figures, and para-official opinion makers (Docs. 5–10). This distribution is analytically relevant because it suggests that support for the CSP is not expressed only as a formal state position, but as a broader elite narrative reproduced across different sites of meaning production. In this sense, the positive tone should be read less as a merely descriptive feature and more as an indicator of discursive stabilisation around the legitimacy of the Partnership (Table 1).

A first interpretive pattern is the close articulation between anti-American rhetoric and references to international order. In most documents, criticism of U.S. "unilateralism" and "interventionism" is not presented only as a bilateral grievance, but as evidence of a wider disorder affecting "security, peace, and stability" in the region (Docs. 1 and 10). Likewise, documents that emphasise the CSP as a response to sanctions (Docs. 2 and 3) do more than describe economic pressure: they frame the Partnership as part of a broader political strategy to resist external domination. This helps explain why anti-American references frequently overlap with "global order" arguments. The CSP is thus narrated not simply as a contract, but as a politically meaningful alignment within an alternative reading of international order.

A second pattern concerns the economic dimension, which remains central but performs an ideational function as well. As the coding table shows, economic arguments appear in almost all documents (with the exception of Doc. 8), and they consistently emphasise mutual gains, connectivity, and long-term development expectations. However, these references are not purely technical. In several cases, economic cooperation is linked to China's perceived status and role, including the expectation that China is a reliable and exceptionally capable partner within the BRI framework, even described as "the most powerful state economically and militarily" (Doc. 9). This suggests that material cooperation is discursively embedded in a hierarchy of international roles in which China is represented not only as useful, but as a legitimate anchor of Iran's strategic future.

A third pattern is the selective use of cultural and identity-based arguments. These are less frequent than economic and anti-American frames, but they play a disproportionate legitimising role. Expressions such as "common cultural grounds," "long-term historical relations," "Asian identity," and "two founders of great civilisations" (Docs. 2, 7, and 9) do not merely praise bilateral ties; they help naturalise the Partnership by presenting it

[4] The speeches' sources (Docs.) are identified in the Bibliographic References.

as historically grounded and civilisationally coherent. This is particularly important for the article's argument on ideational influence, because it shows that the CSP is framed not only as expedient, but as symbolically appropriate. In other words, identity references work to transform strategic cooperation into a narrative of belonging and continuity.

Finally, the silences and asymmetries in the corpus are as revealing as the recurrent themes. Nuclear issues are mentioned only in a limited number of documents (Docs. 4, 8, and 10), despite their clear relevance to the broader strategic context, and military cooperation appears only once—and there in the form of denial (Doc. 7). The complete absence of democracy or human rights language across all ten documents is especially significant. Rather than a neutral omission, this silence suggests a discursive boundary: the CSP is consistently articulated through sovereignty, order, development, and anti-intervention, while normative vocabularies associated with liberal internationalism are excluded. Taken together, these patterns indicate that ideational convergence in the corpus is expressed not only through what is repeatedly said, but also through what is systematically left unsaid.

Overall, the empirical findings point to more than rhetorical support for a bilateral agreement. They reveal a structured discursive alignment in which economic cooperation, anti-American positioning, global-order narratives, and civilisational framing reinforce each other. This combination is what allows the CSP to function, in Iranian elite discourse, as both a material strategy and an ideationally meaningful partnership.

## Conclusion

Regarding the research question posed in the introduction—whether Chinese ideational influence can be identified in the narratives of Iranian political authorities and opinion makers concerning the CSP—the findings suggest a consistent pattern of discursive convergence. Within the selected corpus, Chinese influence is visible not only in the positive valuation of the Partnership, but also in the recurrence of specific interpretive frames that align with Beijing's strategic narratives, particularly those related to sovereignty, anti-unilateralism, international order, and "win-win" cooperation.

At the same time, the findings should be interpreted with analytical caution. The corpus is limited to ten texts produced within a specific political moment (2020–2021), and it primarily reflects elite and para-official voices rather than broader public attitudes. For that reason, the article does not claim to demonstrate a generalised societal alignment, nor does it seek to isolate ideational factors from the material and geopolitical incentives that also structure Sino-Iranian cooperation. Instead, the evidence indicates that the CSP functions as a discursive and institutional setting in which material cooperation and ideational alignment reinforce one another.

The article's theoretical framework contributes to this interpretation by combining constructivism and role theory to analyse how shared meanings, role conceptions, and political expectations are articulated in elite discourse. Methodologically, the combined use of structured thematic categorisation and qualitative discourse analysis proved useful

for identifying both recurring argumentative patterns and strategic silences, including the selective marginalisation of nuclear and military themes and the complete absence of democracy or human-rights language. These omissions are analytically significant because they help define the normative boundaries within which the Partnership is publicly legitimised.

This study also contributes to the literature by examining the 25-year Comprehensive Strategic Partnership not only as a materially driven arrangement, but as an ideationally meaningful platform. While economic and geopolitical factors remain central, the findings indicate that the Partnership also supports the circulation of convergent narratives about order, cooperation, and the role of non-Western powers. Future research may build on this framework by expanding the corpus across different Iranian political periods, comparing elite and non-elite narratives, and assessing whether similar patterns of discursive alignment can be identified in other regional contexts shaped by China's strategic partnerships.

Looking ahead, comparative studies involving foreign journalists, academics, and political actors could help determine whether the observed discursive patterns are uniquely Iranian or part of a broader international echo of China's strategic narratives. Such an approach could further refine our understanding of how ideational influence travels and adapts across different political and cultural contexts.

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**Table 1.** Visual distribution of tones and arguments[5]

| Doc | Author/Origin | Tone | | | Arguments | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Pos | Skep | Neg | Eco | Global Orde/ I.S | Sec. | Demo/ H.R | Cultural/ Identity | Anti-Americanism | Nuclear deal | Military coop. |
| 1 | President Rouhani | X | | | X | | X | | | X | | |
| 2 | President Rouhani | X | | | | X | X | | X | X | | |
| 3 | President Rouhani | X | | | X | X | X | | | X | X | |
| 4 | Spokesperson of Ministry of Foreign Affairs | X | | | X | X | X | | | X | | |
| 5 | Diplomat | X | | | X | X | | | | | | |
| 6 | Opinion maker (University Professor) | X | | | | X | | | X | X | | |
| 7 | Opinion maker (University Professor) | X | | | X | X | | | X | X | | X |
| 8 | Opinion makers (speakers in the international webinar) | X | | | | X | X | | | X | X | |
| 9 | Opinion maker (Managing Director of the Islamic Republic News Agency) | X | | | X | X | | | X | X | | |
| 10 | Opinion maker (journalist) | X | | | X | X | | | X | X | X | |

[5] The content analysis and the corresponding results table stem from research conducted for the preparation of a Master's thesis in International Relations. This material is original and has not been published or disseminated elsewhere.

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# INTERNATIONAL LEGAL STANDARDS FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE FIELD OF LAW ENFORCEMENT: EXPERIENCE OF IMPLEMENTATION IN THE LAW AND ORDER OF UKRAINE

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## Abstract

Policing in Ukraine must comply with international legal standards to protect human rights, which is a key requirement of the global community and a necessary condition for European integration. At the same time, the practical implementation of these standards remains problematic due to legislative gaps, personnel difficulties, and insufficient control mechanisms, which require further scientific analysis and improvement of law enforcement practice. The study uses methods of analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, dialectics, analogy, abstraction, and generalization. The aim of the research is to analyze human rights protection standards in the activities of law enforcement agencies, to assess their implementation in Ukraine, and to develop recommendations for improving national legislation

and practice of police agencies. Significant progress in bringing Ukrainian law enforcement in line with international legal norms has been made, but persistent challenges require continuous adaptation and policy improvement. Strengthening institutional mechanisms, enhancing public scrutiny and promoting international cooperation will be crucial to ensure sustainable compliance with human rights standards.

**Keywords**

Human rights; institutional mechanisms; policy adaptation; public oversight; law.

**Resumo**

A atividade policial na Ucrânia deve respeitar as normas jurídicas internacionais de proteção dos direitos humanos, o que constitui um requisito fundamental da comunidade internacional e uma condição necessária para a integração europeia. Ao mesmo tempo, a aplicação prática dessas normas continua a ser problemática devido a lacunas legislativas, dificuldades de pessoal e mecanismos de controlo insuficientes, o que exige uma análise científica mais aprofundada e a melhoria das práticas das forças policiais. O estudo recorre a métodos de análise, síntese, indução, dedução, dialética, analogia, abstração e generalização. O objetivo da investigação é analisar as normas de proteção dos direitos humanos nas atividades das agências de aplicação da lei, avaliar a sua implementação na Ucrânia e desenvolver recomendações para melhorar a legislação nacional e a prática das agências policiais. Foram alcançados progressos significativos na harmonização da aplicação da lei ucraniana com as normas jurídicas internacionais, mas os desafios persistentes exigem uma adaptação contínua e a melhoria das políticas. O reforço dos mecanismos institucionais, o aumento do escrutínio público e a promoção da cooperação internacional serão cruciais para garantir o cumprimento sustentável das normas de direitos humanos.

**Palavras-chave**

Direitos humanos; mecanismos institucionais; adaptação de políticas; supervisão pública; direito.

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## Introduction

The National Police of Ukraine is committed to promoting the implementation of international treaties ratified by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and protecting human rights. Rights and freedoms are guaranteed by the laws and Constitution of the country. Since one of the legal foundations of the police are international treaties of Ukraine, the consent to which was granted by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, such activities must comply with international legal standards given the aspect of guaranteeing the observance of freedoms and human rights outlined in those treaties.

The President of Ukraine declares the need to take measures to ensure the stable functioning of democratic institutions and the establishment of the rule of law in order to ensure the proper implementation of Ukraine's obligations and commitments arising from its membership in the Council of Europe, to achieve compliance with the political component of the Copenhagen criteria for membership in the European Union. The measures are aimed at bringing the legal framework of law enforcement agencies closer to European standards and strengthening democratic control in this area. This indicates the relevance of the issue chosen for analysis, which requires a scientific and theoretical

solution. This solution is necessary for the practical improvement of police activities according to Ukraine's international obligations, in particular in the area of ensuring respect for rights and freedoms.

At the same time, the growth of transnational organized crime, high rates of global migration, disagreements in police training programs and human rights protection during law enforcement operations require the introduction of uniform international standards in the activities of these agencies. A modern approach to combating the problems of transnational organized crime as an important international component of preventing the introduction of destructive threats to global society is the introduction of international legal standards of policing at the national level. These standards are a concentrated reflection of generally recognized international law enforcement practice, in particular in the area of ensuring the observance of individual rights and liberties by the relevant police agencies.

Numerous international legal instruments, in particular the European Convention on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, and others, reflect the fundamental need of the world community to ensure the protection of individual rights in law enforcement. Application of international legal standards to the activities of the National Police is becoming increasingly important in the light of Ukraine’s European integration path and reform of police authorities. (Medvedenko & Medvedenko, 2023).

The current legislative initiatives and reforms, several problems, including legislative gaps, insufficient personnel training, and the lack of effective systems for monitoring and prosecuting law enforcement agencies for human rights violations, complicate Ukraine’s implementation of global standards in the area of law enforcement. This requires a thorough scientific study of the existing international norms, an assessment of their application in the judicial framework of Ukraine and the development of proposals for improving internal law enforcement procedures.

Several scholars have explored the issue of international legal standards of law enforcement Gavrylenko (2022) examines introduction of global law reforms into the national law enforcement system of Ukraine, focusing on the adaptation of European and world practices taking into account national characteristics, history and culture of the country. It offers methods of effective borrowing of international experience to improve the Ukrainian law enforcement system. Moskalyuk and Sloma (2022) explore international legal standards for the protection of human rights and freedoms, their impact on the Constitution of Ukraine and other normative legal acts. Analyzes the system of international legal acts, in particular the International Bill of Human Rights, agreements on crime prevention, conventions for the protection of vulnerable groups and against abuse by the state, as well as documents of international conferences on human rights (Lytvyn et al., 2022). Lezhnin (2022) analyzes global human rights standards and its influence on national legislation. Particular attention is paid to the role of the Security Service of Ukraine in ensuring human rights during martial law. Voloshchuk (2024) considers international standards of law enforcement, their main characteristics, and

their significance for the harmonization of national legislation. Magnovsky and Kosarevska (2023) investigated international standards of human rights in law enforcement activities of the National Police of Ukraine, analyzing their impact on police reforms and transformations in the context of contemporary challenges. They studied the effectiveness of applying these standards to increase the effectiveness of policing and improve mechanisms for ensuring human rights.

Ukraine's aspirations to join the European Union increase the relevance of compliance with international and European human rights standards in the activities of law enforcement agencies. The Copenhagen criteria, which define the political preconditions for EU membership, clearly require stable institutions that guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities. In this context, the effectiveness of policing and the extent to which law enforcement agencies comply with international legal standards for the protection of human rights become not only a domestic legal issue, but also a strategic factor in Ukraine's European integration process. Therefore, the harmonisation of national law enforcement practice with European legal standards, in particular those developed within the Council of Europe and the European Union, is a prerequisite for Ukraine's progress towards EU membership. This includes providing effective safeguards against abuse of power, strengthening mechanisms of public control and aligning police activities with the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights. Thus, the study of international legal standards for the protection of human rights in law enforcement is of particular importance in the context of Ukraine's obligations arising from its status as an EU candidate and the broader process of approximation of its legislation to the EU acquis.

## Materials and Methods

The study of foreign legal standards for the prevention of human rights violations in the field of legal activities and their implementation in the legal order of Ukraine is based on a systematic approach that involves the use of a set of general scientific and special legal approaches. The use of these methods made it possible to conduct a thorough analysis of legal norms, international standards, and the practice of their application in Ukraine and the world, as well as to formulate appropriate conclusions and recommendations for their improvement.

One of the core methods used in the study is the method of analysis, which is used to study international legal documents regulating the standards of human rights protection in the field of law enforcement, in particular, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, the UN Convention against Torture, etc. Also, this method was used in the study of the national legislation of Ukraine, including the Constitution of Ukraine, laws regulating the activities of law enforcement agencies, and regulations that enshrine international standards for the protection of human rights.

To establish the relationship between international standards and their implementation in the Ukrainian law and order, the synthesis method was used. As a result of the study, the author identifies the peculiarities of implementation of various standards in the operation of national law enforcement agencies, the problems of their practical application, and possible ways to improve the implementation process. Along with the induction method, the deduction method was used, which contributed to the formulation of specific recommendations for improving legislative regulation and law enforcement practice in Ukraine. Studying the general principles of international law and their application in different countries, it was possible to determine directions for improving law enforcement in Ukraine.

The study was based on the dialectical method, which allowed to consider the process of realization of international legal standards in dynamics, taking into account historical background, current state and development prospects. The author uses the analytical method to assess the effectiveness of implementation of global standards in Ukraine. A comparative analysis of research papers, regulations and law enforcement practice was conducted, which allowed the author to identify gaps in national legislation and to identify problems in the realization of human rights in law enforcement.

By using the method of abstraction, the author helped to identify the main conceptual foundations of international legal protection of personal freedoms, making this possible to highlight the key aspects which are important for reforming law enforcement in Ukraine. The data obtained were used as a basis for the generalization method, which allowed the author to formulate final conclusions on the effectiveness of the implementation of global legal standards in law enforcement in Ukraine and to propose recommendations for improving the legal framework and law enforcement practice. The complex use of these methods allowed to provide in-depth research of problems, a systematic analysis of international and national legal norms, an assessment of the practice of their application and the development of scientifically grounded conclusions and proposals for improving the protection of human rights in the law enforcement sphere of Ukraine.

## Results

Human freedoms and rights are the main achievements of modern society. Ukraine became a subject of international law only on August 24, 1991, when it declared its independence. The parliament of Ukraine confirmed its commitment to universal values and universally recognized principles of international law, having the opportunity to independently determine its political priorities and directions of its state-building. This is evidenced by the signing and ratification of several international legal instruments approved by the UN General Assembly.

As a result of its European decision, Ukraine begins the process of transformation. It shares the fundamental concepts and principles of the European Social Charter and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms,

and its future growth is based on the interests of people and the desire to live and create in harmony with society, the environment and its values (Gavrylenko, 2024a).

Ukraine has been involved in the creation of international human rights standards (IHRC) since 1991 and is working on their implementation in the activities of civil servants. This policy is consistent with Article 18 of the Constitution of Ukraine, which states that the foreign policy of Ukraine state is aimed at protecting national interests and security by maintaining friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation with members of the international community by generally recognized norms and principles of the international community. Law. In addition, Articles 3, 5, 6, 8, and 9 of the Basic Law support the idea of observing international norms regarding human rights and freedoms (Svensson-McCarthy, 2021).

Given the complex political and legal circumstances in Ukraine, the relevant international legal norms differ in that there is a particularly urgent need for their deeper theoretical and scientific understanding. The analysis also focuses on the academic justification and implementation of global legal standards of police activity in ensuring the observance of human freedoms and rights into domestic legislation, for their more objective and thorough study, and, therefore, to identify ways of integration into the international and European space (Gavrylenko, 2022).

The international police cooperation is being established, expanded and strengthened on condition that national legislation, in particular departmental regulations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, is adjusted to international legal acts. In its domestic and international cooperation, Ukraine's Ministry of Internal Affairs is governed by the key legal instruments that regulate the protection of rights and freedoms, establish generally recognized standards of behavior for officials, and determine international strategies for combating crime. According to this author, one of the ways to interact with the activities of the police and promote integration in fulfilling the requirements of adapting national legislation to relevant international standards is to bring the normative legal acts of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine into compliance with the requirements of international legal documents (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni & Sharman, 2021).

Law enforcement agencies (police) should be based on the rule of law, demilitarization, decentralization, transparency, accountability, and close cooperation with the public and local communities (the concept of "community policing"), taking into account the standards adopted by many prominent European nations. Establishing certain significant legal boundaries of the police, in particular in the field of ensuring the observance of human rights and freedoms, which gives stability and certainty to the social relations regulated by law, the activities of the police are determined by legal principles as integrating factors of the proper exercise of the discretionary powers of a policeman with the prohibition of arbitrariness in such activities (Moskalyuk & Sloma, 2022).

Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1950, Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials of 1979, Resolution No. 690 of 1979 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe "Declaration on Police," Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1984

and the Basic Principles of the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials of 1990 are international documents, the legal norms of which are the core of the National Police's activities. The above-mentioned international laws are a set of interrelated global, regional, and especially European norms that establish uniform police actions, in particular when it comes to ensuring the observance of human rights and freedoms in Ukraine (Sopilko & Tokarieva, 2023).

International human rights rules apply to police in every country on the planet. The United Nations has adopted these standards, which represent common ideals and beliefs. The approach to compliance with standards in some situations will be significantly different from that used in governments that do not face such problems since policing in countries with limited financial and other resources is always associated with certain problems (Gusarov & Popov, 2020). International standards, on the other hand, are universal and serve as a criterion for assessing the extent to which government structures in different countries of the world respect human rights (Lezhnin, 2022).

The lack of proper financial and other resources may be one of the factors determining the causes, conditions, and factors of the formation of deviant manifestations in the behavior of a police officer. Delinquent behavior, or deviant behavior, is a system of actions and actions of people or social groups that contradict social norms or socially recognized patterns and standards of behavior. In extreme manifestations, deviant behavior is punishable by law. The seriousness of offenses and the expression of their antisocial nature distinguish delinquent behavior from criminal behavior (Geovani et al., 2021).

Consequently, financial resources, as well as material and technical assistance are related to the effectiveness of the police. Low funding and lack of logistical support for such measures pose a threat to law and order in the state and, as a result, the effective implementation of human rights and freedoms. Appropriate financial, material, and technical assistance to the bodies and units of the National Police of Ukraine is a direct prerequisite for the integrated and successful activities of the police. Moreover, all police actions are assessed using international legal standards, especially when it comes to ensuring the observance of freedoms and human rights (Magnovsky & Kosarevska, 2023).

The application of international criteria for assessing the activities of the police does not mean the creation of a unified model for this type of law enforcement activity, since, as noted earlier, the conditions of the transition period of Ukraine and society, national traditions, and mentality should be taken into account. At the same time, it should be emphasized that in today's world, the concern for personal freedom has gone far beyond the borders of a single state, and there is a need to create universal standards of international law that are also considered essential rights. They are reflected in several important international legal acts that have established universal standards of individual liberties and interests and defined the boundaries beyond which the state cannot go (Qizi et al., 2024).

As a result, the world community began to regulate human rights, except for one state. This establishes a mechanism by which human rights, which have received legal recognition in numerous international legal documents and have turned into universal international standards, determine the need for their appropriate provision by the relevant public authorities, in particular the bodies and units of the National Police of Ukraine. This not only establishes how international legal standards of police activities are implemented in national legislation but also obliges all police officers to strictly comply with them (Voloshchuk, 2024; Kotsur et al., 2023).

Ukraine's move towards European Union membership requires a systemic transformation of law enforcement agencies in line with European policing standards. These standards are based not only on universal international human rights instruments, but also on the EU legal and policy framework, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the principles developed in the framework of EU justice and home affairs cooperation. In the context of EU accession, international legal standards for law enforcement function as benchmarks for assessing institutional readiness, the legality of police practices and the effectiveness of mechanisms for protecting individual rights. Compliance with these standards is subject to ongoing monitoring as part of the EU integration process, in particular in areas related to the independence and accountability of law enforcement agencies, prevention of ill-treatment, proportionate use of force and access to effective remedies for victims of rights violations..

Given the peculiarities of police operations, it is important to note that the UN General Assembly adopted the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials (Resolution 34/169) on 17 December 1979 to guide them in the appropriate direction. This code establishes the legal status of the police, its relationship with society, and the basic requirements for its formation and activities in a democratic society. It also requires consideration of generally accepted and reflected in universal international documents' legal standards of human rights and freedoms. In 1998 (Pol. 30/04/98), Amnesty International, in cooperation with law enforcement personnel and international experts, drafted the Ten Standards of Good Conduct for Law Enforcement Agencies, which are grounded in UN standards in the areas of human rights, criminal justice and law enforcement. Amnesty International's "Ten Standards of Good Conduct for Law Enforcement Agencies" is a set of universally recognized basic requirements for police activities, in particular, to promote respect for human freedoms and rights (McCorquodale & Nolan, 2021).

Significantly, one of the first of the "Ten Standards of Good Human Rights Practices for Law Enforcement Agencies" states that all persons have the right to be protected equally by the law, without discrimination, including threats and acts of violence. Women, children, elderly people, refugees, displaced persons and minorities are among the demographic categories that should be given special attention (Gavrylenko, 2024b).

The second rule is to respect and care for all victims of crime while ensuring their privacy and safety. The third rule is to avoid the use of force unless it is necessary and only to a minimum. The fourth rule is to refrain from using force against peaceful but illegal gatherings. The least amount of force is required when forcefully dispersing assemblies.

Lethal force (the fifth standard) should be applied only when it is required to protect the life of the individual or the lives of others.

The sixth need relates to arrests, which have to be carried out on legal grounds and with proper justification. In this case, it is crucial to make sure that all prisoners have the opportunity to contact their loved ones and a lawyer as soon as possible after arrest, in addition to receiving any necessary medical care (standard seventh). When all prisoners are treated humanely, the eighth standard becomes clear. Torture and other ill-treatment should never be applied, supported, or tolerated. Orders to perform these actions are not binding.

Standards do not cover up extrajudicial executions or "disappearances." Orders for such actions are not enforceable (ninth standard). It emphasizes that any abuse of this fundamental principle should be disclosed to the prosecutor's office and management. These international norms are institutional international legal standards for the activities of the police and in the process of introducing international experience are the basis for the formation of such a principle of the activities of bodies and units of the National Police of Ukraine as the observance of human rights and freedoms (Article 7 of the Law of Ukraine "On the National Police"). This conclusion grounded in the findings of the logical-legal method of the content of the provisions of the "Ten Standards of Correct Behavior of Law Enforcement Agencies on Human Rights." Consequently, Ukraine fulfills its international obligations at the domestic level, due to its membership in the relevant international organizations (Antoshkina et al., 2023; Maruf, 2021).

At the same time, bringing national legislation to the norms of international law occurs with the concept of obligations erga omnes ("applicable to all"). Fundamental relations between the state and the world community as a group of nations are based on general rules of law and the need for protection of the main public interests (Rakipova et al., 2023). The International Court of Justice has stressed again and again that nations have a broad responsibility related to the common interests of the community, which qualifies as an obligation (albeit out of contract) to the community as a whole. The Community considers the infringement of erga omnes commitments as an international crime. These are commitments that directly derive from the defense of individual rights (Voitsikhovsky & Zherebko, 2023).

In this context, it is crucial to remember the national implementation of international legal norms on police activities should be aimed at real (actual) and uncompromising defense of human freedoms and rights. They are understood as unified principles and rules of conduct of law enforcement, which are imperative, objectified in international legal acts and decisions of international human rights institutions, and provided (in case of their violation) with international legal sanctions. This is grounded in the findings of the analysis on understanding and specific differentiation of international legal standards of law enforcement. Two main components of international standards for law enforcement should be considered as a whole: professional standards for personnel and law enforcement officials, mainly for professional training; standards of protection and

protection of human rights and freedoms, maintenance of law and order and legality (Lutsenko & Gurtova, 2021).

They are the paradigm of the modern police, the basis for further development and improvement of the legal basis for the functioning of bodies and units of the National Police of Ukraine, and the international criterion for the legal assessment of such activities. Significantly accumulated two-vector theoretical and legal characteristic of international legal standards of law enforcement agencies is their understanding as unified principles and rules of imperative nature, formally fixed in international legal documents, and in case of their violation - the possibility of applying international sanctions. Violation of erga omnes obligations will be taken into account by the international community as a legal basis for the possibility of applying international sanctions.

## Discussion

The current challenges faced by Ukraine's justice system require effective changes and the implementation of international human rights standards in all aspects of law enforcement. An important component of upholding compliance to the principle of law and protecting human rights and freedoms is improving the level of professional training of police officers. Today, both strengthening the rule of law and implementing changes in the law enforcement sector depend on legal education, which is recognized by the Ukrainian Constitution and determined by the President to be a state policy priority. From the perspective of European integration, the implementation of international human rights standards in law enforcement should be understood as a form of legal conditionality. The EU evaluates candidate states on the basis of formal transposition of legal norms and their effective application in practice. Particular emphasis is placed on police training, internal accountability mechanisms and independent oversight structures capable of preventing systemic human rights violations.

The experience of EU member states demonstrates that sustainable compliance with European policing standards requires a combination of legislative harmonisation, institutional capacity building, and the development of a human rights-based professional culture in law enforcement agencies. For Ukraine, this means that the reforms of the National Police should be aimed not only at formal alignment with EU standards but at ensuring their practical effectiveness in a context of democratic governance and public trust.

The key step in bringing the Ukrainian educational system closer to the educational and scientific landscape of Europe is the expansion of the educational network of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. It is crucial to consider how highly developed countries such as Poland, Germany, and the United States have shaped police training in light of Ukraine’s membership in the European Union. For example, in Poland, much attention is paid to human rights training programs and the de-escalation of conflict situations. In Germany, there are specialized educational institutions where police officers are trained on how to act in a multicultural environment, while in the United States initiatives have been

introduced to psychologically train law enforcement personnel and help them work with vulnerable populations (Gavrylenko, 2024c).

Modernization of educational programs, compliance with world standards, advanced training of teaching staff, and introduction of new teaching methods are necessary to ensure a professional level of training for security forces. Creating an effective system of continuous professional development of police officers should be a key component of the reform, as it will allow them to successfully solve modern problems, in particular the growth of terrorism, transnational crime, and cybercrime. The Cyber Police, for example, has been established in Ukraine in recent years and has shown promise in preventing cybercrime; despite this, it requires continuous technological progress and the expansion of training initiatives (Cherpak, 2024).

The creation and implementation of systems for scientific testing of new strategies of police activities are central to the responsibilities to guarantee their effectiveness and compliance with world standards. Active cooperation with international organizations, in particular the UN, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, and Interpol, is an important part of this process for obtaining advanced knowledge and introducing best practices in the area of public safety. For example, Ukraine and the OSCE are already cooperating in reforming the police, which involves training instructors to work by international standards and conducting training seminars (Supronyuk, 2024; Omelchuk et al., 2022).

Establishing procedures for public oversight of law enforcement organizations is another important element that will increase public confidence in the police and guarantee the openness of its activities. The public can now participate in the evaluation of the work of law enforcement officers in Ukraine through advisory councils to police departments; however, they require additional powers and active cooperation with foreign specialists. Using the example of European countries, where independent oversight bodies often conduct such investigations, it is also vital to improve the processes of internal investigations into allegations of law enforcement actions (Vrublevska-Misyuna & Tychyna, 2022).

The Russian-Ukrainian war is a critical stress test for the implementation of international human rights standards in law enforcement. While warfare and martial law inevitably impose certain restrictions on individual rights, international human rights law and international humanitarian law require that such restrictions remain lawful, necessary, proportionate and subject to effective oversight. In this context, the role of law enforcement agencies goes beyond traditional policing functions to include maintaining public order in emergency situations, interacting with the military and ensuring the protection of civilians. The European Convention on Human Rights, as interpreted by the European Court of Human Rights, allows for limited derogations in case of public emergency threatening the life of the nation; however, such derogations do not relieve the state of its fundamental obligations to prevent torture, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and discrimination.

For Ukraine, the war complicates the practical implementation of international human rights standards in law enforcement. Increased security risks, population displacement,

destruction of infrastructure and increased operational pressure on police officers create conditions under which the risk of human rights violations is objectively increasing. Nevertheless, compliance with international legal standards during armed conflict remains a crucial indicator of a state's commitment to the rule of law and democratic values. From the perspective of European integration, the war does not diminish but rather reinforces the importance of respecting human rights standards in law enforcement. The EU and the Council of Europe have consistently emphasised that respect for human rights and effective civilian control over security forces are indispensable even under martial law. In this sense, Ukraine's ability to ensure the accountability of law enforcement agencies during the conflict serves as a key benchmark for assessing the resilience of its legal system and institutional maturity as an EU candidate state.

The war also highlights the need for coordinated application of international human rights law and international humanitarian law in policing, especially in areas affected by hostilities and in dealing with internally displaced persons, detainees and vulnerable groups. Strengthening the training of law enforcement officials in the application of these legal regimes, as well as enhancing cooperation with international monitoring mechanisms, is essential to prevent systemic violations and maintain public trust in law enforcement. Accordingly, the implementation of international legal standards for the protection of human rights by law enforcement in armed conflict should not be seen as an optional or secondary task, but as a fundamental component of Ukraine's legal obligations and its broader strategy of European integration and post-war recovery.

In general, large-scale and systemic changes are needed to implement global legal standards of human rights protection in the law enforcement field in Ukraine. This includes strengthening public control, introducing innovative technologies, improving the skills of police officers, reforming the MIA education system, and intensifying international cooperation. The Ukrainian law enforcement system will be able to meet modern international standards and ensure effective protection of people's freedoms and rights only if these steps are taken.

## Conclusions

Human rights and freedoms are important for Ukraine's democratic growth, as they are the basic principles of the modern world. After gaining independence in 1991, Ukraine assumed international obligations to ensure the protection of rights, and this is reflected in laws and reforms, especially in the area of public security. In the context of Ukraine's European integration and its aspirations to join the EU, the implementation of international legal standards for the protection of human rights in law enforcement is of strategic importance. Compliance with these standards is an important element of the Copenhagen Political Criteria and demonstrates Ukraine's readiness to function as a state governed by the rule of law within the European legal space. Therefore, the further approximation of national law enforcement practices to European standards should be

seen as a crucial factor for successful EU accession and the long-term sustainability of democratic institutions in Ukraine.

The National Police of Ukraine, as a law enforcement authority, provides for the implementation of international legal norms of a number of international agreements, including the UN Convention against Torture, the European Convention on Human Rights, and the UN Code of Legal Conduct. Members of law enforcement agencies and others. The rule of law, accountability, transparency as well as compliance with human rights remain the cornerstones of police work. That means that law enforcement agencies must act exclusively within the law, respecting and protecting the rights of citizens.

The creation of a new police force based on world experience has become one of the main changes that stimulates the observance of human rights. This involved the reorganization of law enforcement agencies, increasing the professional training of police officers, strengthening public control and reducing the level of corruption among these organizations. In addition, special training programs were introduced to help law enforcement officers respect human rights, in particular with the help of foreign partners and experts.

Financial and logistical assistance to the law enforcement system is crucial to successful implementation the international standards. Insufficient resources can lead to the police acting in an uncharacteristic manner and jeopardizing human rights, peace and order. Preventing such problems requires improving the system of motivation of law enforcement officers, creating decent working conditions for them and providing them with sufficient material resources to fulfil their tasks.

Ukraine is still adapting to the European and international legal systems, despite a difficult political and legal environment. A crucial first step in developing a democratic society and strengthening the rule of law is to bring legislation into line with international standards and apply it in practice.

However, there are other issues that need extra attention. Among them are violations of human rights during law enforcement operations, cases of abuse of power by police officers and general distrust of law enforcement agencies. Only a comprehensive strategy that provides for the legal education of citizens, the creation of powerful mechanisms of public control, toughening the punishment of law enforcement officers who violate human rights, and additional improvements in the system of their professional training can solve these problems.

International legal norms should be enshrined in Ukraine’s legal system to effectively address current problems and protect human rights. It is extremely important to enhance the professional training of law enforcement officers, introduce the latest technologies, and adapt curricula to international standards. Equally important is the development of scientific methods, cooperation with international organizations and strengthening of public control over police activities. The implementation of these measures will ensure that the law enforcement system complies with modern international standards and effectively protects the rights of citizens.

Therefore, further improvement of the legislative framework, professional training of police officers and ensuring proper monitoring of freedom of expression remain a priority for the Ukrainian state. Only through an integrated approach and international cooperation can the rights and freedoms of every citizen be truly protected, which is the key to democratic development and the stability of society.

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# CONTENT AND CONSEQUENCES OF UZBEKİSTAN'S NEW FOREİGN POLİCY MODEL

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## Abstract

The article focuses on the changes and transformations in Uzbekistan's foreign policy after 2016. The main topic of the article is to investigate the impact of the large-scale and comprehensive reforms initiated by Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who was elected President of Uzbekistan in 2016, on foreign policy. The article seeks to answer the question of which priorities shaped the change and transformation in Uzbek foreign policy. To answer this question, the content of the post-2016 foreign policy is first analyzed. The new Uzbek foreign policy has abandoned the security-only approach that has dominated the past and now addresses security issues in the context of economic growth. The link between security issues and economic growth underpins the new foreign policy model. This assumption guided the fictional basis and methodological framework of the article. In the article, the concrete effects of the new foreign policy model are tested in detail in the context of regional transportation corridors and the Afghan issue. The article concludes that the foreign policy activities of Uzbekistan after 2016 have been shaped within the framework of a new model.

## Keywords

Uzbekistan, New Foreign Policy Model, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Economization, Transport Corridors, Afghanistan.

## Resumo

O artigo centra-se nas mudanças e transformações da política externa do Uzbequistão após 2016. O principal tópico do artigo é investigar o impacto das reformas abrangentes e de grande escala iniciadas por Shavkat Mirziyoyev, que foi eleito Presidente do Uzbequistão em 2016, na política externa. O artigo procura responder à questão de saber quais as prioridades que moldaram a mudança e a transformação da política externa uzbeque. Para responder a esta questão, analisa-se em primeiro lugar o conteúdo da política externa pós-2016. A nova política externa uzbeque abandonou a abordagem exclusivamente securitária que dominou o passado e aborda agora as questões de segurança no contexto do crescimento económico. A ligação entre as questões de segurança e o crescimento económico está na base do novo modelo de política externa. Este pressuposto orientou a base ficcional e o quadro metodológico do artigo. No artigo, os efeitos concretos do novo modelo de política externa são testados em pormenor no contexto dos corredores de transporte regionais e da questão

afegã. O artigo conclui que as actividades de política externa do Uzbequistão após 2016 foram moldadas no âmbito de um novo modelo.

**Palavras-chave**

Uzbequistão, Novo Modelo de Política Externa, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Economização, Corredores de Transporte, Afeganistão.

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# CONTENT AND CONSEQUENCES OF UZBEKİSTAN'S NEW FOREİGN POLİCY MODEL

**HALİT HAMZAOĞLU**

## Introduction

Uzbekistan is strategically located in the heart of Asia. This strategic location offers great opportunities for Uzbekistan's future regional and global influence. Having gained its independence in 1991, Uzbekistan has been more isolated and cautious in its relations with the external world for political, geopolitical and security reasons until 2016. In this context, it is possible to say that Uzbek foreign policy has developed in a security-oriented manner since the collapse of the Soviet Union until 2016. The foreign policy pursued by Islam Karimov, the first President of Uzbekistan and the country's permanent leader until 2016, was shaped within the framework of a security-oriented approach. This security approach pushed Uzbekistan to adopt an isolationist foreign policy behaviour model.

The reform-oriented foreign policy approach of Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who came to power after Karimov's death in 2016, differed sharply from the previous period. Mirziyoyev's sweeping reforms have resonated at the national, regional and international levels. Economic and social reforms have paved the way for the emergence of a new Uzbekistan phenomenon. Mirziyoyev's reforms, which prioritised economic pragmatism, drastically changed foreign policy and the characteristics of regional and international relations of the new Uzbekistan. In this context, comprehensive reforms paved the way for the formation of foreign policy within the framework of a new model. One of the most important concrete results of the new foreign policy is the economicisation of foreign policy. This approach means that the security foreign policy of the past has been abandoned. The new foreign policy approach, which prioritises the development of Uzbekistan's foreign relations on an economic basis, has yielded positive results in a short time. In this context, there has been a visible change and transformation in Uzbekistan's regional and international relations.

The new foreign policy approach, which emerged as a result of the comprehensive reforms initiated by Mirziyoyev, has given Uzbekistan the characteristic of being a predictable partner both in the regional and international arena. In this framework, Uzbekistan has been able to use its favourable geographical advantages as an effective mechanism for its economic growth and development.

Existing scholarship has also examined Uzbekistan's foreign policy prior to 2016, particularly the security-driven and defensive orientation under Islam Karimov. Fazendeiro (2017), conceptualises this period as one of "defensive self-reliance," highlighting how threat perception, regime security, and strategic autonomy shaped Uzbekistan's isolationist posture. The central objective of this article is to explain how Uzbekistan's post-2016 domestic reform agenda translated into a coherent foreign policy model, and through which mechanisms this transformation reshaped regional engagement. Accordingly, the article is guided by the following research question: How and through which priorities has Uzbekistan's foreign policy been restructured after 2016, and what explains the shift from a security-oriented to an economically driven foreign policy model? The study analyses the emergence of this new foreign policy model by linking domestic reform priorities with foreign policy outputs. To this end, the article examines two policy domains—regional transport corridors and Afghanistan policy—as empirical test cases through which the operationalisation of the new model can be observed.

This article draws on insights from Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), particularly literature on foreign policy change, leadership agency, and the role of domestic priorities in shaping external behaviour. From an FPA perspective, leadership transitions represent critical junctures that enable policy reorientation, especially in systems characterised by strong executive authority. In this context, Mirziyoyev's rise to power constitutes a leadership-driven foreign policy shift, where domestic economic reform imperatives redefined threat perceptions and policy priorities. The concept of economic pragmatism is used here as an analytical lens to capture the recalibration of security concerns through economic instruments, while desecuritisation explains the reframing of issues such as regional connectivity and Afghanistan from existential threats to opportunities for cooperation.

Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative case-study design informed by foreign policy analysis. It combines document analysis of official strategies, presidential speeches, policy programmes, and regional initiatives with secondary academic sources. The analysis proceeds in three steps: first, identifying the core priorities shaping Uzbekistan's post-2016 foreign policy; second, conceptualising these priorities through the lens of economic pragmatism and desecuritisation; and third, empirically testing the explanatory power of this framework through the cases of regional transport corridors and Uzbekistan's policy towards Afghanistan. This design allows for a systematic alignment between the research question, empirical sections, and conclusions.

## Opening Discourse in the Mirziyoyev Era: A New Foreign Policy Model?

Uzbekistan's foreign policy has been attracting attention since the second half of 2016, when President Mirziyoyev launched large-scale reforms. Today one can speak confidently enough about the emergence of the new phenomenon of Uzbekistan's foreign policy (Makhmudov, 2021: 121). Mirziyoyev launched a series of large-scale reforms that can be called 'thawing'. Uzbek foreign policy achieved notable successes in the first year of Mirziyoyev's rule (Kazantsev & Gushev, 2018: 300).

In 2016, after Karimov's death, a new political cycle began in Uzbekistan, and the country's new leadership was faced with the task of overcoming the existing negative inertia of Karimov's foreign policy course. Following Mirziyoyev's victory in the presidential elections, the change of power took place without social and political upheavals, allowing the new Uzbek leadership to focus on addressing the country's economic development problems (Borisov, 2019: 131). During Karimov's years in power, Uzbekistan had become a rather closed country in terms of foreign policy. The new President Mirziyoyev set a course to achieve regional leadership by eliminating the country's isolation and intensifying foreign policy, especially in relations with neighbouring states, while continuing to pursue the concept of the state's non-aligned status and non-participation in military conflicts outside Uzbekistan (Paderina, 2018). Karimov was the permanent president of Uzbekistan for 26 years. Regarded as an influential and authoritarian personality, Karimov's political regime in Uzbekistan was the harshest in the post-Soviet space, based on authoritarianism with a super-presidential model of governance. Some observers claim that Uzbekistan's foreign policy under Karimov was a 'pendulum' swinging from Russia to the United States. In the last years of Karimov's rule, Uzbekistan exhibited a kind of isolationism in both regional and international relations (Izteleuova & Lapenko, 2021).

For the first time in decades, Uzbekistan's foreign policy has undergone a major change. Principles such as strengthening foreign economic cooperation, ending public squabbles with neighbours, easing travel restrictions, and making Central Asian solidarity a key foreign policy goal heralded a major shift (Weitz, 2018: 9). Uzbekistan, which does not prioritise any state in its foreign policy, has signed strategic partnership documents with both the US and Russia. As mentioned above, Uzbekistan's 'piggy bank of strategic partnerships' includes the US, Russia, China, the EU, Türkiye, India, Pakistan, South Korea, Japan and all its Central Asian neighbours.

The new foreign policy has led to normalisation of relations with neighbouring Central Asian countries, a wide range of bilateral relations, expansion of cooperation with extra-regional actors and active participation in infrastructure projects. As a result, a few years later Uzbekistan expanded its influence in Central Asia (Kazimir, 2024: 499). In 2022-2023 alone, more than 150 high-level and senior-level events were organised in Central Asia. Consultative meetings of leaders of the states of the region, a unique mechanism for the development of regional cooperation, were initiated (Tojhiyev, 2024). Uzbekistan takes an active part in these events and meetings. Limited opportunities in Uzbekistan had led millions of Uzbeks to migrate to Russia and Kazakhstan. Tense relations with its neighbours, resulting in economic blockades, closed borders and broken communication links, greatly hindered beneficial economic cooperation. For example, the volume of trade between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan was only $10 million in 2015. Mirziyoyev's new foreign policy creates many opportunities for Uzbekistan. In this context, Uzbekistan can make more effective use of its strategic location in the centre of the region, bordering four other Central Asian states, and thus potentially become a major trade hub (Zhunisbek, 2020). Abdulaziz Kamilov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, stated that a significant improvement in the political situation in Central Asia is one of the most

important results of the new foreign policy approach. In this context, the formation of a real spirit of good neighbourliness in the region and the beginning of joint work between Uzbekistan and neighbouring states on solving vital regional problems have become vital (Yuz.uz, 2025).

The priorities of the foreign policy of the new Uzbekistan were first defined *in the Strategy of Action on Five Priority Development Areas of the Republic of Uzbekistan* for 2017-2021. This document listed the main priorities of Uzbek foreign policy as follows (O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining Formoni, 2017). Within the framework of the strategy of action of the Republic of Uzbekistan on five priority development areas for 2017-2021, about 300 laws, more than 4 thousand decrees of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan were adopted, aimed at carrying out fundamental reforms in all spheres of state and social life (O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining farmoni, 2022). The emergence of the new phenomenon of foreign policy of Uzbekistan is a consequence of socio-economic reforms that began in the country in 2017. It is also the goals of creating a fundamentally new business and socio-political environment that meets the requirements of the modern era that determine foreign policy tasks related to opening markets, attracting investments, modern technologies and knowledge, and building new transport corridors (Makhmudov, 2021).

Speaking about the nature of Uzbekistan's proactive policy, Makhmudov notes that a feature of this policy is the fundamental rejection of the 'win-lose' approach, which exists today as a rule of doing business in the big world geopolitics, according to which there must always be a winner and a loser. According to Makhmudov, Uzbekistan adopts the opposite win-win approach in its relations with other actors of world politics and economy, where all participants in the relationship are expected to win on the political or economic issue under discussion (Makhmudov, 2021). Uzbekistan's foreign policy interests are primarily based on domestic development priorities, which in fact implies a clear shift towards the economicisation of the country's international cooperation and the strengthening of economic pragmatism in foreign relations (Neymatov & Karimov, 2021).

The New Uzbekistan Development Strategy in 2022 was approved by Presidential decree. The Development Strategy covers five areas and 100 goals in a seven-year strategy aimed at 'creating a new Uzbekistan.' The New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for 2022 envisages a comprehensive modernisation. The 2022 Development Strategy consists of the following seven priority areas (O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining farmoni, 2022).

The Development Strategy envisages the implementation of various measures that will form the basis for Uzbekistan to become an 'upper-middle-income country'. In this regard, it defines the objectives in concrete figures and puts in place mechanisms to achieve them. Among the many other priorities set out in the 2022-2026 Development Strategy are further economic liberalisation, privatisation in most areas, competition, elimination of monopolies, attracting more foreign investment, stabilising prices, supporting the development of 'driver areas of the economy' and decentralisation to give more powers to the regions. The development strategy prioritises building a new

Uzbekistan by strengthening the country's security and defence capacity and pursuing an open, pragmatic and active foreign policy (Taraqqiyot Strategiyasi Markazi, 2022). Located on the Great Silk Road, Uzbekistan has been a country of strategic importance for foreign trade and communication for centuries. Naturally, it was considered the heart of Central Asia due to the region's role in socio-political, commercial and cultural spheres. Today, Uzbekistan is strengthening ties of cooperation in Central Asia and becoming a more reliable partner for the international community, while remaining true to the traditions of its historical heritage (Bekar, 2022). In this context, the 2022 Development Strategy allows the new Uzbekistan to further consolidate its foreign policy model.

In the context of the changing world order, new domestic and foreign policy vectors are emerging, and the need to amend the Constitution after the 2021 presidential elections has become apparent. It was announced that the people of Uzbekistan should be directly involved in the drafting of the updated Constitution. To this end, a portal entitled 'Mening Konstitutsiyam' ('My Constitution') and a 24-hour call centre for receiving proposals for amendments to the Constitution were established (Avatkov&Rojkhova, 2023: 72). The revised Constitution of Uzbekistan was adopted in a referendum held on 30 April 2023. In the referendum, 90.2 per cent of Uzbekistan citizens approved the new Constitution. Mirziyoyev stated that the result of the referendum reflected the dreams, hopes and aspirations of the Uzbek people to build a new Uzbekistan (O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining Farmoni, 2023). After the adoption of the new Constitution, the development strategy entered a new stage. In this regard, on 11 September 2023, Mirziyoyev approved the 'Strategy of Uzbekistan-2030'. Analysing the priorities of the Strategy, it is possible to identify specific objectives aimed at strengthening the attractive image of the country, especially in areas such as education, sport and tourism. In particular, the gradual implementation of the relevant objectives of the strategy can serve to increase the prestige of the country and actively promote an attractive image of it internationally. This contributes to pursuing an open, pragmatic and active foreign policy (Saidazimhujayeva, 2023: 233-236).

## Key Priorities of Uzbekistan's New Foreign Policy Model: Economic Pragmatism and Transport Corridors

One of the most important points of the new Uzbek policy that differed from the Karimov era was the economicisation of foreign policy. In Uzbekistan's new foreign policy model, security issues now play a role as a factor that provides the necessary conditions for economic growth. Thus, the economic component started to play a more important role in shaping the new development model of the country. To describe the new philosophy of international cooperation, the term 'economicisation', which has become a distinctive feature of Uzbekistan's modern foreign policy, has become the most important element defining the new foreign policy model (Makhmudov, 2021: 121). The economicisation of Uzbekistan's foreign policy has manifested itself in its active and deep integration into international financial, trade and economic communities (Yuldasheva, 2023: 278). In this context, post-2016 Uzbekistan aimed to enter a new era of international trade and

investment. The new Uzbekistan aspires to develop trade relations with the European Union, the United States of America (USA) and South Korea. Negotiations with the EU in Tashkent in 2019 demonstrated this will. The Uzbek leadership is prioritising the process of replacing the 1999 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU with a new agreement in line with modern conditions. In addition, during President Mirziyoyev's visits to South Korea, the US and the EU, arguments were expressed that Uzbekistan will soon join the World Trade Organisation (WTO) (Umirdinov, 2019).

On 7 July 2020, negotiations between Uzbekistan and the WTO resumed after a 15-year break. At the 9th meeting of the Working Group on Uzbekistan's Accession in 2024, held on 5 and 6 December, a high-level government delegation headed by Deputy Prime Minister Jamshid Khodjaev reaffirmed the country's strong intention to rapidly advance negotiations with WTO members with a view to completing the process by 2026 (WTO, 2024). It is worth noting that membership in international economic structures will provide Uzbekistan with the opportunity to strengthen its position in foreign trade and realise mutually beneficial cooperation. Today, there are very few countries in the world that are not WTO members. In Central Asia, these are Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. WTO membership will provide guarantees for investors entering Uzbekistan and the country's trading partners. In addition, in the case of WTO membership, Uzbekistan will have the right to complain about trade decisions of other countries. All full members of the WTO have the opportunity to participate in the development of international trade rules (Izteleuova&Lapenko, 2021). Uzbekistan has set membership in the WTO as one of its priority foreign policy goals.

The new Uzbek foreign policy seeks to expand its external economic ties by joining or developing cooperation with multilateral international organisations. In 2019, Uzbekistan joined the Organisation of Turkic States (OTS), whose members include Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. One of the goals of this step was to expand trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation with its closest neighbours in the region by creating favourable conditions for trade and investment, further simplifying customs and transit procedures, financial and banking transactions (Makhmudov, 2021: 123).

On 11 December 2020, Uzbekistan received observer status in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAES), which can be seen as a necessary step to study the pros and cons of this organisation, in particular the economic development of the country, and possibly closer cooperation (Makhmudov, 2021: 123). As Mirziyoyev stated, 'We attach great importance to the development of close and multifaceted cooperation with EAES. It is important to use the potential of our countries, jointly remove barriers in trade relations, mutually create new markets'. According to him, the EAES countries are the main, natural trading partners of Uzbekistan, and this is evidenced by the fact that in recent years the trade turnover with them has almost doubled, as well as the creation of thousands of joint ventures (Gazeta uz, 2020).

The new foreign policy approach of Uzbekistan is characterised by transport projects. In this context, transport projects can be considered as a complement to the new Uzbek

foreign policy model. Uzbekistan's transport sector plays a special role in the country's economy due to geographical, historical geopolitical and a number of other factors. Uzbekistan is one of the two countries in the world, along with Liechtenstein, which is a *double landlocked country (double landlocked country*), which is cut off from international sea routes by the territory of two or more countries. Therefore, the cost of transporting export and import cargoes as well as transit traffic becomes a critical factor of competitiveness (Yarashhova, 2019:524). The development of transport communications has always been seen as a priority task in Uzbekistan, which is located at the crossroads between the West and the East. Railway transport has consistently occupied a leading position in the main domestic and interstate transport operations of Uzbekistan, and the country's economy depends on the reliable operation of the railway (Nasirov & Kadirov, 2021: 15).

On 20-21 September 2018, Tashkent hosted the international conference 'Central Asia in the system of international transport corridors: strategic prospects and unrealised opportunities' on the development of transport and transit potential of the Central Asian region. The conference expressed interest in developing a strategy for the development of transport logistics in Central Asia with the participation of the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Asian Development Bank and other international financial institutions.

Mirziyoyev made a number of constructive initiatives at the international conference 'Central and South Asia: Regional Interconnectedness: Challenges and Opportunities' in Tashkent in 2021. These initiatives included the signing of a multilateral Agreement on Economic Cooperation between the countries of Central and South Asia, the organisation of an annual interregional forum to discuss topical economic issues, the development of mutual investments, trade in goods and services, transport and energy communications. Infrastructure projects in particular include the construction of the Termez-Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway, which could strengthen the transit potential of Central and South Asia. This railway will revive the ancient trade route known as Uttarapatha, which connected India to Central Eurasia (Kazantsev 2021). Diversification of foreign economic relations and transport corridors is a vital issue in the near term. Uzbekistan in particular has been talking about the so-called Central Asia-South Asia link for years. However, the realisation of this mega project depends on peace and stability in Afghanistan (Tolipov, 2022: 8). Connecting Central and South Asia is seen as a new trend in the economic development of a wide geography.

The development of Uzbekistan's transit potential in the perspective up to 2035 requires taking into account a number of factors in which the assessment of the potential of intercontinental trade is key, taking into account the prospects for the development of the leading centres of freight creation and freight entrepreneurship in Eurasia- China, the EU, Russia, India, the Middle East region. These centres are the main drivers of intercontinental trade.

Uzbekistan considers the Trans-Caspian International Transport Corridor, or the Middle Corridor as it is commonly called, as one of its priority transport routes. The Central

Corridor is the most important route for Uzbekistan's foreign trade with EU countries. Given its strategic location in the heart of Central Asia and its strong economic ties with neighbouring countries, the new Uzbekistan has a key role to play in the successful implementation of the Central Corridor. For geopolitical reasons, the importance of this route bypassing Russia for Europe has increased. Currently, many countries do not want to be dependent on Russia's transport policy.

In October 2024, China, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan signed an agreement to start construction of a new 454-kilometre-long railway at a cost of USD 4.7 billion, half of which will be financed by China. This project will help transport goods from China to Kyrgyzstan, Central Asian countries, the Middle East, including Türkiye, and the EU. Thus, the new railway will not only connect the countries in the Asian region, but will also become an important part of the Central Corridor connecting China to Europe via the countries of the South Caucasus (Evgrasina, 2024). On 29 January 2025, the Ankara Declaration signed in Ankara between Uzbekistan, Türkiye and Azerbaijan reaffirmed the importance of the Central Corridor and emphasised its role in increasing the transit potential of Uzbekistan, Türkiye and Azerbaijan. The Declaration also pays special attention to the need to strengthen the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA), to consider ways to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its activities and to maintain the full effectiveness of the mechanisms (Gazeta, uz, 2025).

It is obvious that for Uzbekistan and all other Central Asian countries, it is vital to have a well-developed and reliably functioning network of international transport corridors with access to sea and ocean ports, enabling the development of effective international cooperation to ensure sustainable socio-economic development. In this context, Uzbekistan both initiates and supports all reasonable initiatives in this direction (Nasirov & Kadirov, 2021: 14). Considering the geopolitical situation in Central Asia, it should be noted that Uzbekistan is currently becoming one of the important links in the normalisation of the situation in Afghanistan and a strategic hub for the Central Asian countries in the implementation of transport, logistics and other economic projects in the Asian region (Nasirov & Kadirov, 2021: 16).

## How Do Post-2021 Changes in Afghanistan Affect the New Uzbekistan?

Due to geographical, geopolitical and geoeconomic factors, Uzbekistan is one of the key players among Afghanistan's neighbours in the process of solving the problems in this country. Without taking into account the role of this factor, the solution of the problems in Afghanistan cannot be fully realised. In this regard, over the past decades, Uzbekistan has actively participated in the development of political and economic decisions aimed at resolving the conflict in Afghanistan (Ergashev, 2021: 34-35). Uzbekistan's position on the solution of the Afghanistan conflict was initially based on two main premises. The first was the recognition that a solution through military action alone was not possible. The second was to increase the role and importance of the economic component in Afghanistan's reconstruction and conflict resolution programme. In this context, Uzbekistan has conducted parallel diplomatic activities to participate in the

implementation of economic projects and to combine the efforts of both Afghanistan's neighbouring countries and the US, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), China and Russia. Uzbekistan has consistently tried to pursue a policy that prioritises these two interrelated aspects (Ergashev, 2021: 35).

In the post-2016 Uzbek foreign policy model, Afghanistan is conceptualised not as a source of threat to stability and security, but as a bundle of opportunities, primarily economic development, for Uzbekistan and the Central Asian region. Support for peace and stability in Afghanistan, development of trade and economic cooperation with Kabul, Uzbekistan's promotion of initiatives for greater involvement of the international community in peacebuilding in Afghanistan, and the country's integration into the Central and South Asian connectivity projects promoted by Tashkent have formed the basis of the New Uzbek approach. This realistic approach is characterised by a high level of flexibility that enables Uzbekistan to build constructive relations with Afghanistan (Makhmudov, 2023: 80). Under Karimov, multi-vectorism, refusal to join military-political blocs, inadmissibility of deployment of Uzbek troops outside the country, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states dominated Uzbek foreign policy. Seeing a number of areas for cooperation in Afghanistan, Mirziyoyev adapted them to the new realities listed below (Nuriddinov, 2021):

- Afghanistan as a potential opportunity to build bridges between Central and South Asia;
- Involving Afghanistan in trade and economic relations;
- Using 'soft power' tools in Afghanistan to create a positive image of Uzbekistan.

Mirziyoyev's approach is based on the fact that it is not Afghanistan itself that poses a threat, but the terrorist groups that have settled on its territory due to the civil war and pose a threat to the regional security of Central Asia. The first major change in Uzbekistan's foreign policy towards Afghanistan after 2016 was desecuritisation of bilateral cooperation issues. Instead of focusing mainly on security issues, Tashkent emphasised the development of trade, economic, cultural, educational and people-to-people links between the countries. Existing restrictions on Afghan companies' access to the Uzbek market, the use of Uzbek railway corridors for importing and exporting goods to Afghanistan, and the issuance of visas to Afghan citizens were quickly lifted. Uzbekistan initiated efforts to promote Uzbek goods and services in Afghanistan by opening representative offices and trade houses. The second major change, another feature of Uzbekistan's new foreign policy in its relations with Afghanistan, was the gradual expansion of participation in multilateral formats for conflict resolution. Previously, Tashkent prioritised bilateral contacts in relations with Afghanistan and advocated the inappropriateness of participation in multilateral formats (Umarov, 2021: 9).

The Forum 'Peace Process, Security Cooperation and Regional Cooperation' held in Tashkent in March 2018 and the international conference 'Central and South Asia: Regional Interconnectedness: Challenges and Opportunities', also held in Tashkent in

2021, were the main outputs of Uzbekistan's theses on the solution of the Afghan problem (Knyazev, 2023: 269). Uzbekistan's interests in Afghanistan are more focused on two aspects of cooperation: economic and transport and logistics. As it lacks access to the sea, Uzbekistan emphasises opening up to South Asia. Afghanistan is of particular importance for Uzbekistan as it has the potential to connect two major regions, Central and South Asia (Nuriddinov, 2021).

The US withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021 had a profound impact on regional dynamics. The rapid fall of Kabul on 15 August 2021 and the Taliban's seizure of control over the entire territory of Afghanistan, including the seemingly impregnable Panjsher Gorge, unexpectedly for many analysts, immediately after the withdrawal of US troops, made it necessary for all Central Asian countries to adjust their foreign policies to the new realities. According to Uzbek officials, the Taliban's return to power did not come as a surprise to them, as this development was foreseen two years ago and explicit security guarantees were received from the head of the Taliban's political office in Doha (Qatar), Mullah Abdul Ghani Barodar (Makhmudov, 2023: 87). Uzbekistan's Deputy Foreign Minister Farhod Arziyev said that 'they have been in contact with the Taliban for many years and consider the Taliban as an undeniable factor in Afghan society. The same principles defined by President Mirziyoyev will continue to be the main focus of their future approach, and Afghanistan is Uzbekistan's close and valued neighbour and considers it an integral part of Central Asia' (Gazeta uz, 2021).

On 26 July 2022, an international conference on 'Afghanistan: security and economic development' was held in Tashkent with the participation of special representatives of Afghanistan's immediate neighbours, South, Central Asia, the Middle East, the European Union and the United States, as well as a delegation from the Taliban leadership. The conference participants expressed a common understanding that the main priority should be the revitalisation and strengthening of the economy as an important factor in achieving lasting peace in Afghanistan. It is necessary to promote the integration of Afghanistan into interregional economic processes and advance the implementation of socially significant and infrastructure projects, including the creation of interregional transport, energy and other corridors (Kun uz, 2022).

Given the geopolitical instability in the region and the unrecognised status of the Taliban government, Uzbekistan is developing a foreign policy that allows the country to protect its interests without the need for official diplomatic recognition. This strategy reflects a careful balancing act, using economic relations as an effective tool to influence and potentially control outcomes in bilateral relations (Boltayev & Mukhammedova, 2024).

According to some perspectives, Uzbekistan's increased emphasis on economic ties with Afghanistan is based on various strategic considerations. One of the most pressing issues for Uzbekistan is water security. The agricultural sector, which is vital for the country's economy, is heavily dependent on the water resources of the Amuderya River, which partly originates in Afghanistan. With the Taliban coming to power, Uzbekistan has faced the risk of possible manipulation of water rights, which could have disastrous consequences for its agricultural production and thus food security (Boltayev &

Mukhammedova, 2024). An irrigation canal under construction in Afghanistan aims to transform the agricultural landscape and provide water to millions of citizens suffering from regular drought. When completed, the Koshtepa Canal will be 285 kilometres long and will help irrigate the country's arid northern provinces. However, neighbouring Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are extremely concerned about the impact on their water resources. The canal will divert resources from the Amuderya River and reduce the water supply of the two countries, which have been using water from this source since Soviet times. When the waterway is completed in 2028, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan could lose 15 per cent of their current water flows (Mamadshoyev, 2023). It should be noted that Central Asia's water security is inextricably linked to energy, food security, environment, unemployment, political stability and military security (Veretylynik, 2024: 633).

By focusing on trade and economic cooperation, Uzbekistan prioritises creating leverage that can protect its interests in the face of potential challenges, particularly on water security issues. This pragmatic approach reflects a broader shift in Uzbekistan's foreign policy, in which national interests trump ideology. As Uzbekistan continues to navigate the complexities of its relations with Afghanistan, a strategy of economic engagement could be a powerful tool for future stability and security in the region (Boltayev & Mukhammedova, 2024). Afghanistan has never previously competed over the water resources of its border rivers, thus avoiding conflicts with Central Asian countries, but the construction of the Koshtepa canal could change the security situation on Afghanistan's northern border and force neighbouring former Soviet states to see the Afghan government's water policy as a threat to their national interests and national security ((Veretylynik, 2024: 633).

According to Makhmudova, further progress in Uzbekistan's policy towards Afghanistan depends on several decisive conditions. These conditions will largely be shaped by the domestic and foreign policy actions of the new Afghan authorities. Afghanistan needs comprehensive social and economic modernisation. The Afghan government should prioritise not only controlling the domestic political situation, but also initiating sustainable economic growth, raising the income level of the population, gaining international recognition and improving the country's image on the world stage (Makhmudov, 2023: 91).

## Conclusion

This article set out to explain how and why Uzbekistan’s foreign policy has been restructured since 2016, addressing the research question of how domestic reform priorities translated into a new foreign policy model. By adopting a foreign-policy-analysis-informed research design and examining transport corridors and Afghanistan as test cases, the article demonstrates that Uzbekistan’s post-2016 foreign policy change is best understood as a leadership-driven shift towards economic pragmatism. After 2016, Uzbekistan has made great strides both in socio-economic and foreign policy terms. Unlike the previous Uzbek leader Karimov, President Mirziyoyev has implemented

important and multifaceted reforms and thus intensified Uzbekistan's relations with the outside world. Mirzoyoyev prioritised the construction of a new Uzbekistan with his multifaceted reforms. In this context, especially the development and diversification of foreign economic relations has become the strategic priority of the new Uzbekistan in foreign policy. Thanks to Mirziyoyev's policies, Uzbekistan's role in the regional equation has further increased, crystallised and consolidated. Thus, the new Uzbekistan under Mirziyoyev's leadership has implemented a comprehensive and proactive foreign policy model. This foreign policy model has yielded significant results in a short period of time. One of the most important elements of the new model is the economicisation of foreign policy. This model has allowed Uzbekistan to economise international cooperation and strengthen economic pragmatism in foreign relations.

Uzbekistan, located at the very centre of Central Asia, has a very decisive position in the geostrategic and geoeconomic structuring of the region. In this context, the economic pragmatism guiding the new foreign policy model has further increased Uzbekistan's role in regional transport corridors. Uzbekistan started to use its geographical advantage more effectively in regional strategic cooperation mechanisms. In particular, Uzbekistan has adopted a constructive attitude towards the resolution of the Afghanistan issue and has treated its relations with this country as an important part of the regional economic order. In this context, Uzbekistan is one of the important links in the normalisation process of Afghanistan. The new Uzbekistan supports and even encourages the economic integration of Central and South Asia. This orientation shows that Uzbekistan treats the Afghan issue not only as a security-oriented issue, but also as an issue that has socio-economic dimensions and affects the dynamics of the entire region.

Mirziyoyev's reforms, which he has been emphasising and largely successfully implementing since 2016, have made Uzbekistan more visible in regional and international affairs. It is possible to say that this visibility has made a positive contribution to Uzbekistan's international image.

The analysis confirm that the economicisation of foreign policy is not merely a rhetorical shift but a structuring principle that redefines Uzbekistan’s regional behaviour. By desecuritising relations with neighbouring states and reframing Afghanistan as an economic and connectivity opportunity, the new foreign policy model aligns closely with the research design and analytical framework developed in this study. In this sense, Uzbekistan’s post-2016 foreign policy represents a coherent and analytically identifiable model rather than a collection of ad hoc policy adjustments.

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# ROLE OF AFRICAN UNION IN ADDRESSING GLOBAL CHALLENGES THROUGH THE LENS OF GENESIS (11:1-9): THEOLOGICAL AND SOCIO-POLITCAL INSIGHTS

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## Abstract

This interdisciplinary paper analyses the African Union's (AU) role in addressing global challenges and examines the AU's efforts to foster unity and cooperation among African nations. Drawing upon political science, international relations, and environmental studies, the research investigates the effectiveness of the AU's initiatives in promoting a unified African voice on the global stage. It explores how regional integration has shaped policy coordination, resource allocation, and diplomatic efforts in tackling transnational problems. Uniquely, this analysis incorporates a biblical perspective, drawing parallels between the AU's aspirations for unity and the biblical narrative of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9. The paper adopts an interdisciplinary approach and employs the politico-theological framework for the development of the ideas in the research. While acknowledging that AU's regional integration project has made significant strides, it observes that it still faces considerable obstacles in translating this unity into effective solutions for climate change, pandemics, and migration, which are among the global challenges plaguing Africa. Integrating secular and biblical viewpoints, this study offers a holistic understanding of the complexities involved in building a united African response to global challenges.

## Keywords

African Union, Climate Change, Pandemic, Migration, Cooperation.

## Resumo

Este artigo interdisciplinar analisa o papel da União Africana (UA) na resposta aos desafios globais e examina os esforços da UA para fomentar a unidade e a cooperação entre as nações africanas. Baseando-se na ciência política, nas relações internacionais e nos estudos ambientais, a investigação analisa a eficácia das iniciativas da UA na promoção de uma voz africana unificada na cena mundial. Explora a forma como a integração regional moldou a coordenação de políticas, a alocação de recursos e os esforços diplomáticos na resolução de problemas transnacionais. De forma singular, esta análise incorpora uma perspetiva bíblica, estabelecendo paralelos entre as aspirações de unidade da UA e a narrativa bíblica da Torre de Babel em Génesis 11:1-9. O artigo adota uma abordagem interdisciplinar e recorre ao quadro político-teológico para o desenvolvimento das ideias na investigação. Embora

reconheça que o projeto de integração regional da UA tenha feito avanços significativos, observa que este ainda enfrenta obstáculos consideráveis na tradução desta unidade em soluções eficazes para as alterações climáticas, as pandemias e a migração, que se encontram entre os desafios globais que assolam África. Integrando pontos de vista seculares e bíblicos, este estudo oferece uma compreensão holística das complexidades envolvidas na construção de uma resposta africana unida aos desafios globais.

**Palavras-chave**

União Africana, Alterações Climáticas, Pandemia, Migração, Cooperação.

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## Introduction

In an increasingly interconnected world, the challenges of climate change, pandemics, and migration transcend national boundaries, demanding coordinated and unified responses from regional and global actors. The African Union (AU), as the premier continental body representing African states, has arisen as an apt and handy force in addressing these issues through collective action and regional integration (Kanu et al., 2025). However, the effectiveness of these efforts and the AU's role in shaping global responses to these crises remain subjects of intense scrutiny and debate. The AU's ambitious initiatives, such as the Great Green Wall, the African Adaptation Initiative, and the African Medical Supplies Platform, reflect a concerted effort to harness regional unity for global impact (African Union, 2022; United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification [UNCCD], 2022). These initiatives aim to tackle pressing issues like environmental degradation, health emergencies, and migration, highlighting the AU's commitment to promoting a cohesive and proactive African voice on the international stage.

Yet, despite these advancements, the AU's journey is fraught with challenges in translating regional unity into effective and sustainable solutions (African Union Commission, 2015; African Union, 2020). To deepen an understanding of the AU's role and the complexities of its regional integration efforts, this paper draws on an interdisciplinary approach that merges insights from political science, international relations, environmental studies, and biblical scholarship. In particular, the narrative of the Tower of Babel in Gen 11:1-9 provides a compelling allegory for the AU's efforts. This biblical account, depicting humanity's determination to build a towering edifice and the subsequent divine intervention that disrupts their unity, mirrors the AU's own struggle to

harness collective action amidst diverse national interests and external pressures (Wenham, 1987).

Gen 11:1-9 portrays the unity of language and purpose among the people of Babel as a source of both strength and potential hubris, resulting in a dramatic divine intervention that scatters humanity across the globe. This narrative offers a rich metaphor for understanding the AU's approach to addressing global challenges: the aspirations for unity and collaboration resonate with the AU's endeavours to create a unified African response to environmental, health, and migration issues. At the same time, it underscores the inherent risks of overreaching ambition without adequate consideration of practical limitations and external factors. This study provides a holistic examination of the AU's strategies and challenges in fostering regional cooperation by integrating this biblical perspective with contemporary political and environmental analysis. It aims to elucidate how the AU can leverage its collective strength while navigating the complexities of implementing effective solutions to global challenges. Through this interdisciplinary lens, the paper seeks to offer valuable insights and recommendations for enhancing the AU's efficacy in addressing these critical issues, contributing to a more unified and resilient African response to global crises.

## Methodology

The methodology adopted for this paper is the interdisciplinary approach, which can enrich research because of its emphasis on using multiple fields of ideas, inquiry, and methods of research. It is about the involvement of two or more academic, scientific, or artistic disciplines to research, which would mean taking a holistic approach, combining multiple disciplines to achieve one common purpose, and in this case, it is a combination of politics and scripture. This is based on the understanding that for researchers addressing important questions and issues, one set of methods for analyzing and understanding is probably not sufficient on its own (ASU 2024). The interdisciplinary approach is required to overcome the problem that "disciplines may perform a selector role determining what is included and excluded in both the framing of research and its execution" (Tribe, 2006, p. 366). It also increases the flexibility and ability of researchers to address theoretical and methodological biases that are implicit in disciplinary research. It is therefore in the hands of the skilled researcher to integrate various disciplines in recognition of respective merits and shortcomings (Jamal et al., 2001; Tribe, 2007).

Interdisciplinary research has to bridge different worldviews (ontology), understanding of knowledge (epistemology), and methodologies, exacerbated by discipline-specific discourses. An overarching ontology that enables one to overcome and capitalise on heterogeneities is required (Easton 2010). The interdisciplinary approach is based on the Igwebuike philosophical principle, which holds unity as the highest good in all things. It, therefore, requires the drawing of methods from different disciplines and merging them together to produce cognitive advancement, that is, examining or solving a theme, problem, issue, or experience (Kanu 2016, 2020).

## Theoretical Framework

In order to enable a political interpretation of scripture for modern political reality, the theoretical framework for this research establishes a relationship between God and politics at various levels, enabling a political interpretation of scripture for contemporary political reality (Ivan 1969; Cavanaugh 2003; Pilani, 2024). This approach liberates scripture from being confined solely to divine parameters and rediscovers its political dimensions. Horsley (2000) and Kanu and Paul (2024) emphasise that studying the Bible inherently carries political implications. Walzer (2014) argues that there is no contradiction between God and politics, describing the Bible as both a religious and political book. Sihombing (2022) supports this view, noting that political matters are indeed addressed in the Bible. Other scholars, while acknowledging the autonomy of political rulers, assert that their power is limited and must recognise God's eternal governance (Schwartz and Kalman 2016; Kanu 2016; Fleming 2017; Walzer 2018). This perspective sees politics as a means through which God implements His plans for His people, with God as the true King and human rulers seeking divine guidance (Kanu 2020; Martínez 2018; Brueggemann 2009).

Grudem (2018) emphasises God's role in ruling over the destinies of kings and nations, citing several biblical passages to support this claim. These passages from Psalms, Proverbs, and Daniel underscore the belief that God's authority extends over all earthly rulers and nations. Punt (2007 & 2014) and Barr (1980) argue that the New Testament is inherently a political document, which has been obscured by centuries of spiritualisation. The political nature of scripture is further illustrated through Christ's life and involvement in the political society of His time, engaging with an oppressed nation under Roman rule (Punt 2017; Globalchristians 2024). This historical context provides a basis for deriving political discourses from scripture, demonstrating how religious texts can be interpreted and applied to contemporary political realities.

## African Union and Global Challenges

In this subunit, the paper sets out to illustrate the proactive measures the AU has undertaken regarding the three global challenges, namely climate change, pandemics, and migration.

## AU and Climate Change

Climate change signifies one of the most pressing global challenges of our time, with particularly severe implications for the African continent. The African Union (AU) has, however, emerged as a key player in addressing climate change, recognising its severe implications for the continent. The AU's Agenda 2063 acknowledges climate change as a key challenge and outlines strategies for sustainable development and climate resilience (African Union Commission, 2015). In 2015, the AU launched the African Adaptation Initiative (AAI) to enhance action on adaptation, address loss and damage, and increase

climate finance (African Union, 2020). The AU has demonstrated practical action through its support for initiatives like the Great Green Wall, which aims to create green and productive landscapes across North Africa, the Sahel, and the Horn of Africa. The AU has played a vital role in coordinating efforts across member states and securing international funding for this project (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification [UNCCD], 2022). Furthermore, the AU has been actively involved in global climate negotiations, advocating for increased climate finance for adaptation in Africa and recognition of the continent's special needs at forums like COP26 (African Union, 2021).

In 2022, the AU adopted its Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan, a 10-year strategy that marks a significant step in Africa's approach to climate action (African Union, 2022). This strategy is particularly crucial given Africa's disproportionate vulnerability to climate impacts despite contributing less than 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions (UNFCCC, 2021). The strategy is built on four strategic intervention axes and addresses key sectors such as food systems, ecosystems, energy, and urban areas, aligning with international agreements like the Paris Agreement and UN Sustainable Development Goals (African Union, 2022; UNFCCC, 2015). The AU's approach emphasises African-led and African-owned solutions while recognising the need for international support in finance, technology transfer, and capacity building (African Union, 2022; Addaney et al., 2021). This stance was evident at COP27, where African countries advocated for their special circumstances to be considered in global climate policies (UNFCCC, 2022). The AU's proactive engagement in global climate negotiations aims to strengthen Africa's position and attract targeted support (Benkenstein et al., 2020; European Commission, 2022).

## Pandemics

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the critical importance of coordinated responses to global health crises, with the African Union (AU) playing a pivotal role in managing the pandemic's impact across the continent. In February 2020, the AU swiftly established the Africa Task Force for Novel Coronavirus (AFTCOR) to coordinate the continent's COVID-19 response, sharing information, coordinating resources, and developing continent-wide strategies (Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention [Africa CDC], 2020). The AU's Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) has been at the forefront of the pandemic response. A strategic initiative was the establishment of the African Medical Supplies Platform (AMSP), a single online marketplace to enable the supply of COVID-19-related critical medical equipment in Africa (African Union, 2020). This platform addressed significant supply chain challenges and helped mitigate shortages of critical equipment such as personal protective equipment (PPE), diagnostic tests, and ventilators.

In August 2020, the AU launched the COVID-19 Vaccine Development and Access Strategy, aiming to vaccinate at least 60% of the African population. Through this strategy, the African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team (AVATT) was established, which secured 670 million vaccine doses for the continent, supplementing the COVAX facility

(African Union, 2021). This coordinated effort demonstrated the AU's capacity for swift action and its commitment to a unified approach in combating the pandemic. The AU's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly through the Africa CDC and AVATT, has been crucial in navigating the challenges posed by the health crisis. Their efforts not only facilitated the distribution of medical supplies and vaccines but also demonstrated the importance of regional cooperation and solidarity in addressing global health emergencies.

## Migration

Migration, both within Africa and from Africa to other continents, presents complex challenges and opportunities. The African Union (AU) has taken a comprehensive approach to address the complex challenges of migration, both within Africa and from Africa to other continents. The AU adopted the Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) in 2006, revising it in 2018 to align with current migration trends and dynamics. This framework provides guidance to AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in migration management (African Union, 2018). A practical example of the AU's efforts is the Joint Labor Migration Program (JLMP), launched in 2015 to facilitate the free movement of workers and advance regional integration and development in Africa (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2020).

The AU has also focused on addressing forced displacement. In 2019, it declared the "Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa," aiming to raise awareness and promote concrete actions to address forced displacement on the continent (African Union, 2019). Furthermore, the AU has been actively involved in implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) in Africa. The AU Commission, in collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), has been supporting member states in developing national action plans to implement the GCM (IOM, 2021).

The AU's efforts extend to balancing the benefits of migration, such as economic growth and cultural exchange, with the need to address issues like irregular migration and human trafficking. The Joint Labour Migration Program (JLMP) aims to harmonise labour migration policies among member states, promote the rights of migrant workers, and enhance economic opportunities through increased mobility (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2020). The AU's support for the GCM underscores its commitment to promoting safe and regular migration while addressing irregular migration and its associated risks. While the AU has demonstrated significant leadership in addressing these global challenges, the scale and complexity of migration issues require continued efforts.

## An exegesis of Gen (11:1-9)

### Historical and Cultural Context of Gen (11:1-9)

The narrative of Gen 11:1-9 is designed against the backdrop of the ancient Mesopotamian religious and cultural setting. The Mesopotamian worldview was heavily influenced by polytheism, as evidenced by the prevalence of various gods and goddesses in Sumerian, Akkadian, and Babylonian mythologies (Heidel, 1963). The Mesopotamian pantheon included deities such as Enlil, Marduk, and Ishtar, who were believed to have control over various aspects of the natural and social world (Lambert, 1965). In Mesopotamian mythology, the construction of cities and the establishment of human civilisation were often attributed to the direct intervention and guidance of the gods (Jacobsen, 1976). The building of temples and ziggurats, which were massive stepped towers, was seen as a means of honouring the gods and maintaining a connection between the human and divine realms (Frankfort, 1948).

The ancient Near East, particularly Mesopotamia, was characterised by the emergence of large urban centres and the development of city-states (Liverani, 2006). These cities, such as Uruk, Nippur, and Babylon, served as hubs of economic, political, and cultural activity, often vying for dominance and resources (Postgate, 1992). The construction of monumental structures, like the tower described in Gen 11, was a common feature of these urban centres, which served as symbols of power, prestige, and the centralisation of authority (Oppenheim, 1964).

Among scholars, it is popularly noted that there is a relationship between Chapters 1-10 of Genesis and Gen 11:1-9. The story of the Tower of Babel in Gen 11:1-9 follows the Flood narrative in chapters 6-9, which describes the destruction of humanity due to its increasing wickedness and the subsequent preservation of Noah and his family (Wenham, 1987). The aftermath of the Flood is then recounted in Gen 10, known as the "Table of Nations," which outlines the repopulation and dispersal of humanity across the globe (Hamilton, 1990). The Table of Nations in Gen 10 provides a genealogical and geographical framework for understanding the origins of various peoples and their relationship to one another (Mathews, 1996). This background information sets the stage for the events described in Gen 11:1-9, where the unity of language and the subsequent dispersion of humanity are central themes (Wenham, 1987).

## Content analysis of Gen 11:1-9

### The Unity of Language and People (Gen 11:1)

The opening verse of the pericope establishes the initial state of unity among the people, describing them as having "one language (*śāpāʰ ʿeḥāṯ*) and the same words" (Gen 11:1). This unity of language is presented as a positive attribute, as it would have facilitated effective communication and collaboration among the people (Hamilton, 1990). This description of linguistic unity is significant, as it suggests that the people believed their collective strength would enable them to overcome various life challenges, such as

dispersal and marginalisation (Wenham, 1987). The motif of human unity and collective construction projects is found in other ancient Near Eastern traditions, such as the Mesopotamian *Atrahasis* Epic (Lambert, 1965; Heidel, 1963). These parallels indicate that the biblical authors were drawing on common cultural tropes to establish the narrative's context and the significance of the people's unity.

## The Building of the City and Tower (Gen 11:2-4)

The narrative progresses by describing how the people "journeyed" (*nāsa'*) from the east and "settled" (*yāšaḇ*) in the land of Shinar (Gen 11:2). This movement and relocation suggest that the people were seeking to establish a new home and community, perhaps in response to some form of life challenge or adversity (Wenham, 1987). The people then decide to "build a city and a tower" (Gen 11:4). The Hebrew term for "build" (*ḇānāʰ*) implies a deliberate and collective construction project, underscoring the unity of purpose among the people (Hamilton, 1990). The text reveals the people's motivation for this building project: "let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth" (Gen 11:4). The desire to "make a name" (*ʻăśeʰ šêm*) suggests a quest for recognition, power, and security, while the fear of being "scattered abroad" (*pen-nāpûṣ*) indicates a desire to overcome the challenges of dispersal and marginalisation (Mathews, 1996).

The motif of collective human construction projects, such as the building of cities and monumental structures, is found in other ancient Near Eastern traditions, particularly Mesopotamian myths and legends (Lambert, 1965; Heidel, 1963). This suggests that the biblical authors were drawing on common cultural tropes to establish the narrative's context and significance. Thus, the people's collective efforts to build a city and tower reflect their belief in the power of unity to overcome life's challenges.

## Yahweh's Intervention and Judgment (Gen 11:5-7)

The plot reaches its climactic point as the text shifts to focus on Yahweh's perspective. The text states that "Yahweh came down to see the city and the tower that the children of man had built" (Gen 11:5). The use of the verb "came down" (*yāreḏ*) suggests a direct divine intervention and engagement with the human situation (Hamilton, 1990). Yahweh then expresses concern about the unity and ambition of the people, stating, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them" (Gen 11:6). The repetition of the phrase "one people" (*ʻam ʻeḥāṯ*) and "one language" (*śāpāʰ ʻeḥāṯ*) emphasises the potential threat that Yahweh perceives in the people's unity (Wenham, 1987).

In response to the people's unity and ambition, Yahweh declares, "Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech" (Gen 11:7). The use of the verb "confuse" (*ḇālal*) suggests a deliberate disruption of the

people's collective efforts, undermining their ability to communicate and work together effectively (Mathews, 1996). The climactic divine intervention in Gen 11:5-7 highlights the tension between human unity and divine sovereignty. While the people's collective efforts to overcome challenges through unity are presented as admirable, the text ultimately suggests that unchecked human ambition and pride can be perceived as a threat to Yahweh's authority (Sternberg, 1985; Westermann, 1984). The disruption of human unity serves as a divine judgment on the people's self-importance and their attempt to achieve their goals without acknowledging the limits of their capabilities.

## The Dispersal of Humanity (Gen 11:8)

In v. 8, the account reaches its falling action: as a result of Yahweh's intervention, "the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city" (Gen 11:8). The use of the verb "dispersed" (*puṣ*) highlights the disruption of the people's collective efforts, as they are forced to abandon their ambitious building project (Wenham, 1987). The text further emphasises the consequences of Yahweh's intervention, noting that the people were "scattered over the face of all the earth." The repetition of the root (*pūṣ*/*nāpaṣ*), meaning "to scatter" or "to disperse," underscores the divine disruption of the people's unity and their subsequent dispersal across the globe (Hamilton, 1990). The disruption of the people's unity and their subsequent dispersal serve to emphasise Yahweh's ultimate control over the human condition, including the diversity of languages and the geographical distribution of humanity (Mathews, 1996).

## The Resolution: The Name "Babel" (Gen 11:9)

The narrative concludes with an etiological explanation for the name "Babel" (*bāḇel*). The text states, "Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused (*bālal*) the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth." The name "Babel" (*bāḇel*) is derived from the Hebrew verb (*bālal*), meaning "to confuse" or "to mix" (Hamilton, 1990). This linguistic connection serves to explain the divine disruption of the people's unity, as Yahweh "confused" (*bālal*) their language, leading to their subsequent "dispersal" across the earth. The etiological explanation of the name "Babel" in Gen 11:9 underscores the central theological message of the passage. The text emphasises Yahweh's ultimate control over the human condition, including the diversity of languages and the geographical distribution of humanity (Mathews, 1996). The disruption of the people's unity and the resulting dispersal serve as a divine judgment on their self-importance and their attempt to overcome life's challenges through their own collective efforts, without acknowledging the limits of their capabilities and the primacy of Yahweh's authority (Sternberg, 1985; Westermann, 1984).

## Synthesis of the Analysis of Gen 4:1-9

The passage offers an analysis of unity's role in overcoming challenges, presenting it as both a strength and a potential threat to divine authority. The initial description of people sharing "one language and the same words" (Gen 11:1) establishes unity as a positive attribute, facilitating effective communication and collaboration (Hamilton, 1990; Wenham, 1987). This unity is further emphasised through the collective decision to "build a city and a tower" (Gen 11:4), reflecting their belief in unity's power to overcome life's challenges (Mathews, 1996). The motif of collective human construction projects is presented as a common cultural trope in ancient Near Eastern traditions, suggesting that biblical authors drew on shared narratives to establish the context and significance of the people's unity (Lambert, 1965; Heidel, 1963).

However, the passage also highlights the tension between human unity and divine sovereignty. Yahweh's intervention, described as "coming down to see the city and the tower" (Gen 11:5), suggests a direct confrontation with human ambition and an attempt to achieve goals without acknowledging their limitations (Hamilton, 1990; Sternberg, 1985; Westermann, 1984). Yahweh's concern about the people's unity and their potential to achieve anything they propose (Gen 11:6) underscores the perceived threat to divine authority. Consequently, Yahweh's decision to "confuse their language" (Gen 11:7) and "disperse them over the face of all the earth" (Gen 11:8) serves as a divine judgment on human hubris (Mathews, 1996; Wenham, 1987; Hamilton, 1990).

The passage concludes with an etiological explanation of the name "Babel," derived from the Hebrew verb "*Bālal,*" meaning "to confuse" (Gen 11:9). This reinforces the central theological message of Yahweh's ultimate control over the human condition, including language diversity and geographical distribution (Mathews, 1996). The disruption of unity and the subsequent failure to overcome challenges serve as a cautionary tale, highlighting the limits of human ambition and the necessity of acknowledging divine sovereignty.

## African Union and Global Challenges: Lessons from Gen 11:1-9

The story of the Tower of Babel in Gen 11:1-9 provides a profound narrative on human unity, ambition, and the complexities of managing collective endeavours. This biblical account serves as a valuable lens through which we can examine the role of the African Union (AU) in addressing contemporary global challenges, such as climate change, pandemics, and migration. The unity depicted in Gen 11 and its subsequent disruption by divine intervention offer insights into how collective efforts can both strengthen and complicate efforts to tackle global issues.

The narrative of Gen 11:1-9 begins with humanity united by a single language and purpose, embarking on a monumental project – the construction of a city and tower. This unity allows for coordinated action and ambitious goals, which parallels the AU's approach to combating climate change. Just as the people in Babel worked together towards a common objective, the AU has spearheaded collective efforts to address climate change

through initiatives like the Great Green Wall and the African Adaptation Initiative. These programs embody the spirit of unified action seen in Gen 11, aiming to combat environmental degradation and enhance resilience. However, the disruption of Babel's unity serves as a cautionary tale. The AU's initiatives must avoid pitfalls akin to the Babel narrative, where overreach or lack of coordination could undermine their effectiveness. The story underscores the importance of balancing collective ambition with practical constraints and external factors, such as international support and climate finance, to avoid the fragmentation of efforts that could impede progress.

In the Babel narrative, unity facilitates the ambitious construction project but is ultimately disrupted, highlighting the potential pitfalls of unrestrained collective action. In the context of pandemics, particularly COVID-19, the AU's response demonstrates the power of regional solidarity and coordinated efforts. The establishment of the Africa Task Force for Novel Coronavirus (AFTCOR) and the African Medical Supplies Platform (AMSP) mirrors the collaborative spirit seen in Gen 11, as these initiatives pooled resources and strategies to address the pandemic's challenges across the continent. The AU's role in managing the pandemic also reflects the need for a coordinated approach to overcome crises. Just as the Babel narrative shows the consequences of unchecked unity, the AU's experience emphasises the importance of maintaining solidarity while adapting strategies to address emerging issues. The pandemic response highlights how effective coordination can leverage collective strengths while managing the risks of disruption or failure.

The Tower of Babel narrative's focus on dispersion following the disruption of unity offers a compelling analogy for understanding migration challenges. The AU's approach to migration, through frameworks like the Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) and the Joint Labour Migration Program (JLMP), reflects an effort to manage the complexities of human movement and integration, much like the attempt to unify and control dispersal in Babel. The Babel story underscores the inherent challenges in managing large-scale migration and the need for effective governance. The AU's efforts to harmonise migration policies and address forced displacement echo the narrative's themes of managing unity and diversity. The AU's initiatives aim to balance the benefits of migration with the need to address irregular migration and human trafficking, highlighting the necessity of adapting strategies to the realities of human mobility and external factors.

## Questions to Enhance the Role of AU in Addressing Global Challenges

Based on the analysis of the African Union's (AU) role in addressing global challenges and the insights drawn from the biblical narrative of Gen 11:1-9, the following questions could be raised to enhance the AU's effectiveness:

i. *Enhance Coordination and Integration*: Shouldn't AU strengthen coordination mechanisms among member states to ensure that collective efforts, such as those in climate change initiatives, pandemics, and migration management, are well-coordinated and aligned? Just as the unity in Gen 11 was a source of strength, encouraging deeper integration and collaboration can help avoid fragmented or redundant efforts.

ii. *Balance Ambition with Practical Constraints*: While the AU's ambitious projects, like the Great Green Wall and the African Medical Supplies Platform, are commendable, there needs to be a realistic assessment of resources and potential challenges. Shouldn't the AU develop clear, phased plans that account for external support, technological capabilities, and financial limitations to avoid overreach, as illustrated by the Tower of Babel narrative?

iii. *Promote Inclusive Decision-Making*: Shouldn't the AU ensure that its decision-making processes are inclusive and take into account the diverse perspectives and needs of all member states? This will help in promoting a sense of ownership and commitment to collective goals, reducing the risk of disunity or disengagement.

iv. *Strengthen International Partnerships*: Shouldn't the AU continue to build and strengthen partnerships with international organisations, governments, and NGOs? Given the global nature of challenges like climate change and pandemics, securing international support and cooperation is crucial. The AU's advocacy for climate finance and equitable vaccine distribution should be intensified to ensure sustained support.

v. *Adapt and Innovate in Response to Emerging Challenges*: Shouldn't the AU remain flexible and adaptive, continuously assessing and refining its strategies in response to new developments? Learning from the COVID-19 pandemic, the AU should invest in research and development, enhance early warning systems, and build resilient infrastructure to respond to future crises effectively.

vi. *Promote Regional Solutions with Global Impact*: Shouldn't the AU focus on developing regional solutions that have the potential to influence global policies and practices? By positioning Africa as a leader in areas such as sustainable development and climate adaptation, the AU can ensure that the continent's unique challenges and perspectives are integral to global decision-making processes.

## Conclusion

The African Union has demonstrated considerable progress in promoting unity and collective action among its member states to address global challenges such as climate change, pandemics, and migration. By drawing parallels with the biblical narrative of Gen 11:1-9, this study underscores both the potential and the challenges of such unity. The Tower of Babel highlights the power of collective ambition, while also warning of the risks associated with overreach and the need for divine guidance.

The AU's initiatives, like the Great Green Wall and the African Medical Supplies Platform, reflect a strong commitment to unified action, but they also reveal the complexities of maintaining cohesion and effectiveness in the face of diverse national interests and global pressures. Moving forward, the AU must balance its ambitions with practical constraints, ensure inclusive and participatory decision-making, and strengthen international partnerships to overcome these challenges.

The implementation of the recommendations can enhance AU's capacity to address the critical issues facing the continent and contribute more effectively to global solutions. The lessons from Gen 11:1-9 provide a valuable framework for understanding the importance of unity, the need for careful planning and execution, and the essential role of external support in achieving collective goals. Through these efforts, the AU can continue to build a resilient and unified African response to the pressing challenges of our time.

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# RECONNECTING AFRICANS IN THE DIASPORA AND THE CONTINENT: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (ADDI)

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## Abstract

This research focuses on the African Diaspora Development Institute (ADDI), which is a space-making organization with the aim of facilitating networking and reconnection for Africans in the diaspora on one hand, and between Africans in the diaspora and Africans on the continent on the other hand. The organization advocates for Pan-Africanism through initiatives such as the development of Wakanda City, the promotion of regional trade, empowerment of the youth and women, repatriation of the diaspora, and the development of a regional digital currency, Oduwacoin, based on blockchain technology. The framework for analysis of the case of the ADDI is based on institutional theory. Methodology: This is a qualitative analysis of secondary data in the form of academic literature, policy documents, and data obtained from the official website of the African Diaspora Development Institute. The information obtained from the literature and the official website of the organization reveals that it is the 1st ever project of its kind on the African continent, born in vision mostly by Ambassador Arikana Chihombori-Quao, former AU Ambassador to the United States of America. The data obtained from the literature and the official website of the organization reveal promising opportunities for the growth and development of Africa, including rejuvenation of the economies, participation of the diaspora, and integration of the continent, among others. However, the data obtained from the literature and the official website of the organization reveal that there are formidable challenges that the initiative is likely to face, including financial constraints, corruption, and insecurity, among others. The paper recommends that there should be more engagement with organizations such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU)/African Union (AU) and other sub-regional organizations, improvement of security to facilitate the participation of the diaspora, and improvement of anti-corruption mechanisms to safeguard funds and the sustainability of the projects of the ADDI, among others.

## Keywords

African, Challenges, Diaspora, Development, Institute.

## Resumo

Esta investigação centra-se no Instituto de Desenvolvimento da Diáspora Africana (ADDI), uma organização criadora de espaços que tem como objetivo facilitar o estabelecimento de redes e a reconexão, por um lado, entre africanos na diáspora e, por outro, entre estes e os africanos no continente. A organização defende o pan-africanismo através de iniciativas como

o desenvolvimento da Cidade de Wakanda, a promoção do comércio regional, a capacitação dos jovens e das mulheres, o repatriamento da diáspora e o desenvolvimento de uma moeda digital regional, a Oduwacoin, baseada na tecnologia blockchain. O quadro de análise do caso do ADDI baseia-se na teoria institucional. Metodologia: Trata-se de uma análise qualitativa de dados secundários sob a forma de literatura académica, documentos políticos e dados obtidos a partir do site oficial do Instituto de Desenvolvimento da Diáspora Africana. A informação obtida da literatura e do site oficial da organização revela que este é o primeiro projeto de sempre deste tipo no continente africano, nascido de uma visão principalmente da Embaixadora Arikana Chihombori-Quao, antiga Embaixadora da UA nos Estados Unidos da América. Os dados obtidos da literatura e do site oficial da organização revelam oportunidades promissoras para o crescimento e desenvolvimento de África, incluindo o rejuvenescimento das economias, a participação da diáspora e a integração do continente, entre outros. No entanto, os dados obtidos da literatura e do site oficial da organização revelam que existem desafios formidáveis que a iniciativa provavelmente enfrentará, incluindo restrições financeiras, corrupção e insegurança, entre outros. O artigo recomenda que haja um maior envolvimento com organizações como a Organização da Unidade Africana (OUA)/União Africana (UA) e outras organizações sub-regionais, a melhoria da segurança para facilitar a participação da diáspora e o aperfeiçoamento dos mecanismos anticorrupção para salvaguardar os fundos e a sustentabilidade dos projetos da ADDI, entre outros..

**Palavras-chave**

Africano, Desafios, Diáspora, Desenvolvimento, Instituto.

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# RECONNECTING AFRICANS IN THE DIASPORA AND THE CONTINENT: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (ADDI)

**AGABA HALIDU**

## Introduction

Thus, the movement of Africans, whether forcibly dispersed during the transatlantic slave trade or voluntarily choosing to migrate, has given birth to what might be considered one of the most vibrant diasporas in the world today. Pan-African aspirations for a single, united people of African descent, despite political boundaries, have faced a harsh reality: the tools for mobilizing diaspora resources for Africa's advancement are fragmented, mostly rhetoric, and lacking substance. In fact, the African Union recognizes the diaspora as Africa's "sixth region," but institutional mechanisms for harnessing such a powerful tool for Africa's advancement are hard to find. This provides the context for any new initiatives from the diaspora community.

In that context, ADDI, the African Diaspora Development Institute, enters the scene as a bold entrepreneurial endeavor of Africans, led by Africans, and for Africans, with a dream of reconnecting Africans in the diaspora with their ancestral home through economic, cultural, and technological means. They envision a future where ventures such as Wakanda City in Ghana, repatriation programs for diasporans, empowerment of the youth and women, and initiatives for regional trade that are aligned with the goals of the African Union's integration agenda, as well as a digital currency called Oduwacoin based on blockchain technology, are a reality. The question that this article seeks to explore and answer is: Will ADDI grow into a credible, viable, and sustainable tool for reconnecting Africa with her diaspora in a historical sense, or will the barriers of financial instability, insecurity, corruption, and regulatory challenges bar it from realizing its full transformative potential?

In order to analyze this question, the authors use institutional theory as an analytical framework and adopt a qualitative research approach based on a case study design and secondary data analysis. The structure of this text is as follows: after presenting the research design and data sources, the authors provide some conceptual clarification on development, diaspora, and pan-Africanism, and briefly introduce the institutionalist

framework that guides this analysis. Then, the text focuses on the development, structure, and strategic center of ADDI, and finally, on the major challenges that this initiative faces, before concluding with some major findings and policy recommendations on how to improve institutional collaboration between Africa and the diaspora.

## Methodology

The research is a qualitative/interpretive research design that aims to explore the African Diaspora Development Institute (ADDI) and its capacity to influence Africa-diaspora relations. It does not attempt to quantify the relationship or run any statistical analyses; instead, it delves deeper into the stories, developmental underpinnings, and structural tensions that are embedded in the creation of ADDI and its intended actions. The research aims to address an exploratory research question about whether or not ADDI has the capacity to bridge the structural gap between Africa and its diaspora. As such, it is more appropriate to apply a qualitative research design because it is more appropriate to address exploratory research questions that require depth, richness, and contextual information to make more meaningful analyses.

The research design is an exploratory qualitative case study that is more appropriate for analyzing an organizational initiative in the contemporary world of politics and socioeconomic challenges. The African Diaspora Development Institute is analyzed as an experiment in secondary institutions that are informed by the long tradition of Pan-Africanism, which has been informed by contemporary debates in development theory. The focus of the research on the eighth most populous country in the world provides an in-depth look at the organizational structure of the African Diaspora Development Institute, its legitimacy claims, its organizational structure, its vision of development, and its capacity to bridge the gap between Africa and its diaspora. The research relies on secondary qualitative data sources that are official reports, policy briefs, platform documents, speeches, statements, and relevant scholarly works on diasporas, diaspora engagement, and institution-building. The theory that grounds this research is an application of the theory of institutions that assesses the plausibility, integrity, and organizational structure of the African Diaspora Development Institute in the context of the rise of governance structures in Africa.

## Conceptual Clarifications

### Development

Development constitutes a deeply debated topic in political economy and International Relations (IR) theory, the conceptualisation of which revolves around economic growth and the elimination of underdevelopment (Agaba, Bissala, & David, 2022). Modernization theory has portrayed development as growth, industrialization, and technological development, and development as a normal path to Western modernity (Todaro, 1985; Cobbinah & Black, 2011). Yet, such an understanding of development strips the political

element from the concept of development. Development, as noted by Omotola (2010), is unknowable because it is ideological.

Development as "a structural transformation of social attitudes, institutions and national systems, along with sustained growth," has been proposed by Todaro (1985), cited in Omotola (2010). This notion of development includes qualitative developments, changes in institutions, and the general betterment of life of human beings. Development from an institutionalist perspective of development relies on strong institutions that provide for accountability (Scott, 2008; Kivisto, 2011).

But postcolonial theory has also stated that development should not be read outside of its historical connection to global relations of (Under)development (Adejumobi, 2008). Therefore, in order for development to be real, there must be strong institutions, profound structural changes, and an awareness of global inequalities.

## Concept of Diaspora

Diaspora means the dispersal of people from their homeland to other places. Page and Mercer (2018) state that diaspora was originally used to mean the Jewish community during the war years from 640 to 610 BCE, when they dispersed from their homes. However, today, "diaspora" means any group of people scattered all over the world for any reason. Longley (2021) states that diaspora means any group of people that has left their state, either willingly or by force, and moved to another country. There are two types of diasporas, namely, forced and voluntary, which any sociologist or anthropologist ought to be aware of.

The reason for forced diaspora often arises from unfortunate circumstances such as wars, imperialism, slavery, or natural disasters such as famine or drought. However, when diaspora is forced, there is always an element of threat or desire to return to one's original home. On the other hand, voluntary diaspora means any group of people that has left their country to look for economic opportunities. For example, during the late 19th century, there was an economic great migration from an economically backward state, namely, Europe, to America, and today, Africans are moving to Europe, America, and the Middle East to lead an easy and steady life, thus causing a brain drain.

## The Concept of Pan-Africanism

Pan-Africanism is the revival of the African diaspora. It began in the late 1800s and asked Africans around the world, who were separated from each other because of things that happened in America, to return to their homeland. It asks all Africans around the world to come together and share common goals and aspirations. Simply put, Pan-Africanism was born out of colonization and exploitation of Africa by Europeans (Adejumobi, 2008). The political idea behind Pan-Africanism is to unite all Africans into one state, into one homeland that many Africans envision (Appiah, 2006).

## Theoretical Framework

The text that follows is situated within an emerging, ever-evolving debate on Pan-Africanism, the diaspora, and African development, and it is grounded on four assumptions.

First, Pan-Africanism remains a living, active, and driving normative force in the 21st century. From the early, proto-pan-African ideas of Edward Wilmot Blyden and W.E.B. Du Bois to Kwame Nkrumah's more politicized version, Pan-Africanism has provided a vision of Africa and the diaspora as one historical and political entity—separated by the scars of slavery and colonialism, but united in purpose (Du Bois, 1903; Nkrumah, 1963; Adejumobi, 2008). Pan-Africanism remains a relevant force today, with scholars continuing to point to its relevance for African integration and diaspora mobilization (Tieku, 2017; Murithi, 2020). Second, the African Diaspora is a significant player in African development, not just through more conventional diaspora theories of identity and dispersion (Sheffer, 1986), but also through more contemporary versions that emphasize remittances, cross-border flows, and knowledge as drivers of development (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Page & Mercer, 2018).

Third, institutional change is a prerequisite for Africa's sustainable development, and this assertion is supported by classic development theory (Todaro, 1985) and more contemporary governance theory (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; Omotola, 2010). Fourth, identity and economic modernization are complementary paths in the postcolonial world (Fanon, 1961; Mkandawire, 2015).

Institutional theory provides the connective tissue for understanding the development of legitimacy as norms are institutionalized into a concrete social structure. Following Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Scott (2008), institutional legitimacy arises as these norms are objectified into systems of rules and structure. Consider the case of the African Diaspora Development Institute (ADDI): it could be interpreted as an attempt to institutionalize Pan-African values of unity, self-reliance, and progress within a system of rules and structure that mobilizes diasporic resources for transformative development on the continent. In embracing diasporic participation, collaborative investment, and identity-based development programs, the ADDI could be understood as an attempt to operationalize the Pan-Africanist ideal into a system of rules and structure for development.

## Literature Review

The existing literature on the African diaspora, pan-Africanism, and the development of institutions is vital to contextualize this research in terms of the existing intellectual debates. The recent literature on the subject reflects an evident shift of focus from symbolic appeals to African unity under the umbrella of pan-Africanism to more practical approaches that incorporate the African diaspora in the building of the future of the African continent. Khisa (2022), in his work, "Rethinking the Pan-African Agenda," explains that:

"Pan-Africanism must transcend symbolism by re-centering Africa and its Diasporas in a renewed liberation paradigm that prioritizes structural transformation and political accountability." Kumah-Abiwu (2024) explains that: "Global African Thought represents an ever-present site of encounter between classical pan-African ideologies and contemporary diasporic thought, with its emphasis on the transnational, epistemological, and collective aspects of global governance."

## ADDI: Evolution, Structure, and Prospects

### Evolution and Institutional Genesis

The African Diaspora Development Institute (ADDI) stands at the crossroads of historical periods: the African Diaspora itself, Pan-Africanism, and current globalization development narratives. The trans-Atlantic slave trade established the structural foundation for the modern-day African Diaspora. This is also noted by Lituchy (2019) and Thompsell (2020). Professional migration from Africa to other continents following colonialism extended Africa's influence intellectually and economically, giving rise to debates on brain drain versus brain circulation (Tucho, 2009).

For most of the 20th century, Pan-African Congresses promoted the ideals of unity and solidarity among Africans everywhere. Yet the connection between the diasporas and the development of the African continent remained disjointed. The African Union's recognition of the diaspora as the "sixth region" of Africa signaled inclusion but did little to alleviate the problem of disunity among Africa's 55 nations.

From the perspective of institutionalism, the disjointedness of the diasporas' connection to the development of the African continent stems from the disconnection between universalized development ideals and local institutions (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). New organizations are formed to provide order to the expectations and interactions of individuals within a system. The birth of ADDI itself is a product of the fact that such a body did not previously exist—an alternative to a non-existent transnational platform for engagement with the diasporas.

The birth of ADDI itself is a product of institutional entrepreneurship—individuals developing organizational routes to create development ideals from Pan-Africanism that the world will recognize (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott, 2008).

### Institutional Structure and Organizational Architecture

ADDI's organizational structure combines a tight top-down leadership with its arms and a wide transnational network that helps to maintain its connectivity.

(a) The Executive & Legitimacy:

The core organizational leadership is a tight top-down structure headed by the Founder/President, with other key directors responsible for finance, compliance, outreach, human resources, project management, etc. It has a corporate organizational

structure that fits into widely accepted organizational models across the globe. It has organizational legitimacy based on widely accepted corporate organizational models across the globe (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). ADDI is privately founded, unlike other organizations formed through interstate treaties like the African Union or ECOWAS. It's privately founded by influential Pan-African intellectuals who enhance its normative organizational legitimacy through its connection to dominant cultural systems of knowing (Scott, 2008).

(b) Sector-Based Differentiation:

The organization has been differentiated into various sectors like agriculture, health, education, trade & investment, finance, media, engineering, mining, law, culture, technology, etc. Sector differentiation is a product of rationalization, whereby modern organizations gain organizational legitimacy through formal structuring into sectors that align with widely accepted organizational models of knowing (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). It's a technocratic shift towards development planning.

(c) Non-National Chapters:

ADDI has a decentralized organizational structure with chapters across North America, Europe, the Caribbean, Latin America, Oceania, Africa, etc. It's a wide transnational network with localized organizational structures that provide organizational legitimacy through its cognitive legitimation as a necessary actor within organizational structures, normative organizational legitimacy through its Pan-African values, and cultural embeddedness within diasporas' neighborhoods. It's a product of the current wave of organizational change that's shifting towards development thinking (Scott, 2008).

## Prospects of ADDI

The future of ADDI will depend on whether it is able to provide an institutional framework that produces results in sustainable development. Its promise is anchored on five strategic pillars.

## African Development and Wakanda City

An important part of the ADDI vision is the development of Wakanda City in Cape Coast, Ghana. This futuristic Pan-African city is envisioned to embody utopian ideals of development (Sam, 2020). Wakanda City physically represents the ADDI vision. The city received support from the people of Ghana in the form of the country's previous president, Nana Akufo-Addo. The president supported the city through his initiative to place part of the city near the harbor from which enslaved Africans were transported from the continent. This is an important act of place-making in which the city converts the trauma of slavery into an act of development.

Diakite (2020) indicates five phases of development in Wakanda City:

i. A 1,000-bed teaching hospital facility.

ii. A university and technical college facility.

iii. Pharmaceutical manufacturing facility.

iv. Five-star hotel facility.

v. Green parks and innovation facility.

vi. Smart mobility facility

This facility is envisioned to provide about 3,000 jobs in Cape Coast. Wakanda City represents the "rationalized myth" (Meyer and Rowan 1977) of globally known smart cities and innovation centers.

The tourism and infrastructure sub-modules are consistent with global data on travel and construction. Travel and tourism comprised 10.4% of global GDP and 10.6% of total global employment before COVID-19 (WTTC, 2019). Travel and Tourism contributed to 6.9% of GDP and 6.5% of total employment in Africa before COVID-19. Wakanda City would thus find its place within a conventional global development industry, with jobs, foreign exchange earnings, and infrastructure modernization to offer. At an institutional level, Wakanda City is the developmental anchor for ADDI, transmuting Pan-African ideology into material form.

## Returning Africans to History and Heritage

However, ADDI is not just about growing an economy; it's also about reclaiming culture. It's about reconnecting diasporic Africans to their precolonial past, to their oral history, and to their sense of history (Sam, 2020). The oral recorded history of Africa was disrupted by colonial invasion, and ADDI's idea of restoring a sense of heritage is its fundamental principle, which seeks to create institutional spaces for cultural education and the construction of identity.

In terms of its institutional application, this approach seeks to legitimize cultural understanding by establishing a sense of common identity narratives among dispersed populations (Scott, 2008). Wakanda City is not just an economic center; it's meant to be a symbolic pilgrimage site for diasporic Africans looking to reconnect to their historical roots (Diakite, 2020).

## Promoting Regional Trade and Continental Integration

Regional economic integration is still at the center of the AU's policy agenda, particularly through the formation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). ADDI actively advocates for diaspora awareness and participation in Africa's trade liberalization agenda (ADDI, 2022). ADDI's goals are:

i. Mobilize the diaspora for Africa's development.

ii. Facilitate diaspora investment participation

iii. Engage diaspora communities to participate in AfCFTA

By engaging in the wider debates on regional integration, ADDI acquires normative legitimacy and positions itself as a regional actor based in Africa, as opposed to a global actor.

## Youth and Women Empowerment

ADDI emphasizes the importance of empowering youth and women as a key strategy (ADDI Report, 2022). It suggests providing micro-enterprise financial assistance between $250 and $1,000 to fund business ventures.

From an organizational viewpoint, being supportive of gender and youth empowerment is consistent with existing global development norms outlined in Sustainable Development Goal structures. This not only serves to increase the organization's moral and normative legitimacy but also reinforces its position as a responsive organization to address social concerns.

## Regional Monetary Innovation: OduwaCoin

ADDI has introduced its digital currency, referred to as OduwaCoin, which has been described as Africa's cryptocurrency (ADDI Report, 2022). It has been developed using blockchain technology to create a decentralized financial system of trading and unite Africans across the globe.

In terms of its institution-building role, ADDI has set its sights on a wide-ranging digital finance system across the globe. By embracing technology, ADDI has conformed to recognized patterns of development of financial technology across the globe. The nuts and bolts of monetary governance are a private, cross-border, multi-layered enterprise that demands moral clarity among financial institutions at both state and continental levels. ADDI is a hybrid institution that draws on diasporic energy, Pan-African ideals, and development blueprints across the globe. It is a case of institutional entrepreneurship with its architecture drawing on widely recognized concepts of financial governance across the globe, with security guaranteed through a combination of infrastructure, culture, economy, and technology.

## Challenges of ADDI

The African Diaspora Development Institute (ADDI) is giving rise to new hopes about the potential of diaspora networks to achieve things from building infrastructure and

increasing regional trade to advancing digital technologies. Of course, to enumerate the problems of the African Diaspora Development Institute – financial dependency, conflicts among members, and corruption – is to provide only part of the picture. To gain an adequate understanding of what impedes the African Diaspora Development Institute, it is necessary to consider these challenges in the context of institutional theory to assess their implications for the legitimacy, stability, and continued survival of the institution.

Following Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Scott (2008), it is not only grand and innovative ideas and programs that sustain institutions; it is also the extent to which they can gain and regain legitimacy through regulation, norms, and shared cultural meanings. Ultimately, it is the "institutional" environment of Africa upon which the future of the African Diaspora Development Institution will depend more than upon the sweep of their ambitions.

## Financial Dependence and Institutional Isomorphism

The Achilles' heel of ADDI is its dependence on external sources of finance. Currently, ADDI depends on philanthropic support and the goodwill of the diaspora community. From the institutional theory point of view, ADDI is currently in a pre-institutionalized phase, as stated by Meyer and Rowan (1977). In this phase, although institutional structures exist, the flow of resources has not yet been fully institutionalized.

The three institutional risks that ADDI currently faces are:

a. Legitimacy,

b. Decoupling, and

c. Isomorphism.

a. Legitimacy Fragility – Ventures such as Wakanda City may be more symbolic in nature if finance does not materialize.

b. Decoupling Risk – According to institutional theory scholars, organizations may develop institutional structures such as blueprints for smart cities or blockchain technology to gain institutional legitimation, but in practice, they may not be as powerful as they seem.

c. Isomorphism – To raise finance for its activities, ADDI may feel compelled to align itself with the policy agendas of the major financiers, which may compromise its Pan-African values.

Rather than telling ADDI to "raise money," institutional theory would suggest that ADDI should seek to work with the various continental governance structures, such as the African Union, or sub-regional governance structures such as ECOWAS, which would give ADDI a regulatorily legitimated status, rather than just a dependently philanthropically

legitimated status. ADDI, therefore, would become a quasi-public actor, embedded in the broader context of African development, with a commitment to the implementation of Agenda 2063 and AfCFTA, rather than just a private initiative.

## Insecurity and the Decay of Cognitive Legitimacy

Insecurity is a major problem in Africa, which affects the success of the diaspora return programs as a structural issue. Applying institutional theory, Scott (2008) explains that for an organization to endure as an organization, it must possess some form of text-based relevance, or "legitimacy." Insecurity, therefore, affects:

a. The confidence of the diaspora population.

b. The predictability of investments.

c. The viability of tourism activities.

d. The sustainability of infrastructural growth

From the point of view of cultural cognition, it is important for the Diaspora Africans to feel that it is "safe" to return to Africa and invest in the respective countries. The stories told by the public also reflect this, as once insecurity becomes the dominant story in Africa, the cognitive legitimacy of Wakanda City as a pilgrimage or investment site declines significantly.

Insecurity, therefore, is not just a problem; it is an institutional problem that affects the regulative pillar of governance in Africa. ADDI cannot resolve national security issues on its own, but it must sustain itself as an organization by forming strategic alliances with continental security mechanisms through the African Union Peace and Security Architecture. In this regard, ADDI will no longer be a target but a co-evolved actor in these efforts.

## Corruption and Institutional Decoupling

Corruption, however, could be the biggest challenge for ADDI in terms of establishing credibility in the long run. Institutional theory refers to decoupling, where an organization might adopt certain rules and structures, but the actual work environment contradicts these rules (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

If not well governed, ADDI might lose:

a. Normative legitimacy.

b. The trust of the Diaspora.

c. Regulatory attention.

d. Reputation

In the governance arena, corruption in Africa has been a major challenge, causing the failure of development initiatives due to funds being misdirected and a lack of accountability. Thus, ADDI needs to ensure that it has good compliance and auditing systems in place and that it demands transparency. Institutionally, fighting corruption not only ensures ethical behavior but also ensures that an organization maintains legitimacy within itself. This, in essence, ensures that an organization that is fair and just in its processes increases not only its normative and cognitive legitimacy but also the chances of a successful partnership.

Thus, the aim should not be to demand zero corruption at all costs, but to ensure that there are effective checks and balances within an organization, as required within the governance arena on the continent, and that it is ratified within the AU anti-corruption framework.

## Digital Monetary Innovation and Regulatory Constraints

The idea of OduwaCoin is a reflection of the global move to digital currency, but true innovation is done within the context of existing national and continental systems of finance. The institutional theory of innovation argues that if an idea is not in conformity with existing laws, it will never be sustained. Thus, if OduwaCoin is not endorsed by central banks and other key financial institutions, it may be reduced to a mere gesture. To go from being legitimate to being functional, it has to be integrated into the growing digital finance systems in Africa.

## Conclusion

To further enhance the depth of analysis and policy relevance of the research, it might also consider conducting a critical discourse analysis of its institutional reports and policy pronouncements, and speeches of its leadership. This would enable it to conduct a more nuanced analysis of areas of convergence and divergence between ADDI's vision and the ideas of the Pan-African nationalists and diasporic intellectuals of the past, and to obtain a preliminary indication of whether it indeed represents ideological continuity or merely symbolic ideological continuity.

On the policy side, it must position itself in Africa's governance architecture to secure sustainability. This means it must formalize engagement with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as an economic integration mechanism for the African diaspora. The Wakanda City initiative must also be formalized and positioned as a transparent and multi-level initiative grounded in solid partnership relationships and sound anti-corruption and security considerations. It must also align itself with Agenda 2063 in areas of youth employment, women's economic empowerment, skills development, and brain circulation. Financial sustainability must also be achieved beyond philanthropy through blended finance and diaspora investment products and instruments. Finally, it must also

work to strengthen transparency in governance to secure better levels of regulatory, normative, and cognitive legitimacy.

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# BALANCING PEACE-BUILDING STRATEGIES IN NIGERIA: APPRAISING THE IMPACT OF THE RULE OF LAW VS MILITARY SPENDING

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## Abstract

The drive for peace in any country is and has been a cardinal policy of the country's government. In recent years, Nigeria has faced a myriad of security challenges which has necessitated its policy managers to increase the country's military expenditure while also strengthening its rule of law. This work unveils the impact of the rule of law versus military expenditure on Nigeria's peace-building experience. The fully modified OLS technique is used in analyzing the data collected. Data for the study were collected from the CBN statistical bulletin, World Justice Project data-base and the World development indicator data-base. The data covered the period from 2006 to 2023. The findings from the analysis indicates that both the rule of law and military spending impact positively on peace-building in Nigeria, however, the rule of law has more impact on peace-building than increased military spending. It is recommended that Nigeria's rule of law should be strengthened. However, an effort to strengthen the rule of law coupled with responsible military spending is required to create a comprehensive framework for peace-building. It is further recommended that policy makers should adopt a coordinated approach that aligns security spending, legal reform, and social investment strategies in peace-building. Finally regular assessment of peace indices and related variables should be undertaken to guide policy adjustments.

## Keywords

Peace-building, Military spending, Rule of law, Social investment, Peace indices.

## Resumo

A busca pela paz em qualquer país é, e sempre foi, uma política fundamental do governo nacional. Nos últimos anos, a Nigéria tem enfrentado uma miríade de desafios de segurança, o que levou os responsáveis políticos a aumentar as despesas militares do país, reforçando simultaneamente o Estado de direito. Este trabalho revela o impacto do Estado de direito, em comparação com as despesas militares, na experiência de construção da paz na Nigéria. A técnica OLS totalmente ajustada é utilizada na análise dos dados recolhidos. Os dados para o

estudo foram recolhidos a partir do boletim estatístico do CBN, da base de dados do World Justice Project e da base de dados dos Indicadores de Desenvolvimento Mundial. Os dados abrangem o período de 2006 a 2023. Os resultados da análise indicam que tanto o Estado de direito como as despesas militares têm um impacto positivo na construção da paz na Nigéria; no entanto, o Estado de direito tem um impacto maior na construção da paz do que o aumento das despesas militares. Recomenda-se que o Estado de direito na Nigéria seja reforçado. No entanto, é necessário um esforço para reforçar o Estado de direito, aliado a gastos militares responsáveis, para criar um quadro abrangente para a construção da paz. Recomenda-se ainda que os decisores políticos adotem uma abordagem coordenada que alinhe os gastos com a segurança, a reforma legal e as estratégias de investimento social na construção da paz. Por fim, deve ser realizada uma avaliação regular dos índices de paz e das variáveis relacionadas para orientar os ajustes políticos.

**Palavras-chave**

Construção da paz, Despesas militares, Estado de direito, Investimento social, Índices de paz.

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# BALANCING PEACE-BUILDING STRATEGIES IN NIGERIA: APPRAISING THE IMPACT OF THE RULE OF LAW VS MILITARY SPENDING

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## Introduction

Nigeria has been confronted by threats that are multifaceted, often intertwined and vary across regions although with similar experiences. Such threats includes; Terrorism and insurgency (Rosenje, et.al, 2022), Crime and transnational organized crimes (UNODC, 2021). Political instability and armed conflicts that threaten to undermine state authority and hinder development (United Nations, 2020). Ethnic and sectarian violence often rooted in historical grievances and resource competition which have led to periodic violence and displacement (Ottoh, 2018). Economic and cyber threats (Akinola & Liaga, 2024), as well as, Public health threats occasioned by outbreaks of infectious diseases such as Ebola, COVID-19, and other pandemics (WHO, 2025). The most prominent among Nigeria security challenges is the insurgency by Boko Haram, an extremist group that emerged in northeastern Nigeria around 2009, leading to thousands of deaths and displacing millions (Onuoha, 2025). In addition to Boko Haram and its splinter group, ISWAP (Islamic State West Africa Province), Nigeria contends with ethnic and communal violence, particularly in the Middle Belt and Niger Delta regions, driven by resource disputes, land conflicts, and political competition (Akinola, (2011). Socio-economic issues like poverty, unemployment, governance deficits, and marginalization contribute to the persistence of violence and extremism. Criminal activities such as kidnapping for ransom, cattle rustling, and organized crime further exacerbates insecurity (Olejeme, et.al, (2025)).

Nigeria has adopted a multifaceted approach to peace-building, recognizing that sustainable peace requires addressing the root causes of conflict, promoting reconciliation, and strengthening governance. Example of such approaches adopted includes; i) Regional and international peacekeeping missions, through regional peacekeeping operations under the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN). ii) Dialogue and reconciliation initiatives often focused on national dialogues and reconciliation processes to foster social cohesion. iii) Strengthening governance and state

institutions. iv) Peace education and community engagement as well as, conflict prevention and early warning systems (Essia, 2025).

The Nigerian government has employed a combination of military operations, dialogue, and development programs to address these challenges. Military efforts include the counter-insurgency campaigns by the Nigerian Armed Forces and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) targeted at Boko Haram and ISWAP. Simultaneously, peace initiatives such as amnesty programs for repentant Boko Haram and ISWAP members, as well as, in the Niger Delta and community engagement have sought to foster reconciliation and development (Toye, 2023).

Nigeria's pursuit of peace has been a central theme in its post-colonial development trajectory. Given Nigeria's history of colonialism, conflict, and political instability, the country have continuously sought sustainable peace through various strategies, frameworks, and initiatives. This quest is driven by the recognition that peace is foundational for development, stability, and the well-being of its peoples. The effectiveness of peace-building efforts remains limited due to the inability to address root causes such as poverty, marginalization, and political exclusion, raising concerns about the sustainability of peace and security in Nigeria (Akinola, 2011). Despite these strategies, challenges such as persistent violence, political instability, and resource constraints continue to impede peace efforts.

## Research Objectives

The first objective for undertaking this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of rule of law-based peace strategies in Nigeria. The rule of law is a cornerstone of sustainable peace and development, particularly in regions characterized by political instability, conflict, and fragile governance structures. In Nigeria, where diverse conflicts have persisted over decades, peace-building efforts increasingly emphasize strengthening the rule of law as a central strategy. This approach aims to establish justice, accountability, and legal reforms that foster social stability and prevent recurrence of violence. However, the effectiveness of rule of law-based peace strategies varies across different contexts and requires comprehensive evaluation to understand their impact, limitations, and potential for future application (Foley, 2020). Rule of law-based peace strategies rest on core principles such as equality before the law, independence of the judiciary, access to justice, and legal accountability for human rights violations. These strategies often include institutional reforms, legal capacity building, transitional justice mechanisms, and community-based justice initiatives. The underlying assumption is that establishing justice and legal order reduces grievances, mitigates conflict, and sustains peace over the long term.

Efforts to reform judicial systems (improving accessibility, independence, and efficiency) have yielded mixed results. Countries like Ghana and Botswana have made notable progress in judicial independence, which correlates with increased public trust and peaceful dispute resolution. Conversely, in countries like Nigeria with weak institutions, corruption, political interference, and resource have constraints undermine judicial

effectiveness, thereby limiting peace dividends (Azoro, et al. 2021). Although in many Nigeria societies, customary law and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms complement formal legal systems. When integrated effectively, they can enhance local participation, cultural relevance, and sustainability of peace efforts. For instance, in Nigeria's northern regions, traditional councils have played roles in mediating disputes. However, tensions between customary laws and formal legal standards can sometimes hinder justice or perpetuate inequalities, especially concerning gender rights.

The second objective for undertaking this study is to analyze the impact of military expenditure and operations on peace-building in Nigeria. The evaluation of the impact of military expenditure and operations on peace-building reveals a profound tension between the necessity of short-term security and the imperative of long-term sustainable peace and development. While military action is often the prerequisite for ending violence, excessive reliance on militarization can actively undermine the political, economic, and social foundations required for peace to endure. (Garikai & Mahuku, 2022) Military operations aimed at countering insurgency and violence can restore order and protect civilians, but if not carefully managed, they risk causing civilian casualties, eroding trust, and exacerbating conflicts. The effectiveness of military actions depends on their integration with political, social, and economic strategies that address root causes of instability. Overall, a balanced approach that aligns military efforts with comprehensive peace-building measures, respect for human rights, and fostering community engagement is vital for sustainable peace. Strategic and transparent use of military resources can support peace objectives, while over-militarization may hinder long-term stability. Military operations, both national counter-insurgency and International Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs), provide vital immediate security but introduce risks to the rule of law and political trust.

According to Saba & Ngepah (2019)**,** the core negative impact of military spending lies in its opportunity cost and contribution to regional instability, for example, military budgets divert massive resources from essential social and development sectors like health, education, and infrastructure. This undermines the root causes of conflict (poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment) and actively hinders the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Equally, high spending often crowds-out private investment, increases public debt, and has been empirically linked to lower long-term economic growth in low-income states. This weakens the economic foundation necessary for long-term political stability and state legitimacy. Finally, increased military budgets are often perceived as a threat by neighbors, potentially triggering an arms race or deepening regional mistrust (the security dilemma). The peace-building consequence is that, it increases the risk of inter-state and internal conflict reoccurrence.

The third objective is to compare the outcomes of both the rule of law and military approaches to peace-building. The evaluation of peace-building strategies in Nigeria reveals that both rule of law (RoL) and military actions (expenditure/operations) are necessary but profoundly different tools, each carrying inherent strengths and weaknesses that determine their long-term effectiveness. The fundamental distinction is between establishing security (military) and establishing legitimacy and sustainability

(rule of law). While challenges such as institutional weaknesses and resource constraints exist, integrating rule of law with military strategies offers a promising pathway toward sustainable peace in Nigeria. It requires committed political leadership, adequate resources, and community engagement to harness these opportunities effectively (Otaiku, 2018).

## Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it provides critical insights into the effectiveness of Nigeria's current security strategies, particularly the debate between emphasizing the rule of law versus increasing military expenditure. Understanding which approach yields more sustainable peace and stability is vital for policy makers, security agencies, and civil society to formulate balanced and effective security policies (Ikelegbe, 2014). By evaluating the impact of military spending in comparison to rule of law initiatives, the research offers evidence-based recommendations for optimizing resource allocation in Nigeria's peace-building efforts. Furthermore, the findings can contribute to academic discourses on conflict resolution, governance, and security sector reform in Nigeria. Finally, the study aims to enhance understanding of the interplay between military power and legal-institutional approaches in fostering long-term peace.

## Review of relevant previous studies on conflict and security

Nigeria's quest for sustainable peace has been a complex journey characterized by multiple approaches, primarily oscillating between strengthening the rule of law and increasing military expenditure. The debate centers around which of the strategies is more effective in fostering long-term stability amidst the ongoing internal conflicts, insurgencies and communal violence. Peace initiatives refer to deliberate efforts aimed at resolving conflicts, promoting reconciliation, and establishing sustainable peace (Zailani, et al, 2025). In Nigeria, peace initiatives have ranged from community-based approaches, legal reforms, and dialogue processes to military interventions. The effectiveness of these initiatives depends heavily on the strategic emphasis, that is, whether on reinforcing the rule of law or on military force.

### *The rule of law as a peace strategy*

According Okengwu (2024), the rule of law is foundational to sustainable peace, emphasizing justice, legal accountability, and institutional integrity. Advocates argue that ensuring justice and protecting rights create an environment conducive to peace, social cohesion, and political stability (Akinola, 2011). Nigeria's legal framework, judicial institutions, and rights-based approaches are seen as critical in addressing grievances that often underlie conflicts, such as resource disputes, ethnic tensions, and political exclusion (Toye, 2023).

The challenges in operating an effective rule of law include; weak judicial institutions, corruption, and inadequate enforcement of laws, which limit the effectiveness of rule of law initiatives (Olejeme, et al, 2025). Moreover, many conflicts are rooted in socio-economic grievances that legal reforms alone may not fully address.

*Military expenditure and operations as a peace strategy*

Military intervention has traditionally been Nigeria's response to insurgencies and violence, especially in the North-East with Boko Haram, and in the Niger Delta with militant groups. Nigeria's military spending has increased significantly over the years, justified as necessary for national security and combating terrorism (Olejeme, et al, 2025). Proponents of military action on security issues such as Onuoha (2025), argue that, a strong military is essential for deterring violence, protecting the state, and restoring order swiftly during crises. Military solutions often provide quick responses to threats and are visible symbols of state sovereignty.

On the other hand, critics contend that excessive reliance on military expenditure and intervention can be counter-productive, potentially exacerbating conflicts by fostering repression, human rights abuses, and alienation of communities. Moreover, military approaches often address symptoms rather than root causes, risking a cycle of violence and impunity (Okengwu, 2024).

*The dichotomy and interplay between the two strategies*

The ongoing debate in Nigeria revolves around whether peace can be achieved predominantly through legal-institutional reforms or through military force. Scholars argue that both strategies are necessary but must be balanced (Toye, 2023). While military action may be necessary to contain immediate threats, long-term peace depends on strengthening the rule of law, promoting justice, and addressing socio-economic inequalities. Recent policy shifts suggest the recognition of this interplay, with some initiatives combining military operations with community engagement, legal reforms, and development programs. For example, the Nigerian government's counter-insurgency strategy includes military operations alongside reconciliation and reconstruction efforts in affected regions.

## Theories of Peace and Conflict

Understanding the dynamics of peace initiatives in Nigeria requires examining underlying theories that explain how different approaches (rule of law versus military force) contribute to peace and stability. This framework examines relevant theories to analyze the effectiveness, limitations, and interplay of these strategies. Some peace and conflict theories are examined below;

## Human Needs Theory

The human needs theory is a perspective in conflict resolution and peace-building that emphasizes the importance of addressing fundamental human needs as a pathway to achieving lasting peace. It posits that conflicts often arise when basic human needs are unmet, and resolving conflicts requires satisfying these needs. The theory has roots in the works of psychologists and conflict theorists such as Manfred Steger, John Burton, and others who viewed conflicts as stemming from unmet human needs rather than solely from material or political grievances. (Burton, 1990).

The core principles of human needs theory includes; i) *Universal human needs*, which asserts that certain needs are universal and must be fulfilled for individuals and groups to coexist peacefully such as, security, identity, participation, development and well-being, ii) *Conflict as unmet needs,* this principle affirm that conflicts emerge when these fundamental needs are frustrated or unmet. For example, ethnic conflicts often involve threats to identity and recognition. iii) *Addressing needs for peace,* which states that achieving peace involves creating conditions that satisfy these needs, thereby reducing the motivation for conflict and violence.

The strengths of human needs theory is embedded in the following values; a) It adopts a holistic approach by looking beyond material aspects to psychological and social needs .b) It is inclusive because it recognizes the importance of identity, recognition, and participation. c) It prevents conflict recurrence by satisfying fundamental needs, it reduces the likelihood of future conflicts. d) It is flexible because it can be applied across cultures and contexts.

The limitations and criticisms of the human needs theory include the fact that, it does not always account for power dynamics, economic interests, or political agendas. Equally, satisfying needs can be complex, especially when interests are deeply entrenched. Finally, different groups may prioritize needs differently thereby complicating negotiations.

In the Nigeria context, human needs theory offers valuable insights for peace-building, especially in post-conflict societies where issues of identity, recognition, and security are prominent. For instance, addressing the needs for security and recognition among marginalized ethnic groups can reduce tensions. Participatory governance can fulfill the need for participation and agency. Social and economic development can meet basic needs for well-being. In conclusion, the human needs theory emphasizes that lasting peace depends on satisfying the core needs of individuals and groups. Its holistic perspective makes it a powerful tool in conflict resolution, particularly in complex and diverse societies like those in Nigeria. However, effective application requires careful understanding of specific needs, contextual factors, and power dynamics (Clerk, 1990).

## Structural Violence Theory

Introduced by Galtung in 1969, this theory highlights systemic inequalities embedded within social structures. It suggests that conflicts are rooted in structural violence,



inequities in resource distribution, political exclusion, and social injustice. The rule of law initiatives is better aim to dismantle structural violence by promoting equitable justice, whereas military approaches may inadvertently reinforce structural inequalities through repression. (Henderson, 2019).

Structural violence is a form of violence where social arrangements such as, economic, political, legal, and cultural structures cause harm by limiting access to resources, rights, and opportunities. It manifests through disparities in wealth, education, healthcare, political participation, and legal justice, leading to inequality and social suffering. Because it is embedded in societal systems, structural violence often remains unseen or unrecognized, making it difficult to address directly. The Key Dimensions of the structural violence theory are; economic inequality, political oppression, legal discrimination, cultural and social norms, institutionalization, normalization, deprivation and marginalization (Weber & Pickering, 2011).

The relevance of SVT to peace and conflict studies includes the fact that in the first instance, structural violence is often the root cause of conflicts, as grievances stemming from inequality and injustice accumulate over time. Equally, effective peace-building requires addressing structural violence by reforming social, political, and economic institutions to promote equity and justice. Finally, recognizing and combating structural violence aligns with the promotion and protection of human rights.

According to Hirschfeld, (2017), the critiques and limitations of the SVT include: i) The concept can be criticized for its abstractness and difficulty in measuring or pinpointing specific sources. ii) It emphasizes systemic issues, which may overlook individual agency or immediate violence. iii) Addressing structural violence often requires deep societal reforms, which can be slow and politically challenging.

In summary the structural violence theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how social arrangements perpetuate harm and inequality. Recognizing these hidden forms of violence is crucial for developing sustainable strategies for peace, justice, and social development, especially in contexts like Nigeria, where historical and systemic inequalities continue to impact social cohesion.

## Traditional Security Theory

Traditional security theory is one of the earliest and most influential frameworks in the field of security studies. Rooted primarily in realist thought, it emphasizes the protection of the state from external military threats and views security as a matter of national defense and sovereignty. This approach has historically shaped international security policies and military strategies.

According to Bartley (2023), the core principles of traditional security theory are;

- *State-centric focus*, which means that, the primary actor in traditional security is the nation-state. The main concern is safeguarding territorial integrity and political sovereignty.



- *Military power and defense,* which entails that, military strength is seen as the most effective means of ensuring security, as such a strong defense posture deters potential aggressors and maintains stability.
- *Anarchy in the international system,* this posits that, the international system is anarchic, meaning no overarching authority governs states. In such a system, states must rely on their own capabilities for security.
- *Security dilemma,* which means that, actions taken by one state to enhance its security (e.g., increasing military capabilities) can threaten others, leading to an arms race. This cyclical process can escalate tensions and conflict.
- *Balance of power* which posits that, stability is maintained when power is distributed relatively evenly among states; hence alliances and military build-ups serve to prevent dominance by any single actor.

The fundamental components of the traditional security theory are; military deterrence, strategic defense, and alliances. For example during the cold war era which was dominated by the bipolar confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union with emphasis on nuclear deterrence (Mutually Assured Destruction - MAD) as a means of maintaining peace was the order of the day. However, during the post-cold war era, there is a shift towards addressing new threats but still heavily reliant on military capabilities for security assurance.

The criticisms of traditional security theory are that; firstly, there is an overemphasis on military aspects thereby neglecting non-military threats like economic instability, environmental crises, and human security. Secondly, is the issue of state-centric view, which mean the roles of non-state actors, international organizations, and transnational issues are ignored. Thirdly is the problem of potential for escalation, this is because arms races and militarization can increase the risk of conflict. Finally is the issue of limited scope, because it fails to address the root causes of conflicts such as social injustice, inequality, and ecological degradation (Attina, 2016). In summary, traditional security theory remains a fundamental concept in understanding state behavior and military strategy. While it provides valuable insights into defense and deterrence, modern security challenges require integrating broader perspectives that encompass non-military threats and human security concerns.

## Realist Theory

Realist theory, also known as "Realism" is one of the most influential paradigms in international relations. It emphasizes the competitive and conflictual nature of international politics, viewing states as primary actors motivated by national interests, particularly security and power. In international relations, realism emphasizes state security and the primacy of military power (Sagir, 2024). From this perspective, increasing military expenditure is justified as essential for national security, deterring threats, and maintaining sovereignty. Nigeria's focus on military strength aligns with realist assumptions that security is achieved through force.

The major assumptions of realist theory includes; i) Anarchic international system, ii) States as rational actors, iii) Primacy of sovereignty, iv) Power and security, v) Interest-driven behavior. According to (Donnelly, 2000), there are two main types of realism namely;

*Classical realism:* It emphasizes human nature as the root cause of conflict and power struggles among states. Thinkers like Hans Morgenthau argue that human greed and ambition drive state behavior (Altman, et, al. 2018).

*Neorealism (Structural realism)* Developed by Kenneth Waltz, it shifts focus from human nature to the anarchic international structure as the determinant of state behavior. The distribution of power (unipolar, bipolar, multipolar) shapes international outcomes ( Schweller, 1997).

The strengths of realist theory revolve round the fact that; a) It provides a realistic lens to analyze state behavior, especially in security and conflict studies. b) It explains why states pursue military buildup, alliances, and strategic interests. c) Many international events, such as Cold War rivalries, align with realist principles.

Critics of the realist theory hinged their arguments on the fact that realism underestimates cooperation, diplomacy, and international institutions' roles. Also, it downplays domestic politics, culture, and economic factors influencing state behavior. Finally, its focus on power and self-interest can justify unethical actions and ignore human rights. As well, realism often portrays international politics as zero-sum, overlooking the potential for mutual gains. Despite its criticisms, realism remains relevant, especially in analyzing power politics, military conflicts, and strategic alliances. It offers valuable insights into the behavior of major powers like the US, China, and Russia in contemporary geopolitics. In summary, the realist theory provides a foundational framework for understanding international relations by emphasizing power, security, and state interests in an anarchic system. While it offers pragmatic explanations for conflict and competition, it must be complemented with other perspectives to fully grasp the complexities of global politics.

## Liberal Peace Theory (LPT)

Liberal peace advocates argue that sustainable peace is rooted in democratic governance, rule of law, and socio-economic development (Paris, 2004). It emphasizes building legal and institutional frameworks to prevent conflicts from re-emerging, suggesting that peace is best preserved through legal reforms, justice, and human rights. The liberal peace theory is a prominent paradigm in international relations and peace studies, advocating that democracy, economic development, and respect for human rights are essential for achieving and sustaining peace. Rooted in liberal political philosophy, the theory posits that liberal democracies are less likely to go to war with each other and that promoting liberal values globally can lead to a more peaceful world.

The main principles of liberal peace theory are; i) the theory assert that democratic states, characterized by free elections, rule of law, and respect for civil liberties, are

inherently less inclined to engage in conflict with other democracies. This idea is encapsulated in the "Democratic Peace Hypothesis." ii) economic openness and free markets foster mutual dependencies among nations, reducing incentives for conflict. Prosperous societies with strong economic ties are believed to prioritize diplomacy over violence. iii) the protection of individual rights and the rule of law contribute to social stability and reduce grievances that can lead to violence or insurgency. iv) International organizations (e.g., UN, WTO) facilitate cooperation, dispute resolution, and enforcement of rules, reinforcing peace-promoting norms.

The historical and theoretical foundations of the LPT is rested on; i) the liberal political philosophy, this can be traced back to enlightenment thinkers like Immanuel Kant, who in his essay Perpetual Peace (1795), argued that republican constitutions and international federation could promote lasting peace. ii) Kantian peace. Kant's idea that republican (democratic) states are more peaceful and that international federation (global governance) can help prevent wars. iii) Modern development of the liberal theory. The 20th and 21st centuries saw the rise of the liberal peace paradigm through post-World War II efforts, including the expansion of democratic governance and global economic integration (Terminski, 2010).

The main critiques and limitations of the LPT are;

- *Western-centric bias:* Critics argue that the theory reflects Western values and may impose liberal models that are incompatible with local cultures or political contexts.
- *Democracy does not guarantee peace:* Empirical evidence shows that democracies can and do engage in conflicts, including humanitarian interventions and military interventions.
- *Neglect of structural factors:* The theory underestimates economic inequalities, historical grievances, ethnic tensions, and social injustices that can undermine peace despite democratic or economic advancements.
- *Overemphasis on formal institutions:* Formal democratic and legal institutions may exist without substantive social justice, leading to fragile peace or even conflict.

On a final note, the liberal peace theory offers a compelling framework emphasizing the importance of democracy, economic openness, and legal institutions for peace. While it has contributed to global peace initiatives and democratization efforts, its limitations highlight the need for context-sensitive approaches that consider local political, social, and cultural realities. Effective peace-building requires not only promoting liberal values but also addressing root causes of conflict beyond institutional reforms. (Miller, 2010).

## Conflict Transformation Theory (CTT)

This theory is associated with Lederach (1997) who advocated for addressing root causes (justice, social equity) alongside managing conflict escalation through security measures.

This hybrid approaches recognize that both military strength and rule of law are necessary, but their effectiveness depends on context, implementation, and balance. Conflict transformation theory is a framework that redefines how conflicts are understood and addressed. Unlike traditional approaches that focus primarily on managing or resolving conflicts temporarily, CTT emphasizes transforming the underlying social structures, relationships, and perceptions that produce conflict. It aims for sustainable peace by fostering deep change at individual, relational, and systemic levels.

The cardinal principles of conflict transformation theory include;

a. A holistic approach. This entails that the CTT considers conflict as a complex social phenomenon rooted in cultural, economic, political, and psychological factors. It advocates for addressing these multiple dimensions simultaneously.

b. Focus on relationships. This principle emphasizes transforming relationships between conflicting parties, fostering mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation.

c. Change at multiple levels. This principle posits that the CTT targets change at personal, relational, structural, and cultural levels, recognizing that conflicts are embedded in social systems.

d. Participation and empowerment. CTT emphasizes the promotion of inclusive participation of all stakeholders, empowering marginalized groups and encouraging active engagement in the peace process.

e. Long-term perspective. This approach aims for enduring change, not just short-term conflict management or resolution.

f. Peace-building as a process. CTT sees peace as a process of ongoing growth, learning, and adaptation, rather than a static outcome.

While conflict resolution often emphasizes negotiation, mediation, or cessation of violence, conflict transformation broadens the scope to include social change and ongoing development of positive relationships. It views conflict as an opportunity for growth and societal improvement, rather than merely a problem to be solved.

The challenge of the CTT upon which it draws criticism includes the fact that, the transformational processes are often slow and require sustained effort. Again, assessing what constitutes "change" can be subjective and context-dependent. Equally, it requires skilled facilitators and genuine stakeholder commitment. Finally, its lack of clear quantifiable indicators, makes evaluation challenging.

On a final note, the conflict transformation theory offers a comprehensive and profound approach to understanding and addressing conflicts. It emphasizes that lasting peace arises from deep social, cultural, and structural change, not just the cessation of violence. Its focus on relationships, participation, and systemic reform makes it a valuable framework for sustainable peace-building, particularly in complex, protracted conflicts. This theoretical framework underscores that peace drives in Nigeria are rooted in diverse

paradigms, those emphasizing justice, legal reforms, and social equity versus those prioritizing security through military might. An effective peace strategy likely requires an integrated model that combines the strengths of both approaches while addressing their limitations, guided by theories that recognize the importance of legitimacy, social justice, and security. (Botes, 2003).

## Empirical review on how rule of law and military spending impact peace-building

Nigeria's approach to peace-building has involved a combination of legal reforms, judicial initiatives, and military interventions. Empirical studies provide insights into the effectiveness, limitations, and outcomes of these strategies in different conflict contexts.

## Empirical evidence supporting the rule of law in peace-building

The work of Williams (2025) indicates that, reforming judicial institutions can reduce conflict and violence by increasing access to justice and promoting accountability. For example, in Liberia, post-civil war judicial reforms contributed to increased trust in state institutions and reduced recurrence of violence. Similarly, studies such as Geraghty (2020), show that countries with more effective, transparent legal systems tend to experience higher levels of peace and stability. Rwanda's efforts to rebuild its justice sector after the genocide, including *gacaca* courts and legal reforms, are associated with national reconciliation and peace consolidation.

The UNDP report (2024) noted that, a positive correlation exists between the rule of law and economic growth, which in turn supports peace. For example, in Kenya, improvements in legal frameworks and property rights have been linked to increased investment and social stability.

Finally, the empirical results of the work of Ayal, et al, (2025) also demonstrates that legal measures such as land rights laws and anti-corruption statutes, help address underlying grievances that fuel conflict. In Ethiopia, land reform laws contributed to reducing land disputes and ethnic tensions

Despite positive evidence, challenges such as weak institutions, corruption, and political interference hinder rule of law initiatives. Studies highlight that without genuine political will and institutional capacity, rule of law reforms are often superficial and fail to produce sustainable peace (Nharaunda-Makawa, 2022).

## Empirical evidence supporting military expenditure/operations in peace-building

Military efforts, including peacekeeping missions and targeted operations, have played a significant role in stabilizing conflict zones and supporting peace-building in Nigeria. According to Bellamy & Williams, (2020), African-led and international peacekeeping

missions have contributed to reducing violence and creating space for political processes. For example, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) have been associated with reductions in hostilities and progress toward peace agreements

Equally, studies by Onuoha, (2025), revealed that increased military expenditure, especially in counter-insurgency, can deter violence and insurgency. In Nigeria, military spending and operations have been crucial in countering Boko Haram, although with mixed results regarding long-term stability. As well, Chafer, et al, (2020) discovered that targeted military interventions can stabilize fragile states temporarily, providing a foundation for subsequent political reconciliation. For example, in Mali, French military operations (Operation Serval and Barkhane) helped regain control over territories held by insurgents, enabling political processes to resume

Critics like Okengwu (2024) argue that military approaches often result in human rights abuses, alienating local populations and fueling cycles of violence and distrust. Equally, Zailani, et al, (2025) noted that, military solutions are often short-term, addressing symptoms rather than root causes. Over-reliance on military expenditure can also divert resources from development and social programs critical for long-term peace.

Despite positive contributions, empirical evidence also highlights risks such as unintended escalation, dependency on military solutions, and undermining local governance. The case of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) demonstrates that military operations without comprehensive political strategies may lead to cycles of violence (Dunn, 2002).

## Methodology

The methodology adopted in this research is the *ex poste* analysis, this is because it allows researchers to analyze data that has already been collected, providing insights based on actual events and outcomes rather than theoretical models. Equally, it is useful in situations where experimental manipulation is unethical or impractical, such as studying the effects of natural disasters or policy changes. Finally, it facilitates the examination of trends and patterns over time, contributing to understanding long-term effects and developments.

## Analytical Framework

The analytical framework for the study is hypothesizes in the table 3.1 below;

Analyzing the impact of the rule of law and military spending on peace-building in Nigeria requires a comprehensive framework that moves beyond simply measuring the presence of laws and military might. It necessitates evaluating how RoL and military interventions affect stability, governance, human security, and reconciliation.

**Table 1.** Hypothesized analytical framework

| Variable | Expected sign | Rational |
|---|---|---|
| RLAW | Positive (+) | Stronger rule of law is associated with higher levels of peace. (Kobayashi, et al, 2025) |
| MIL | Positive (+/-) | A well-funded military can act as a deterrent to conflict, thus promoting peace. (Gromes 2025). Equally, military action may result in human right abuses which may fuel other cycles of violence and distrust thereby leading to more crises. (Okengwu, 2024) |

Source: Authors compilation.

Table 1 shows that the impact of the rule of law on peace-building promotes stability and order, builds credibility and trust in institutions, protects human rights and justice, facilitates disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, prevents the re-emergence of conflict, supports economic development and social justice, enhances international support and cooperation. Hence it is expected that a positive relationship exist between rule of law and peace-building.

On the other hand, it is observed that the impact of military spending on peace-building could either be positive or negative depending on the aspect it leads to. On the positive side, it enhanced security and stability, protection of peace agreements, support for humanitarian operations. While on the negative side military intervention on peace-building could lead to; perpetuation of arms race, undermining diplomatic solutions, resource allocation issues as well as, fear and suspicion. In relations to this study, it is expected that military spending will exhibit either a positive or negative relationship with peace-building

## Model Specifications

In this study, a fully modified OLS model based on the human needs theory earlier mentioned is specified in line with similar study by Obomeghie (2025), and Wagner et, al. (2020). The Fully Modified Ordinary Least Squares (FM-OLS) is an econometric technique developed by Engle and Granger (1987). It is designed specifically for estimating long-run relationships among non-stationary, cointegrated variables. It extends the traditional OLS method by making modifications to correct for issues like endogeneity and serial correlation that commonly arise in time series data. FM-OLS provides consistent, unbiased estimates of cointegrating vectors, enabling reliable inference about long-term equilibrium relationships in macroeconomic and financial data.

The basic form of the fully modified ordinary least square is given as;

$$PEI_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 RLAW_t + \beta_2 MIL_t + \beta_3 SERV_t + \varepsilon_t \text{ ----------1}$$

Where;

$\beta_0$ = Intercept

$\beta_1\beta_2\beta_3$ are the coefficient and

$\varepsilon_t$ is the error term.

Equation (1) is further transformed to the error correction model as follows;

$$\Delta PEI_t = \beta_0 + \sum_{i-1}^{p} \beta_1 \Delta RLAW_{t-1} + \sum_{i-1}^{p} \beta_2 \Delta \mathrm{MIL}_{t-1} + \sum_{i-1}^{p} \beta_3 \Delta \mathrm{SERV}_{t-1} + \lambda ECT_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t \quad \text{----------2}$$

Where;

Δ = First difference

P = Number of lags

$\lambda$ = Speed of adjustment

## Justification for estimating a FM-OLS

The justification for using a FM-OLS in this study includes the fact that it;

- *Corrects for endogeneity and serial correlation*. While standard OLS estimates can be biased and inconsistent when regressors are endogenous or when errors are serially correlated. FM-OLS explicitly accounts for endogeneity arising from correlation between regressors and error terms by modifying the OLS estimator, leading to consistent estimates.
- *Addresses serial correlation and endogeneity in error terms*. In standard OLS, serial correlation in errors can lead to inefficient estimates and invalid inference. FM-OLS on the other hand, applies a non-parametric correction to eliminate serial correlation and endogeneity bias, improving estimator efficiency.
- *Provides asymptotically unbiased and consistent estimates in cointegrated systems*. When dealing with cointegrated time series, OLS estimates of the cointegrating vector are biased in small samples. FM-OLS on the other hand produces asymptotically unbiased and consistent estimates of the cointegrating relationships, making it more reliable in long-run equilibrium modeling.
- *Better inference and hypothesis testing*. Standard errors from OLS may be invalid under non-stationarity and cointegration. However, FM-OLS adjusts for these issues, allowing for valid statistical inference and hypothesis testing about long-run relationships.
- *Suitable for non-stationary data.* While standard OLS can give spurious results when applied directly to non-stationary series. On the hand, FM-OLS is designed specifically for cointegrated (non-stationary) variables, ensuring meaningful and reliable estimates

In summary, FM-OLS is justified over ordinary OLS because it provides more reliable, consistent, and efficient estimates of long-run relationships in systems where variables are non-stationary but cointegrated, especially when issues like endogeneity and serial correlation are present

## Data Sources

The data used in this analysis were obtained from various sources such as the CBN statistical bulletin, the World Bank database, as well as the World justice project data base, covering the period from 2006 to 2023.

## Results

From table 2 above, it can be seen that military expenditure (MIL) has the highest mean while the rule of law (RLAW) has the lowest mean with 2328.123 and -1.00875 respectively. This shows that the Nigeria government has a tendency for higher investment or focus on military activities than on the rule of law.

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics

| | PEI | RLAW | SERV | MIL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mean | 2.743750 | -1.008750 | 50.53750 | 2328.125 |
| Median | 2.830000 | -1.010000 | 50.50000 | 2195.000 |
| Maximum | 2.920000 | -0.840000 | 59.80000 | 4470.000 |
| Minimum | 2.470000 | -1.180000 | 42.30000 | 1500.000 |
| Std. Dev. | 0.167685 | 0.117863 | 4.951077 | 755.9296 |
| Skewness | -0.574855 | -0.123611 | 0.118607 | 1.481852 |
| Kurtosis | 1.664150 | 1.519982 | 2.412598 | 5.048898 |
| Jarque-Bera | 2.070885 | 1.501048 | 0.267541 | 8.654349 |
| Probability | 0.355069 | 0.472119 | 0.874791 | 0.013205 |
| Sum | 43.90000 | -16.14000 | 808.6000 | 37250.00 |
| Sum Sq. Dev. | 0.421775 | 0.208375 | 367.6975 | 8571444. |
| Observations | 16 | 16 | 16 | 16 |

Source: Authors compilation.

As well, MIL has the highest standard deviation while RLAW again has the lowest standard deviation with 755.9296 and 0.117863 respectively. This indicates that the values for military expenditure vary widely across the data set. It also means that, there is a large amount of fluctuation or inconsistency in military spending among the observations. On the other hand, the rule of law with the lowest standard deviation means that, the values for the rule of law are relatively stable and consistent across the data set, showing less variability

**Table 3.** Stationarity test

| Variable | Order | ADF | Prob | Conclusion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| D(PEI) | I (1) | -2.5680 | 0.014 | Stationary |
| D(RLAW) | I (0) | -6.5557 | 0.000 | Stationary |
| D(SERV) | I (1) | -3.4917 | 0.000 | Stationary |
| D(MIL) | I (1) | -4.037 | 0.000 | Stationary |

Source: Authors compilation.

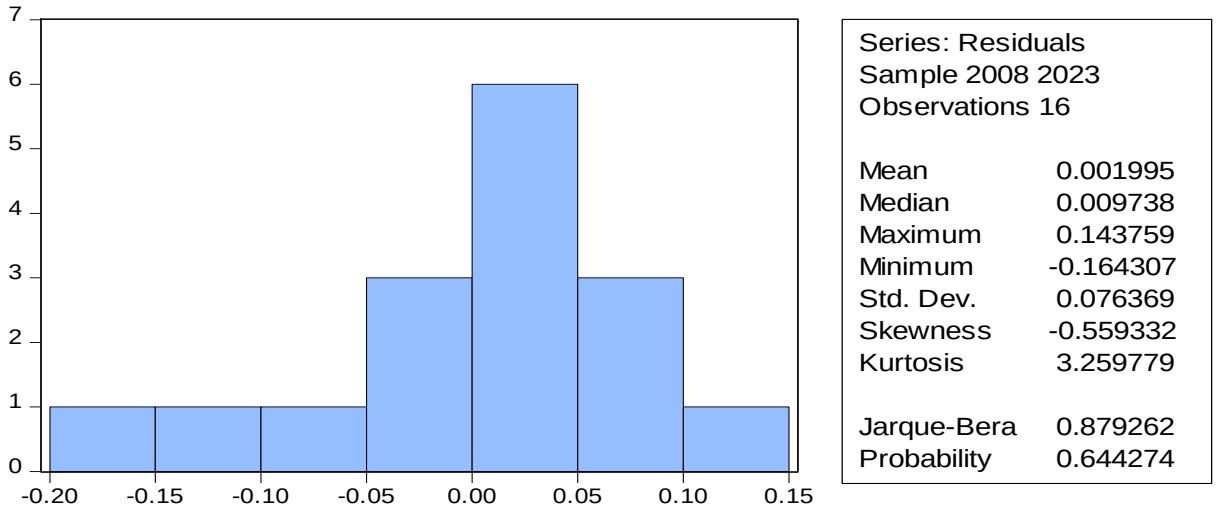
From table 3, it can be observes that all the variables used in the analysis are stationary at first difference except RLAW which is stationary at levels. If values are stationary, it means that they do not change or fluctuate over time. In statistical and analytical contexts, stationarity has specific implications for empirical analysis which includes;

*Predictability and stability;* Since values remain constant over time, future values can be reliably predicted based on past data. This stability simplifies modeling and forecasting because the underlying data distribution does not change.

*Simplified analysis:* Many statistical techniques, such as regression analysis and time series modeling, require stationarity to produce valid results. Non-stationary data can lead to spurious correlations, so stationarity ensures more accurate and meaningful analysis.

*No trends or cycles;* Stationary data lack trends, seasonal effects or cycles, meaning that the mean and variance are constant. This implies a steady environment without significant shifts or long-term changes.

**Figure 1.** Normality test




From figure 1 which depicts the normality test, the Jarque-Bera value of 0.879262 with a corresponding probability of 0.644274, indicates that the variables used are normally distributed. The implications of normal distribution in econometric analysis include;

*Validity of statistical inference;* Many inferential statistics, such as t-tests and F-tests, rely on the assumption of normality of the error terms or variables. Normality ensures that the sampling distribution of estimators is approximately normal, especially in large samples, enabling valid hypothesis testing and confidence interval construction.

*Efficiency and unbiasedness of estimators;* Under the assumption of normally distributed variables, the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimators are not only unbiased but also

the Best Linear Unbiased Estimators (BLUE). It also helps in verifying the assumptions needed for estimator optimality.

*Simplification of model diagnostics;* Normality facilitates the use of residual analysis, Q-Q plots, and other diagnostic tools to assess the goodness of fit. It simplifies the detection of outliers and influential data points.

*Applicability of parametric tests:* Many parametric tests assume normality; if variables are normally distributed, these tests are more reliable. This includes tests for coefficients, joint hypotheses, and model specifications.

In conclusion, if variables are normally distributed, it generally enhances the validity and reliability of statistical inference in econometric models, simplifies diagnostics, and supports the use of parametric tests.

**Table 4.** Cointegration test

| Trend assumption: Linear deterministic trend | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Series: PEI RLAW SERV MIL | | | | |
| Hypothesized | | Trace | 0.05 | |
| No. of CE(s) | Eigenvalue | Statistic | Critical Value | Prob.** |
| None * | 0.914236 | 74.11373 | 47.85613 | 0.0000 |
| At most 1 * | 0.858092 | 39.72751 | 29.79707 | 0.0026 |
| At most 2 | 0.485134 | 12.39145 | 15.49471 | 0.1391 |
| At most 3 | 0.198489 | 3.097585 | 3.841466 | 0.0784 |
| Unrestricted Cointegration Rank Test (Maximum Eigenvalue) | | | | |
| Hypothesized | | Max-Eigen | 0.05 | |
| No. of CE(s) | Eigenvalue | Statistic | Critical Value | Prob.** |
| None * | 0.914236 | 34.38622 | 27.58434 | 0.0057 |
| At most 1 * | 0.858092 | 27.33606 | 21.13162 | 0.0059 |
| At most 2 | 0.485134 | 9.293869 | 14.26460 | 0.2625 |
| At most 3 | 0.198489 | 3.097585 | 3.841466 | 0.0784 |

Source: Authors compilation.

Table 4 shows the cointergration result for our analysis. From the results, it can be seen that there exist a long-run relationship between our dependent variable and the selected independent variables. The implications of cointegration in econometric analysis are; i) *The presence of a long-run equilibrium relationship*. Cointegration indicates that although individual variables may be non-stationary (their values fluctuate over time), a linear combination of these variables is stationary. This suggests that the variables move together over the long term, maintaining a stable equilibrium relationship despite short-term deviations. ii) *The avoidance of spurious regression issues*. Non-stationary variables can lead to spurious regressions, where relationships appear significant but are actually meaningless. Cointegration confirms that the observed relationship is genuine and not a statistical artifact, allowing for valid inferences. iii) *The use of Error Correction Models (ECMs).* When variables are cointegrated, the appropriate modeling approach is often an Error Correction Model. ECMs capture both short-term dynamics and long-term equilibrium relationships, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how

variables adjust to deviations. iv) *Implications for policy and forecasting*. Recognizing cointegration implies that policy makers can focus on long-term relationships, knowing that variables tend to move together over time. Forecasts based on cointegrated variables are more reliable because the long-run equilibrium relationship anchors their movements. v) *Model specification and testing*. Cointegration necessitates specific tests (e.g., Engle-Granger, Johansen tests) to identify the number of cointegrating relationships. Proper modeling of cointegrated variables ensures that estimates are consistent and meaningful.

**Table 5.** The FM-OLS result

| Dependent Variable: PEI | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Method: Fully Modified Least Squares (FMOLS) | | | | |
| Variable | Coefficient | Std. Error | t-Statistic | Prob. |
| RLAW | 1.184708 | 0.144811 | 8.181089 | 0.0000 |
| SERV | 0.019699 | 0.004263 | 4.621090 | 0.0006 |
| MIL | 0.000108 | 2.92E-05 | 3.690276 | 0.0031 |
| C | 2.690307 | 0.306880 | 8.766651 | 0.0000 |
| R-squared | 0.792432 | Mean dependent var | | 2.743750 |
| Adjusted R-squared | 0.740540 | S.D. dependent var | | 0.167685 |
| S.E. of regression | 0.085414 | Sum squared resid | | 0.087547 |
| Long-run variance | 0.003574 | | | |

Source: Authors compilation.

## Discussions

From table 5 which represents the FM-OLS estimates, the adjusted $R^2$ value of 0.74 from our estimates clearly shows that all the independent variables used in the analysis have been able to explain about 74% of the variation in the dependent variable within the period under review.

Our first independent variable is the rule of law (RLAW). The estimates indicates that for each unit increase in rule of law (RLAW), peace-building (PEI) is expected to increase by approximately 1.18 units, holding other factors constant. In other words, there is a positive relationship between rule of law (RLAW) and peace-building (PEI) since the p-value is much less than the typical significance level of 0.05.

With respect to our second independent variable which is government expenditure on services (SERV), the analysis indicates that for each unit increase in government expenditure on services (SERV), the peace-building (PEI) is expected to increase by approximately 0.0197 units. Again this relationship is statistically significant suggesting a positive and meaningful association between service expenditure and peace outcomes in the studied context

From our final independent which is military expenditure, the results again indicates that for each unit increase in military expenditure (MIL), peace-building (PEI) is expected to

increase by approximately 0.000108 units. The very small magnitude suggests that the effect is positive but quite small in scale. The relationship is statistically significant

## Conclusion

Enhancing the rule of law contributes significantly to peace-building in Nigeria. This suggests that stronger legal institutions, effective enforcement of laws, and equitable justice systems promote social stability, reduce conflict, and foster peaceful coexistence. This is in line with the work of Cox & Cobb (2025).

With respect to government expenditure on services, the findings suggest that higher government expenditure on services contributes to peace and stability in the country. This positive association indicates that investments in health, education, social welfare, and related services may help mitigate conflict drivers such as inequality, poverty, and social exclusion, thereby fostering a more peaceful environment. Studies such as, Debraj & Esteban, (2017), have further demonstrated that increased social spending correlates with reductions in civil unrest and violence

With regards to government military expenditure, the findings suggest that, military spending contributes to maintaining peace, possibly through deterrence or stronger defense capabilities. One should note that, the positive correlation does not necessarily imply that increased military expenditure causes greater peace. It might be that, peaceful conditions allow for higher military spending. Other factors like economic development, political stability influence both military expenditure and peace. This is in line with similar findings by Momoh (2024).

In summary it has been demonstrated that the rule of law has more impact on peace-building in Nigeria than military spending/intervention. This is because while RLAW responded with a coefficient of 1.1847, on the other hand MIL responded with a marginal value of 0.00018.

## Recommendations

Nigeria should further strengthen the rule of law by prioritizing judicial reforms, enhance legal institutions, and promote transparency and accountability this is because a robust rule of law fosters social trust, reduces corruption, and mitigates conflict, thereby promoting peace (North, 2009; World Bank, 2011).

While military expenditure is positively associated with peace in this context, it suggests that a well-funded and professional military can contribute to stability. However, it is crucial to ensure that military spending is transparent, focused on defense and peacekeeping, and not diverted to internal repression or conflict-provoking activities. Governments should aim for transparent and strategic military spending that supports national security without undermining economic development or civil liberties (SIPRI, 2020).

Equally, Nigeria should increase expenditure on services by investing in health, education, social protection, and infrastructure because these can address the root causes of conflict such as poverty, inequality, and marginalization. This fosters social cohesion and enhances peace stability (Akinola & Liaga, 2024). Governments should also ensure that social spending is effectively targeted, equitable, and sustainable to maximize its peace-promoting effects. (Obomeghie & Bello, 2017)

One may note that, combining efforts to strengthen the rule of law, responsible military spending, and social investment creates a comprehensive framework for peace-building. Policy makers should adopt a coordinated approach that aligns security, legal reform, and social development strategies. Also policy makers in Nigeria should embark on regular assessment of peace indices and related variables because such adjustment can guide policy adjustments, hence, the need for holistic and dynamic strategies, (Obomeghie & Ugbomhe, 2021).

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# COMUNIDADE DOS PAÍSES DE LÍNGUA PORTUGUESA COMO ESPAÇO DE SEGURANÇA: O EIXO BRASIL–PORTUGAL E A AGENDA DE DEFESA COMUM

**LAÉRCIO EDUARDO DE ARAÚJO**
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Coronel de Cavalaria da reserva do Exército Brasileiro (Brasil), formado pela Academia Militar das Agulhas Negras e em Administração de Empresas. mestre e doutorando em Ciências Militares pelo Instituto Meira Mattos (ECEME), dedica-se à pesquisa sobre a capacidade dissuasória do Brasil no Atlântico Sul, a guerra do futuro e seus impactos sobre a Base Industrial de Defesa (BID). É autor do livro "Amazônia Oriental: das riquezas, cobiças e ameaças até a guerra no futuro e questões logísticas envolvidas", publicado pela Editora Dialética. Publicou artigos em periódicos nacionais e internacionais sobre geopolítica, inovação em defesa, logística militar, segurança internacional e desenvolvimento da BID brasileira. Atua ainda como palestrante e instrutor em cursos e seminários sobre estratégia, poder militar e defesa, no meio acadêmico e em instituições especializadas.

## Resumo

O artigo tem como objetivo geral analisar de que maneira o eixo Brasil–Portugal contribui para configurar a Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (CPLP) como espaço de segurança e para estruturar uma agenda de defesa comum entre seus Estados-membros. A pergunta de pesquisa que orienta o texto é: em que medida, e com quais limites, o eixo Brasil–Portugal consegue converter a retórica de uma comunidade lusófona de segurança em práticas concretas de cooperação em defesa? Como objetivos específicos, o artigo a) examina as bases normativas e o desenho institucional que permitem conceber a CPLP como espaço de segurança; b) analisa como Brasil e Portugal inscrevem a CPLP e o eixo luso-brasileiro em suas estratégias nacionais de defesa; c) mapeia os principais instrumentos de cooperação de defesa no âmbito da CPLP com destaque para os exercícios FELINO, iniciativas de formação e produção de pensamento estratégico; e d) discute os limites, lacunas e oportunidades para o aprofundamento dessa agenda comum. Metodologicamente, recorre-se à análise documental de estatutos, protocolos, livros brancos de defesa e declarações conjuntas, articulada a literatura especializada em segurança regional e cooperação em defesa. Os resultados indicam que o eixo Brasil–Portugal é condição necessária para dar densidade política e operacional à dimensão de defesa da CPLP, mas permanece insuficiente para consolidar um espaço de segurança lusófono robusto, em razão de assimetrias de capacidades, agendas externas concorrentes e fragilidades institucionais.

## Palavras-chave

CPLP; Defesa; Brasil–Portugal; FELINO.

## Abstract

This article examines how the Brazil–Portugal axis contributes to shaping the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) as a security space and to structuring a common

defence agenda among its member states. It departs from the question of to what extent, and with which limits, this axis is able to translate the rhetoric of a "lusophone security community" into concrete and sustained practices of defence cooperation. The analysis is organised into four steps. First, it reconstructs the evolution of the CPLP's security and defence architecture, highlighting the consolidation of specific norms, organs and instruments, such as the Defence Protocol, the Centre for Strategic Analysis and the "Identity of the CPLP in the Field of Defence". Second, it assesses how Brazil and Portugal inscribe the CPLP and the lusophone axis into their defence and maritime strategies, with particular emphasis on the Atlantic. Third, it maps key instruments of cooperation in defence, including the FELINO exercise series, joint training and education initiatives and the production of strategic thinking. Finally, it discusses the main constraints and opportunities for deepening a common defence agenda, in light of capability asymmetries, competing external priorities and institutional weaknesses. The article concludes that the Brazil–Portugal axis is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for consolidating the CPLP as a meaningful security space, and points to concrete avenues for strengthening its maritime and strategic dimension.

**Keywords**

Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries; Brazil–Portugal relations; Defence cooperation; FELINO exercises.

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# COMUNIDADE DOS PAÍSES DE LÍNGUA PORTUGUESA COMO ESPAÇO DE SEGURANÇA: O EIXO BRASIL–PORTUGAL E A AGENDA DE DEFESA COMUM

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## Introdução

A Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (CPLP) consolidou-se, desde 1996, como um espaço político-diplomático marcado por laços históricos, culturais e linguísticos comuns, mas cuja dimensão de segurança e defesa ganhou densidade apenas a partir dos anos 2000, com a criação de instâncias próprias, exercícios conjuntos e documentos estratégicos específicos. Nessa trajetória, a relação bilateral Brasil–Portugal ocupa lugar singular, tanto pela centralidade histórica na formação do mundo lusófono quanto pelo peso relativo de seus instrumentos militares, diplomáticos e econômicos no Atlântico.

Ao mesmo tempo, o ambiente estratégico em que a CPLP opera, em especial o Atlântico Sul, tornou-se mais complexo e contestado, com a sobreposição de agendas de segurança energética, proteção de infraestruturas críticas, criminalidade transnacional, disputas por recursos naturais e pressões de atores externos ao espaço lusófono. A importância de áreas como a Amazônia Azul[1], o Pré-Sal, as rotas atlânticas entre África, América do Sul e Europa, e os cabos de comunicações submarinos reforça a percepção de que não se trata apenas de uma comunidade linguística, mas de um potencial espaço de segurança com problemas e interesses comuns a gerir (BRASIL, 2020a; BRASIL, 2020b; BRASIL, 2020c).

Nesse contexto, Brasil e Portugal assumem papéis complementares. Para o Brasil, o Atlântico Sul constitui eixo fundamental de projeção externa e de proteção de recursos estratégicos, articulando-se com sua presença crescente em África e com iniciativas como

[1] *A expressão "Amazônia Azul" é utilizada no Brasil para designar a extensa área marítima sob jurisdição nacional — incluindo mar territorial, zona econômica exclusiva e plataforma continental — e tem sido empregada como conceito estratégico para enfatizar a relevância econômica, ambiental e de defesa desse espaço.* (BRASIL. Marinha do Brasil. Amazônia Azul: a fronteira marítima brasileira. Disponível em: https://www.marinha.mil.br/. Acesso em: 11 fev. 2026.)

a Zona de Paz e Cooperação do Atlântico Sul (ZOPACAS)[2] (Farias, 2017; Pereira, 2019). Para Portugal, a CPLP e o entorno atlântico com o Brasil contribuem para equilibrar a tradicional inserção no eixo euro-atlântico via Organização do Tratado do Atlântico Norte (OTAN)/União Europeia, com uma vocação pós-colonial voltada para África e para o Sul Global (Bernardino; Leal, 2011; Rizzi; Bernardino, 2019).

Apesar do acúmulo de declarações, planos de ação e exercícios combinados, a literatura aponta uma assimetria entre o desenho institucional da "arquitetura de segurança e defesa da CPLP" e a capacidade efetiva de transformar compromissos em políticas operacionais e capacidades conjuntas (Bernardino; Leal, 2011; Azevedo; Bernardino, 2015 p.23). Em paralelo, análises sobre a política externa e de defesa brasileiras indicam um ciclo de expansão de presença no Atlântico Sul e na África, seguido por um período de retração e perda de influência internacional, com impactos diretos sobre a coerência e a continuidade da cooperação em defesa (Farias, 2017; Farias; Alves, 2020; Pereira, 2019).

Nesse quadro, este a pergunta de pesquisa deste trabalho é: em que medida a CPLP pode ser entendida como um espaço de segurança articulado no eixo Brasil–Portugal, capaz de sustentar uma agenda comum de defesa frente às ameaças contemporâneas no Atlântico Sul e em seus entornos?

O objetivo geral é analisar em que medida a arquitetura de segurança e defesa da CPLP, combinada com a cooperação bilateral Brasil–Portugal, oferece bases políticas, normativas e operacionais para uma agenda comum de defesa, com funções de coordenação política, construção de capacidades e gestão cooperativa de riscos e ameaças.

Do ponto de vista conceitual, é interessante distinguir segurança e defesa. Em sentido amplo, segurança refere-se à condição (e ao processo) de redução de ameaças percebidas a valores e interesses considerados vitais; defesa, por sua vez, diz respeito ao conjunto de políticas, capacidades e instrumentos militares mobilizados pelo Estado para dissuadir, prevenir e responder a riscos e ameaças, inclusive em cooperação com parceiros.[3]

A noção de "espaço de segurança" é aqui empregada como categoria analítica para designar um recorte geopolítico em que atores estatais, por afinidades identitárias e interesses convergentes, constroem expectativas de cooperação estável e institucionalizam mecanismos para gerir riscos comuns. Trata-se, portanto, de um conceito próximo ao de "comunidade de segurança", entendida como arranjo no qual a resolução violenta de controvérsias entre os membros se torna improvável, substituída por mecanismos de consulta e de solução pacífica de disputas (Deutsch et Al., 1957

[2] A Zona de Paz e Cooperação do Atlântico Sul (ZPCAS/ZOPACAS) é um mecanismo político-diplomático estabelecido em 27 de outubro de 1986, por iniciativa do Brasil (com apoio da Argentina), formalizado pela Resolução 41/11 da Assembleia Geral da ONU, voltado à promoção da paz, da segurança e da cooperação entre os países das duas margens do Atlântico Sul. Disponível em: Resolução A/RES/41/11 (ONU) e página institucional do Ministério da Defesa sobre a ZOPACAS. Acesso em: 11 fev. 2026.
[3] Disponível em: Buzan; Wæver; de Wilde, Security: a new framework for analysis (1998) e Brasil, Política Nacional de Defesa/END/PND (versão 2020, Ministério da Defesa). Acesso em: 11 fev. 2026.

p.123; Adler; Barnett, 1998 p.3). Em diálogo com abordagens que salientam a interdependência regional da segurança e a formação de complexos regionais, o termo também permite capturar como percepções de ameaças e práticas de cooperação se organizam em torno de espaços atlânticos específicos (Buzan; Waever; de Wilde, 1998).

Nesse enquadramento, a CPLP não configura um sistema de defesa coletiva, mas pode ser analisada como um arranjo de segurança cooperativa, no qual normas, órgãos e instrumentos (por exemplo, o Protocolo de Cooperação no Domínio da Defesa, o CAE/CPLP, reuniões ministeriais e exercícios combinados) funcionam como alavancas de coordenação política e de construção de capacidades. Ao mesmo tempo, a consolidação desse espaço depende de capacidade institucional, financiamento e continuidade política para transformar repertório declaratório em práticas sustentadas.

Por fim, delimita-se o objeto: o texto concentra-se na cooperação no domínio da defesa (componente político-militar) no âmbito da CPLP, evitando confundir esse eixo com a cooperação em segurança pública/policial, que possui dinâmicas, instrumentos e níveis de relevância distintos na Comunidade.

Para alcançar esse objetivo, o artigo desenvolve quatro objetivos intermediários, que estruturam as seções subsequentes:

a) reconstruir a trajetória histórico-institucional da CPLP no domínio da segurança e defesa, com destaque para a formação da sua arquitetura de segurança e defesa e para a formulação da Identidade da CPLP no Domínio da Defesa[4];

b) analisar o eixo Brasil–Portugal como vetor estruturante da cooperação de defesa na CPLP, examinando mecanismos bilaterais, exercícios combinados e convergências geoestratégicas;

c) identificar convergências e assimetrias entre os principais documentos estratégicos de defesa de Brasil e Portugal, avaliando como tais convergências se traduzem, ou não, em diretrizes comuns no âmbito da CPLP;

d) mapear oportunidades e constrangimentos para a consolidação da CPLP como espaço de segurança, com foco em iniciativas ligadas à segurança marítima, à proteção de infraestruturas críticas e à gestão cooperativa de crises no Atlântico Sul.

Do ponto de vista teórico, o artigo dialoga com quatro vertentes centrais da produção recente em língua portuguesa. Em primeiro lugar, estudos sobre a "arquitetura de segurança e defesa da CPLP", a "centralidade do Centro de Análise Estratégica (CAE)" e a construção da "Identidade da CPLP no Domínio da Defesa", que enfatizam a passagem de uma lógica eminentemente declaratória para uma agenda "mais operacional" de cooperação estratégica (Bernardino; Leal, 2011 p 45-49; Rizzi; Bernardino, 2019 p 25-

[4] Normativo institucional da Componente de Defesa da CPLP, aprovado na XVI Reunião de Ministros da Defesa (26 maio 2015, São Tomé) e objeto de registo/endosso no âmbito do Conselho de Ministros da CPLP (24 jul. 2015, Díli). Disponível em: portal da Defesa da CPLP (secção de normativos/documentos) e registo institucional da CPLP sobre a tomada de nota do documento. Acesso em: 11 fev. 2026.

26; Azevedo; Bernardino, 2016 p 7-8). Em segundo lugar, com a contribuição de Pereira (2019) para a compreensão do Atlântico Sul como eixo de articulação entre Brasil e África e, por extensão, como espaço de atuação preferencial da CPLP, tanto do ponto de vista da política externa quanto da segurança marítima. Em terceiro lugar, analisa a estratégia do brasil na África e a trajetória recente da inserção internacional brasileira, permitindo relacionar capacidades econômicas, investimentos e cooperação técnica com a projeção externa do estado e a articulação político-diplomática no sul global (Farias, 2017, p. 9; p. 136; p. 139; p. 172–173; Farias; Alves, 2020, p. 15–40). Por fim, o artigo incorpora estudos acerca do poder de dissuasão militar do Brasil no Atlântico Sul, que evidenciam a dimensão militar e tecnológica da capacidade brasileira de sustentar, em cooperação com parceiros lusófonos, um espaço de segurança funcionalmente integrado (Araújo, 2024).

Metodologicamente, a pesquisa combina análise documental de fontes primárias, tais como declarações de cúpulas, atas de reuniões de ministros da Defesa e Chefes de Estado-Maior, documentos estratégicos nacionais de defesa de Brasil e Portugal e textos normativos da Componente de Defesa da CPLP[5], com revisão de literatura especializada produzida no Brasil e em Portugal. O recorte temporal concentra-se no período de 1998 em diante, a partir da primeira Reunião de Ministros da Defesa da CPLP e do progressivo adensamento da componente de defesa, sem prejuízo de referências a antecedentes institucionais anteriores.

O artigo está organizado em quatro seções, além desta introdução e das considerações finais. A segunda seção discute a evolução da arquitetura de segurança e defesa da CPLP, enfatizando a criação de instâncias próprias, como o CAE e os Exercícios FELINO[6], e o processo que conduz ao documento "Identidade da CPLP no Domínio da Defesa". A terceira seção analisa o eixo Brasil–Portugal na cooperação de defesa, evidenciando como mecanismos bilaterais e convergências estratégicas encorpar ou limitar a agenda multilateral da CPLP. A quarta seção examina as convergências e assimetrias entre os principais documentos de defesa de Brasil e Portugal, buscando identificar espaços de construção de uma agenda comum de segurança. A quinta seção discute oportunidades e constrangimentos para a consolidação da CPLP como espaço de segurança, com ênfase no Atlântico Sul, na segurança marítima e na proteção de infraestruturas críticas. Por fim, as considerações finais retomam a pergunta de pesquisa, sintetizam os principais

[5] A Componente de Defesa da CPLP é o conjunto de órgãos, normas e mecanismos criados para promover e facilitar a cooperação multilateral em matéria de defesa entre os Estados-membros, funcionando como instrumento de concertação, formação/treino, partilha de conhecimento e coordenação de iniciativas (incluindo a série de exercícios FELINO). Seu enquadramento jurídico-institucional assenta no Protocolo de Cooperação da CPLP no Domínio da Defesa (2006) e é detalhado no portal oficial da Defesa da CPLP, que descreve missão, estrutura e órgãos (por exemplo, o Secretariado Permanente para os Assuntos de Defesa). Disponível em: portal da Componente de Defesa da CPLP (página "Componente de Defesa") e "Protocolo de Cooperação da CPLP no Domínio da Defesa" (PDF). Acesso em: 12 fev. 2026.

[6] Os Exercícios FELINO constituem a série de exercícios conjuntos e combinados da componente de Defesa da CPLP, voltada principalmente ao treino e preparação de um Estado-Maior de uma Força de Tarefa Conjunta e Combinada (FTCC) para emprego em missões de apoio à paz e de assistência humanitária, nos níveis operacional e tático, reforçando padrões de interoperabilidade entre as Forças Armadas dos Estados-membros. Disponível em: Defesa da CPLP, "Exercício FELINO" (Formação e treino) e "Normas para a realização de Exercícios Militares da CPLP". Acesso em: 11 fev. 2026.

achados e apontam desdobramentos possíveis para a agenda de defesa da CPLP na próxima década.

## A Arquitetura de Segurança e Defesa da CPLP

A compreensão da CPLP como espaço de segurança exige analisar o processo de construção da sua arquitetura específica de segurança e defesa. Essa arquitetura não foi concebida de forma acabada na criação da comunidade, em 1996, mas resulta de um percurso incremental em que, gradualmente, a dimensão militar deixou de ser apenas um tema difuso de concertação político-diplomática para assumir expressão própria em documentos, órgãos e práticas de cooperação (Bernardino; Leal, 2011). Trata-se de uma arquitetura de natureza cooperativa, não de defesa coletiva, concebida para articular capacidades nacionais em torno de objetivos comuns, sobretudo em operações de paz, resposta a crises e segurança marítima.

## Da concertação político-diplomática à componente de defesa

Nos primeiros anos da CPLP, a temática da defesa aparecia de forma dispersa, subordinada à lógica mais ampla de concertação político-diplomática.

As declarações das conferências de Chefes de Estado e de Governo e dos Conselhos de Ministros incluíam referências genéricas à paz e à segurança, mas sem ainda configurar um eixo próprio de cooperação militar multilateral (Bernardino; Leal, 2011). Iniciativas de cooperação em defesa tendiam a se desenvolver no plano bilateral, em especial entre Portugal e os países africanos de língua portuguesa, e entre o Brasil e parceiros da África Ocidental.

A inflexão começa a ocorrer a partir de 1998, quando se realiza a primeira reunião de Ministros da Defesa da CPLP. Entre 1998 e 2006, sucessivas reuniões de Ministros da Defesa e de Chefes de Estado-Maior General passam a produzir decisões específicas sobre cooperação militar, identificando áreas prioritárias como operações de apoio à paz, formação de quadros, treino conjunto, intercâmbio de informações e cooperação técnico-militar (Bernardino; Leal, 2011). Nesse período, amadurece a ideia de instituir um exercício militar conjunto sob a égide da CPLP, voltado à preparação de forças para operações de paz, o que resultará na criação da série de exercícios FELINO no início dos anos 2000.

O marco jurídico-institucional decisivo da passagem de uma mera concertação política para uma verdadeira componente de defesa é a assinatura do Protocolo de Cooperação no Domínio da Defesa, em 2006, na 9ª Reunião de Ministros da Defesa da CPLP, em Cabo Verde (CPLP, 2006). Esse Protocolo define princípios, objetivos e modalidades de cooperação, listando como áreas prioritárias: a formação e o treino conjuntos; o intercâmbio de informações e experiências; a participação articulada em operações de manutenção da paz e ajuda humanitária; e a cooperação técnico-militar. A partir de então, como sublinham Bernardino e Leal (2011), passa a ser possível falar em uma

arquitetura de segurança e defesa da CPLP, assentada em bases jurídico-políticas reconhecidas por todos os Estados-membros.

## Consolidação institucional, CAE/CPLP e a "Identidade da CPLP no Domínio da Defesa"

A fase posterior a 2006 caracteriza-se pela consolidação e densificação da arquitetura de segurança e defesa. Um passo central nesse movimento é a criação do CAE/CPLP[7], instalado em Maputo (Moçambique), concebido como órgão de apoio à componente de defesa, com a missão de produzir estudos, fomentar o intercâmbio de conhecimentos e apoiar a formulação de posições concertadas no domínio da defesa (CAE/CPLP, 2020).

O CAE/CPLP atua como espaço de encontro entre militares, diplomatas e acadêmicos dos Estados-membros, contribuindo para construir uma visão geoestratégica comum da CPLP. Azevedo e Bernardino (2015) destacam que o Centro reforça a percepção da comunidade como "espaço estratégico" essencialmente atlântico, ligando Europa, África, América do Sul e Ásia, e funcionando como plataforma de cooperação em segurança e defesa. Por meio de seminários, documentos de reflexão e publicações, o CAE difunde conceitos, referenciais analíticos e diagnósticos compartilhados, que alimentam decisões nas instâncias políticas da componente de defesa.

Outro marco importante é a aprovação do documento "Identidade da CPLP no Domínio da Defesa", em 2015, resultado de um longo processo de debate entre os Estados-membros. Rizzi e Bernardino (2019) mostram que esse texto busca explicitar os fundamentos normativos e políticos da cooperação de defesa, definindo valores e princípios comuns, como a promoção da paz, o respeito à soberania, a solidariedade e a não ingerência, bem como objetivos específicos, entre os quais se destacam: reforçar a interoperabilidade entre as Forças Armadas dos Estados-membros; desenvolver capacidades para participar em operações de apoio à paz mandatadas por organizações internacionais; e cooperar em matérias de segurança marítima, ajuda humanitária e gestão de catástrofes.

A "Identidade da CPLP no Domínio da Defesa" é concebida como documento estruturante, destinado a orientar a ação da componente de defesa e a articular instrumentos já existentes, como o Protocolo de 2006, as Normas para a realização de exercícios militares da CPLP e o funcionamento do CAE, em uma visão coerente. Azevedo e Bernardino (2015 p.22) interpretam esse movimento como uma "nova visão geoestratégica" da CPLP, que procura transformar um conjunto relativamente disperso de iniciativas em um projeto de médio e longo prazo para a cooperação de defesa. Mais recentemente, a obra comemorativa "25 anos de cooperação de defesa na CPLP", coordenada por Bernardino

[7] órgão da Componente de Defesa da CPLP, com missão de promover a pesquisa, o estudo e a difusão de conhecimentos no domínio da estratégia/defesa de interesse comum, operando a partir da sua sede em Maputo e por meio de Núcleos Nacionais nos Estados-membros (normalmente junto aos Ministérios da Defesa). Disponível em: Estatuto do CAE/CPLP (26 maio 2015) e Regulamento do CAE/CPLP (2016), na área "Documentos" do portal da Defesa da CPLP; e página institucional do Ministério da Defesa de Portugal sobre o CAE/CPLP. Acesso em: 12 fev. 2026

e Rizzi (2023), sistematiza essa trajetória, apresentando a arquitetura de defesa como resultado de um crescimento institucional "consolidado e dinâmico" desde 1998, mas ainda dependente da vontade política e das capacidades materiais dos Estados-membros. Nesse balanço, Bernardino (2023) sintetiza a evolução da cooperação de defesa (1998-2023) como uma aposta na dimensão atlântica da Comunidade e destaca a centralidade dos instrumentos operacionais e de coordenação para sustentar a atlanticidade[8] da CPLP.

## Instrumentos operacionais: exercícios FELINO e órgãos de coordenação

No plano operacional, o principal instrumento da arquitetura de segurança e defesa da CPLP é a série de exercícios militares FELINO. Realizados anualmente desde 2000, esses exercícios foram, com o tempo, formalizados como atividade estruturante da componente de defesa, regulada por Normas próprias aprovadas no âmbito das reuniões de Ministros da Defesa e de Chefes de Estado-Maior-General (CPLP, 2013). As Normas definem o FELINO como exercício conjunto e combinado, destinado a preparar um Estado-Maior de Força de Tarefa Conjunta e Combinada para o planeamento e a condução de operações de apoio à paz, assistência humanitária e gestão de crises, sob mandato de organizações internacionais.

O modelo adotado prevê um ciclo bienal: em um ano realiza-se um exercício de carta, centrado no planeamento em posto de comando; no ano seguinte, um exercício com tropas no terreno, envolvendo efetivos militares de diferentes ramos e, em alguns casos, componentes civis. Essa alternância permite, por um lado, desenvolver doutrina, procedimentos e capacidades de comando e controlo e, por outro, testar, em ambiente prático, as capacidades nacionais e a interoperabilidade entre as Forças Armadas dos Estados-membros (CPLP, 2013; BRASIL, 2014). Ao longo dos anos, o FELINO tem funcionado como laboratório de interoperabilidade e de construção de confiança, além de espaço para a partilha de experiências em operações de paz e missões de apoio à paz.

Para além dos exercícios, a arquitetura de segurança e defesa da CPLP apoia-se em um conjunto de órgãos e fóruns de coordenação: o Secretariado Permanente para os Assuntos de Defesa (SPAD), as reuniões periódicas de Ministros da Defesa, de Chefes de Estado-Maior-General, de Diretores de Política de Defesa e de Comandantes de Força Aérea e Marinha, entre outros. Esses mecanismos visam assegurar acompanhamento político-militar da cooperação, harmonização de prioridades e monitoramento da execução das decisões tomadas em nível ministerial (Bernardino; Leal, 2011; Prazeres, 2019).

[8] O termo "atlanticidade" é empregado na literatura e no debate político em língua portuguesa para indicar uma vocação/identidade atlântica (por vezes associada à dimensão insular), com usos que remetem a Vitorino Nemésio no contexto açoriano; na discussão sobre a CPLP, a noção aparece explicitamente vinculada à Comunidade em texto de André Corsino Tolentino na Janus ("atlanticidade, que passa pela CPLP") e é retomada na literatura recente de defesa, por exemplo em Luís Manuel Brás Bernardino, ao analisar 1998–2023 como "uma aposta na atlanticidade". Disponível em: https://www.janusonline.pt/arquivo/2004/2004_2_1.html; https://link.springer.com/rwe/10.1007/978-981-95-1169-3_56; https://www.culturacores.azores.gov.pt/ea/pesquisa/default.aspx?id=566. Acesso em: 11 fev. 2026.

Ao mesmo tempo, a ausência de um mecanismo de defesa coletiva, uma vez que a CPLP "não pode agir (…) como bloco defensivo", somada à limitação de recursos e à heterogeneidade de capacidades, faz com que a efetividade dessa arquitetura dependa fortemente da vontade política dos Estados-membros e da prioridade que atribuem à CPLP em suas agendas externas (Rizzi; Bernardino, 2019, p. 15; p. 17; p. 19; Bernardino; Leal, 2011, p. 71). É nesse contexto que o papel específico do eixo Brasil–Portugal, enquanto possível vetor de coordenação e dinamização dessa arquitetura (Rizzi; Bernardino, 2019, p. 3; p. 18) será examinado na seção seguinte.

## O eixo Brasil–Portugal na cooperação de defesa da CPLP

A arquitetura de segurança e defesa da CPLP, ainda que formalmente multilateral, é fortemente condicionada pelas capacidades e agendas externas de Brasil e Portugal, que aparecem como exceção em termos de prioridades e meios e, em certos vetores, como potenciais líderes de processos de desenvolvimento no âmbito comunitário (Bernardino; Leal, 2011, p. 60; p. 71). Ademais, a literatura aponta a parceria Brasil–Portugal como base recorrente das relações intra-CPLP, embora a condução política varie por ciclos e por arranjos internos de coordenação (Rizzi; Bernardino, 2019, p. 207; p. 211).

## Bases jurídico-institucionais do eixo de defesa Brasil–Portugal

O aprofundamento da relação Brasil–Portugal em matéria de defesa insere-se em um quadro mais amplo de aproximação política e econômica, marcado pela assinatura do Tratado de Amizade, Cooperação e Consulta, em 2000, promulgado no Brasil pelo Decreto n. 3.927, de 2001 (BRASIL, 2001). Esse tratado estabelece um marco geral de diálogo político, cooperação setorial e consultas regulares, no qual a área de defesa é indicada como domínio prioritário.

No plano estritamente militar, o instrumento central é o Acordo entre a República Federativa do Brasil e a República Portuguesa sobre Cooperação no Domínio da Defesa, assinado em 2003 e promulgado no Brasil pelo Decreto n. 7.329, de 2010 (BRASIL, 2010). O acordo define áreas de cooperação que vão desde o intercâmbio de informações e experiências militares, passando por formação e aperfeiçoamento de pessoal, até o planejamento e a realização de exercícios combinados e a cooperação em matéria de armamento e material de defesa.

Além desse quadro básico, a cooperação foi sendo densificada em instrumentos específicos, sobretudo a partir da década de 2010. Podem ser citados, por exemplo, iniciativas voltadas à cooperação entre indústrias de defesa, com vistas a facilitar o acesso da produção brasileira ao mercado europeu e a articular complementaridades tecnológicas entre empresas dos dois países (BRASIL, 2017), bem como memorandos de entendimento em áreas de nicho, como a defesa cibernética (BRASIL, 2024). Em todos esses casos, o Atlântico, especialmente o Atlântico Sul, é enunciado como espaço

estratégico comum, o que aproxima diretamente a agenda bilateral das preocupações da CPLP.

Do ponto de vista analítico, Prazeres (2019) argumenta que a cooperação em defesa Brasil–Portugal tem potencial para funcionar como modelo ou núcleo duro da cooperação multilateral na CPLP, na medida em que combina proximidade política, afinidade doutrinária, língua comum e interesses convergentes na segurança marítima. Ao mesmo tempo, o autor sublinha que esse potencial tem sido apenas parcialmente aproveitado, em razão de assimetrias de prioridade: para o Brasil, a CPLP compete com outros eixos regionais (América do Sul, BRICS[9], ZOPACAS); para Portugal, a centralidade continua sendo a inserção euro-atlântica, via União Europeia e OTAN (Prazeres, 2019).

## Brasil e Portugal em seus documentos de defesa: convergências e assimetrias

As estratégias e políticas de defesa nacionais de Brasil e Portugal oferecem pistas importantes sobre como cada país inscreve a CPLP e o eixo luso-brasileiro em sua visão estratégica.

No caso brasileiro, o Livro Branco de Defesa (LBDN), a Política Nacional de Defesa (PND) e a Estratégia Nacional de Defesa (END), em suas versões aprovadas em 2020, reafirmam o Atlântico Sul como eixo de interesse estratégico externo, articulado à proteção da "Amazônia Azul", das reservas do pré-sal e das rotas marítimas que ligam o Brasil à África e à Europa (BRASIL, 2020a; BRASIL, 2020b; BRASIL, 2020c).

A CPLP aparece como um dos instrumentos para a concertação com países africanos e para a construção de um entorno cooperativo, ao lado de mecanismos como a ZOPACAS e iniciativas de cooperação técnico-militar (PEREIRA, 2016).

Autores como Visentini e Pereira (2014 p. 84-98) interpretam o Atlântico Sul como "espaço estratégico" de articulação entre política externa e política de defesa do Brasil, no qual a presença lusófona, via CPLP, constitui um dos vetores diplomáticos e militares relevantes. Essa leitura aproxima-se de análises mais recentes, que veem a atuação brasileira na cooperação em defesa da CPLP como extensão de interesses geopolíticos concentrados no "triângulo estratégico" formado por Brasil, costa ocidental africana e Portugal (Rizzi, 2025, p.207).

Contudo, estudos sobre a trajetória recente da inserção internacional brasileira apontam um movimento pendular: entre 2003 e meados da década de 2010, verificou-se uma expansão de iniciativas no Atlântico Sul e na África, com forte componente de cooperação técnica e de defesa; posteriormente, a combinação de crises econômicas e mudanças políticas internas levou a uma retração de presença e à perda de protagonismo em várias

[9] BRICS é um fórum de coordenação política e diplomática e de cooperação entre grandes economias emergentes e países em desenvolvimento, criado a partir das cúpulas iniciadas em 2009 (BRIC) e ampliado com a entrada da África do Sul em 2010 (BRICS). O agrupamento passou a incluir novos membros a partir de 2024–2025, conforme a expansão registrada nos portais oficiais. Disponível em: brics.br/en/about-the-brics; brics2026.gov.in (FAQ "What is BRICS?"); guides.loc.gov/brics. Acesso em: 12 fev. 2026

frentes (Farias, 2017; Farias; Alves, 2020). Isso ajuda a explicar por que, mesmo com referências reiteradas à CPLP nos documentos de defesa, o grau de continuidade e prioridade efetiva da comunidade variou ao longo do tempo.

No caso português, o Conceito Estratégico de Defesa Nacional, aprovado pela Resolução do Conselho de Ministros n. 19/2013, define uma visão de segurança mais abertamente global. O documento sustenta que Portugal deve conciliar três círculos de inserção prioritária: o euro-atlântico (OTAN e União Europeia), o Atlântico (com destaque para o relacionamento com o Brasil e o espaço lusófono) e o Mediterrânico/árabe-africano (PORTUGAL, 2013). A CPLP é apresentada como um dos pilares da ação externa de defesa, especialmente pela dimensão africana e atlântica da comunidade.

Análise comparativa entre a Estratégia Nacional de Defesa do Brasil e o Conceito Estratégico de Defesa Nacional de Portugal evidencia um paradoxo: o "menor" dos Estados (Portugal) é o que assume uma política de segurança com ambição mais global, enquanto o "maior" (Brasil) mantém foco mais circunscrito ao próprio entorno regional (Delgado, 2018). Para a CPLP, esse descompasso produz um enquadramento assimétrico: Portugal tende a ver a comunidade como extensão de sua ação euro-atlântica e africana; o Brasil, como parte de sua estratégia de fortalecimento do Atlântico Sul, mas com prioridade variável em função de ciclos internos.

Ainda assim, tanto em Brasília quanto em Lisboa há reconhecimento formal de que a CPLP é um instrumento relevante para a cooperação político-estratégica com países africanos lusófonos e para a afirmação de interesses no Atlântico. A forma como esse reconhecimento se traduz em recursos e iniciativas concretas, entretanto, depende do alinhamento entre governos, prioridades orçamentárias e percepções sobre ameaças, o que explica a intermitência observada nas agendas de alto nível.

## Liderança compartilhada e projeção de capacidades na CPLP

No plano da cooperação multilateral em defesa, a literatura especializada identifica Brasil e Portugal como principais provedores de capacidades militares, logísticas e de formação no âmbito da CPLP. Análises de cooperação marítima e de presença naval no Atlântico Sul, por exemplo, ressaltam que apenas esses dois países dispõem de meios navais e aéreos em número e qualidade suficientes para operar de forma continuada em áreas distantes de seu litoral, o que lhes confere papel de uma "liderança natural" em segurança marítima e cooperação com parceiros africanos (Antunes et Al., 2018 p.9; EURODEFENSE-PORTUGAL, 2020).

Estudos de Rizzi (2019; 2025) argumentam que, desde a consolidação da Componente de Defesa da CPLP, o Brasil tem atuado como liderança compartilhada com Portugal, propondo iniciativas e assumindo responsabilidades em áreas como os exercícios FELINO, o apoio à estruturação do CAE e a participação em operações de paz com contingentes expressivos. Ao mesmo tempo, Portugal mobiliza sua inserção na OTAN e na Política Comum de Segurança e Defesa da União Europeia para oferecer oportunidades de

formação, intercâmbio e emprego operacional a militares de países africanos lusófonos, o que retroalimenta a centralidade luso-brasileira na comunidade.

Ao examinar o papel do Brasil no desenvolvimento de um pensamento comum em segurança e defesa na CPLP, Prazeres (2019) destaca que a contribuição brasileira se manifesta, sobretudo, em três dimensões: produção de conhecimento estratégico, por meio de centros como o Instituto Meira Mattos (IMM) e a Escola Superior de Guerra (ESG); participação em exercícios e missões conjuntas; e disponibilização de vagas de formação para oficiais de países africanos em escolas militares brasileiras. Portugal, por sua vez, cumpre funções análogas em seu próprio sistema de ensino militar e em exercícios realizados no quadro da OTAN e da União Europeia, para os quais convida parceiros africanos lusófonos.

Contribuições recentes de Araújo (2024) sobre o poder de dissuasão militar do Brasil no Atlântico Sul reforçam a ideia de que a capacidade brasileira de projeção de poder naval e aéreo, ainda que limitada em termos globais, é significativa em comparação com os demais membros da CPLP. Essa capacidade confere ao Brasil um papel potencialmente central na proteção de linhas de comunicação marítima, infraestruturas críticas offshore e zonas econômicas exclusivas de países africanos parceiros, desde que haja vontade política e recursos para sustentar operações de presença e cooperação naval de longo prazo.

Essa liderança, contudo, não é linear nem isenta de tensões. Estudos sobre a atuação brasileira na CPLP apontam momentos de descompasso com Portugal, seja por divergências quanto à intensidade da agenda de defesa, seja por diferentes percepções sobre o papel da comunidade em relação a outras organizações internacionais (Miyamoto, 2009; Rizzi; Cruzichi, 2017). Em certos períodos, observa-se competição simbólica por protagonismo; em outros, prevalece a lógica de coordenação pragmática, especialmente quando interesses convergentes estão em jogo, como a preservação do Atlântico Sul como zona de paz e cooperação.

De modo geral, pode-se afirmar que o eixo Brasil–Portugal funciona como condição necessária, mas não suficiente, para conferir densidade política e operacional à cooperação em defesa da CPLP. Necessária, porque sem as capacidades materiais, a experiência acumulada e o peso diplomático desses dois países, dificilmente a Comunidade conseguiria sustentar uma agenda minimamente robusta em segurança e defesa. Insuficiente, porque a efetividade dessa agenda depende também do engajamento dos demais Estados-membros, da estabilidade política em África, da disponibilidade orçamentária e, sobretudo, da capacidade de transformar iniciativas pontuais em políticas de longo prazo.

É justamente nesse ponto que emergem os limites e as oportunidades do protagonismo luso-brasileiro na CPLP: de um lado, a possibilidade de utilizar o eixo bilateral como plataforma de fortalecimento da arquitetura de defesa comunitária; de outro, o risco de que a assimetria de capacidades e de prioridades externas cristalize uma dependência excessiva em relação a Brasil e Portugal, dificultando a apropriação plena da agenda de defesa pelos demais membros. Esses dilemas serão examinados nas seções seguintes,

ao se analisar, de um lado, os instrumentos concretos de cooperação, como exercícios FELINO, iniciativas de formação e produção de pensamento estratégico e, de outro, os limites, lacunas e oportunidades para a consolidação da CPLP como espaço de segurança.

## Instrumentos de Cooperação de Defesa na CPLP: Exercícios, Formação e Pensamento Estratégico

A arquitetura de segurança e defesa da CPLP ganha concretude por meio de instrumentos operacionais que vão além dos textos normativos e das reuniões políticas. Entre esses instrumentos, destacam-se:

a) os exercícios militares conjuntos, em especial a série FELINO;

b) as iniciativas de formação, ensino e intercâmbio de pessoal militar e civil; e

c) a produção de pensamento estratégico e de conhecimento especializado, articulada por centros de estudo e redes acadêmicas.

## Exercícios FELINO como laboratório de interoperabilidade

Conforme já mencionado, os exercícios FELINO constituem o principal instrumento operacional da componente de defesa da CPLP. As Normas para a realização de exercícios militares da Comunidade definem esses exercícios como atividades conjuntas e combinadas, destinadas a preparar forças para o emprego em operações de apoio à paz, ajuda humanitária e gestão de crises, sob mandato de organizações internacionais (CPLP, 2013). Na prática, os exercícios FELINO assumem um papel de laboratório de interoperabilidade, no qual se testam procedimentos, doutrinas, estruturas de comando e controlo e capacidades logísticas dos Estados-membros.

Estudos de Bernardino e Leal (2011) sublinham que a série FELINO foi concebida desde o início como eixo estruturante da cooperação de defesa na CPLP, por permitir treinar, em contexto multinacional, um Estado-Maior de Força de Tarefa Conjunta e Combinada. O modelo de alternância entre exercício de carta (planejamento em posto de comando) e exercício com forças no terreno possibilita combinar custos relativamente controlados com a experiência prática de desdobramento de meios. Ao longo dos anos, cenários de crise humanitária, de conflito interno e de instabilidade regional têm sido utilizados para simular missões típicas de operações de paz, com foco na proteção de civis, na coordenação civil-militar e na logística em ambiente austero (BRASIL, 2014).

Do ponto de vista específico do eixo Brasil–Portugal, os exercícios FELINO funcionam como espaço privilegiado de liderança compartilhada. Ambos os países se revezam na condição de nação anfitriã e na condução do Estado-Maior da Força Tarefa, trazendo consigo experiência acumulada em operações sob égide das Nações Unidas e da União Europeia. Estudos sobre a evolução dos exercícios indicam que, em diversas edições, a participação brasileira e portuguesa foi decisiva para garantir a massa crítica de meios e

quadros necessária ao cumprimento dos objetivos de treino (Bernardino; Leal, 2011; Rizzi; Cruzichi, 2017).

Além do treino propriamente dito, exercícios multinacionais tendem a gerar efeitos relacionais que facilitam a coordenação em crises, ao favorecerem confiança e redes pessoais entre participantes (CENTER FOR ARMY LESSONS LEARNED, 2015, p. 12; HYMAN, 2021, p. 25). No plano técnico-operacional, o FELINO estrutura ciclos recorrentes de planeamento e condução (com rotinas de comando e controlo, comunicações, logística e coordenação civil-militar) que, pela repetição, reduzem fricções e custos de coordenação e criam compatibilidades mínimas de procedimentos, com impactos práticos sobre a interoperabilidade (DEFESA/CPLP, s/d; EMGFA, 2024; NATO, 2023).

No plano institucional, as Normas para a realização de exercícios militares no âmbito da CPLP fornecem referenciais e requisitos comuns que balizam a preparação e a execução, favorecendo a padronização progressiva de práticas. As lições aprendidas são sistematizadas em relatórios e, em alguns casos, transformadas em estudos publicados pelo CAE da CPLP (CAE/CPLP) e por instituições nacionais de ensino militar, contribuindo para o desenvolvimento de doutrina comum e de referências operacionais compartilhadas (CPLP, 2013; BRASIL, 2014; CAE/CPLP, 2020; BERNARDINO; RIZZI, 2023).

## Formação, ensino e intercâmbio de quadros militares e civis

Outro pilar da cooperação de defesa na CPLP é a formação de quadros. A literatura especializada destaca que Brasil e Portugal desempenham papel central nesse domínio, ao oferecerem vagas em cursos de altos estudos militares, escolas de Estado-Maior, cursos de aperfeiçoamento e estágios de especialização para oficiais e praças dos demais Estados-membros (Prazeres, 2019; Rizzi; Cruzichi, 2017).

No caso brasileiro, instituições como a ESG, o IMM/ECEME, a Escola de Guerra Naval (EGN) e as escolas de formação das Forças Armadas recebem, há décadas, militares de países africanos de língua portuguesa, em especial Angola, Moçambique, Cabo Verde e São Tomé e Príncipe. Essa formação inclui não apenas aspectos técnico-militares, mas também conteúdos de geopolítica, estratégia, logística e planejamento, contribuindo para a difusão de uma cultura estratégica relativamente convergente no espaço lusófono (Pereira, 2016; Prazeres, 2019).

Em Portugal, o Instituto Universitário Militar (IUM), o Instituto de Defesa Nacional (IDN), a Academia Militar, a Escola Naval e a Academia da Força Aérea exercem papel análogo, oferecendo cursos e estágios a oficiais de países da CPLP, inclusive brasileiros. A presença desses militares em cursos de Estado-Maior, em mestrados e em pós-graduações contribui para a circulação de ideias e para a construção de redes de contato profissionais entre oficiais dos diversos Estados-membros, reforçando a capacidade da comunidade de pensar conjuntamente problemas de segurança e defesa (Azevedo; Bernardino, 2015; Bernardino; Rizzi, 2023).

A cooperação em formação não se limita ao nível militar estrito. Programas e instrumentos de cooperação acadêmica e de bolsas têm viabilizado a circulação de estudantes dos países africanos lusófonos para universidades brasileiras e portuguesas em cursos de pós-graduação, por meio de mecanismos como o Programa de Estudantes-Convênio de Pós-Graduação (PEC-PG) e os programas de bolsas do Camões, I.P., bem como por acordos de cooperação interinstitucional entre universidades (CAPES, s/d; CAMÕES, I.P., s/d; PORTUGAL, 2023; ULISBOA, s/d). A partir dessa evidência de fluxo e cooperação institucional, o artigo infere que, na prática, a presença desses estudantes tende a se concentrar de modo relevante em áreas próximas aos estudos estratégicos, relações internacionais e, em especial, agendas atlânticas e de segurança marítima, o que pode contribuir para a formação de elites civis e militares com maior familiaridade com a CPLP e ampliar a base social de sustentação da componente de defesa.

## Produção de pensamento estratégico e redes de pesquisa

A dimensão de pensamento estratégico constitui o terceiro eixo de instrumentos de cooperação de defesa da CPLP. O já referido CAE/CPLP desempenha função central nesse campo, ao promover seminários, grupos de estudo e publicações que abordam temas como segurança marítima, operações de paz, terrorismo, criminalidade transnacional e impactos das mudanças climáticas sobre a segurança (CAE/CPLP, 2020).

De acordo com Azevedo e Bernardino (2015, p.28), o CAE/CPLP representa um esforço deliberado de institucionalizar uma comunidade epistêmica lusófona em defesa, na qual especialistas civis e militares dos Estados-membros produzem diagnósticos e propostas de política que alimentam as decisões das instâncias políticas da componente de defesa. A Revista Estratégica, publicada pelo Centro, é um dos veículos dessa produção, reunindo artigos de autores de diferentes países da CPLP e fortalecendo um vocabulário comum sobre ameaças, riscos e oportunidades no espaço atlântico lusófono. CAE/CPLP (2020)

Paralelamente, multiplicam-se iniciativas de cooperação acadêmica e de pesquisa conjunta envolvendo instituições como o Instituto de Defesa Nacional (IDN), o Instituto Universitário Militar (IUM), a ESG, o IMM, a EGN e universidades públicas de Brasil, Portugal e países africanos de língua portuguesa. A coletânea "25 anos de cooperação de defesa na CPLP", coordenada por Bernardino e Rizzi (2023), é um exemplo emblemático desse esforço, ao reunir contribuições de autores de todos os Estados-membros sobre a trajetória, os avanços e os desafios da componente de defesa.

Trabalhos como os de Prazeres (2019), Rizzi e Cruzichi (2017) e Visentini e Pereira (2014) mostram que essa produção intelectual cumpre, pelo menos, três funções: a) sistematizar a experiência acumulada de cooperação em defesa na CPLP; b) fornecer subsídios para a formulação de documentos estruturantes, como a "Identidade da CPLP no Domínio da Defesa"; e c) alimentar o debate público e acadêmico sobre o papel da comunidade na segurança do Atlântico Sul e de outras regiões de interesse.

Por fim, merece destaque a participação crescente de autores brasileiros e portugueses em redes de pesquisa que articulam a CPLP a outros arranjos regionais, como a

ZOPACAS, a União Africana e a União Europeia. Esses estudos ajudam a situar a Componente de Defesa Da CPLP no contexto mais amplo das transformações da ordem internacional, reforçando o entendimento de que a comunidade pode funcionar como ponte entre o Norte e o Sul globais no domínio da segurança e defesa.

## Limites, Lacunas e Oportunidades para a consolidação da CPLP como Espaço de Segurança

A análise da arquitetura de segurança e defesa da CPLP, do eixo Brasil–Portugal e dos principais instrumentos de cooperação permite identificar um conjunto de limites e lacunas que condicionam a consolidação da comunidade como espaço de segurança, mas também um conjunto de oportunidades ainda pouco exploradas.

## Assimetria de capacidades e prioridades externas

Um primeiro limite estrutural reside na assimetria de capacidades entre os Estados-membros. Brasil e Portugal concentram a maior parte dos meios navais, aéreos e de projeção expedicionária relevantes para Operações de Paz[10], segurança marítima e apoio a crises. Os demais países, em particular os africanos de língua portuguesa e Timor-Leste, enfrentam severas restrições orçamentárias, de pessoal e de infraestrutura, o que limita sua capacidade de participar de forma continuada em exercícios, missões e iniciativas mais ambiciosas (Bernardino; Leal, 2011; Rizzi; Cruzichi, 2017).

Do ponto de vista político-estratégico, essa assimetria se combina com prioridades externas distintas. Portugal precisa conciliar a CPLP com sua inserção prioritária no eixo euro-atlântico (OTAN e União Europeia), em um contexto de exigências crescentes de contribuição para operações e capacidades comuns europeias. O Brasil, por sua vez, equilibra a CPLP com outros vetores de atuação externa, como os BRICS, o G20, a ZOPACAS, a própria América do Sul, além de lidar com ciclos internos de maior ou menor internacionalismo (Miyamoto, 2009; Farias; Alves, 2020). Em ambos os casos, a CPLP tende a ocupar posição intermediária na hierarquia de prioridades, o que se traduz em flutuações de engajamento.

Análises de Rizzi (2019, 2025) destacam que, embora Brasil e Portugal sejam reconhecidos como lideranças naturais na Componente de Defesa, essa liderança é marcada por intermitências e assimetrias: ora um país assume protagonismo maior, por exemplo na proposição de documentos estruturantes e na dinamização do CAE/CPLP; ora o outro lidera iniciativas específicas, como projetos de cooperação técnico-militar em

[10] conjunto de missões autorizadas pela Organização das Nações Unidas para apoiar a transição de situações de conflito para a paz, combinando presença de militares, polícia e componentes civis, com tarefas definidas caso a caso. No âmbito da ONU, essas operações são estabelecidas com base em mandatos do Conselho de Segurança e podem envolver, entre outras atividades, proteção de civis, apoio a processos políticos e fortalecimento institucional. Disponível em: https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/what-is-peacekeeping; https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mandates-and-legal-basis-peacekeeping. Acesso em: 12 fev. 2026.

África. A ausência de um mecanismo institucional que estabilize e distribua responsabilidades de forma mais clara faz com que a agenda de defesa da CPLP seja sensível às mudanças de governo, às crises internas e às pressões externas sobre os dois polos.

## Lacunas institucionais e de implementação

Além das assimetrias materiais e de prioridades, há lacunas institucionais e de implementação que limitam a efetividade da arquitetura de segurança e defesa. A primeira delas diz respeito ao caráter essencialmente intergovernamental, sem mecanismos de decisão supranacionais ou estruturas permanentes com mandato para coordenar, em tempo integral, a execução de planos e decisões, o que é coerente com a natureza da CPLP, mas reduz a capacidade de resposta rápida e de planejamento de médio e longo prazo (Bernardino; Leal, 2011).

Outra lacuna recorrente é a distância entre o nível declaratório e o nível operacional. Documentos como o Protocolo de Cooperação no Domínio da Defesa e a "Identidade da CPLP no Domínio da Defesa" estabelecem princípios ambiciosos, mas sua implementação depende, em grande medida, de decisões orçamentárias e administrativas tomadas em âmbito nacional. Em períodos de restrição fiscal ou de reorientação política interna, compromissos assumidos em nível comunitário tendem a ser postergados, reduzidos ou simplesmente não executados (Azevedo; Bernardino, 2015; Prazeres, 2019).

Há, ainda, uma lacuna entre a centralidade atribuída ao Atlântico Sul nos discursos e a densidade das práticas concretas de cooperação no domínio marítimo. Embora o discurso sobre segurança marítima, pirataria, crime organizado transnacional e proteção de infraestruturas críticas esteja presente em documentos e declarações, a cooperação efetiva em áreas como partilha de informações marítimas, patrulha conjunta, desenvolvimento de capacidades de guarda-costeira e proteção de cabos submarinos permanece fragmentada e dependente, muitas vezes, de iniciativas bilaterais ou de projetos financiados por terceiros (Visentini; Pereira, 2014; Pereira, 2016).

A dimensão industrial e tecnológica da defesa constitui outra lacuna importante. Apesar do potencial de complementaridade entre segmentos da base industrial de defesa brasileira e capacidades industriais em Portugal, a CPLP não dispõe, até o momento, de instrumentos robustos para estimular projetos conjuntos, transferência de tecnologia ou integração em cadeias de valor em defesa. A cooperação industrial permanece, em grande parte, tratada bilateralmente e condicionada por regimes de controle de exportações de países extra lusófonos, o que limita sua projeção para o conjunto da comunidade.

## Oportunidades para o aprofundamento da agenda comum de defesa

Apesar desses limites, a análise permite identificar oportunidades relevantes para o aprofundamento da agenda comum de defesa da CPLP, especialmente se o eixo Brasil–Portugal for mobilizado de forma mais estratégica e coordenada.

Uma primeira oportunidade reside na consolidação do Atlântico Sul como foco temático privilegiado. A convergência entre a visão brasileira do Atlântico Sul como eixo central de sua política de defesa e a percepção portuguesa da CPLP como ponte atlântica entre Europa, África e América do Sul cria espaço para iniciativas conjuntas em segurança marítima, combate a ilícitos transnacionais, proteção de infraestruturas offshore e cooperação em busca e salvamento (Visentini; Pereira, 2014; Antunes et Al., 2018). O desenvolvimento de projetos de vigilância marítima compartilhada, de centros regionais de coordenação e de exercícios específicos para incidentes no mar poderia fortalecer a relevância prática da comunidade.

Ao tratar da dimensão marítima, destaca-se que essa agenda ganha densidade quando é lida à luz da convergência entre diretivas estratégicas recentes de Portugal e do Brasil para o mar, tal como interpretadas por Araújo (2024b), que sublinha o papel do mar como eixo de desenvolvimento sustentável e de segurança para ambos os países. Nessa perspectiva, a CPLP pode evoluir de mera comunidade de afinidades histórico-culturais para um verdadeiro pivô de governança marítima, articulando capacidades navais, científicas e econômicas dos seus membros para enfrentar ameaças transnacionais, em especial no Golfo da Guiné e no Atlântico Sul mais amplo. De acordo com o autor, essa potencialização da vertente marítima convive com o risco de uma dependência excessiva de potências extrarregionais no domínio da defesa e das infraestruturas estratégicas, o que reforça a necessidade de que o eixo Brasil–Portugal seja utilizado para negociar parcerias equilibradas, preservando a autonomia decisória dos demais Estados-membros e evitando vulnerabilidades de longo prazo (Araújo, 2024b).

Uma segunda oportunidade decorre do capital humano já acumulado nas áreas de formação e pensamento estratégico. O grande número de oficiais e civis formados em escolas de altos estudos militares e programas de pós-graduação em Brasil e Portugal, bem como a rede de pesquisadores associada ao CAE/CPLP e a instituições como a ESG, o IMM/ECEME, o IUM e o IDN, oferece base para a construção de uma comunidade epistêmica estável em defesa. Essa comunidade pode ser mobilizada para produzir avaliações periódicas de ameaças e capacidades, propor roteiros de cooperação e acompanhar a implementação de decisões, contribuindo para reduzir o hiato entre discurso e prática (Azevedo; Bernardino, 2015; Prazeres, 2019; Bernardino; Rizzi, 2023).

Uma terceira oportunidade refere-se à possibilidade de articular a CPLP com outros arranjos regionais e multilaterais. Trabalhos recentes sugerem que a comunidade pode funcionar como ponte entre iniciativas da União Europeia, da União Africana, da Comunidade Econômica dos Estados da África Ocidental (CEDEAO) e da ZOPACAS, especialmente em temas de segurança marítima, combate ao terrorismo e operações de paz (Pereira, 2016; Rizzi; Cruzichi, 2017). Nesse contexto, o eixo Brasil–Portugal poderia

ser utilizado para aproximar agendas europeias e africanas das prioridades do Atlântico Sul, evitando a fragmentação de esforços.

Por fim, uma oportunidade relevante, ainda incipiente, encontra-se na possibilidade de desenvolver projetos-piloto em nichos específicos de cooperação em defesa, mais viáveis do ponto de vista financeiro e tecnológico, como ciberdefesa, desminagem, segurança de infraestruturas críticas e capacitação de forças de segurança marítima costeira. Esses nichos permitem combinar expertise disponível em Portugal e no Brasil com necessidades concretas de países africanos da CPLP, gerando ganhos tangíveis para todos os envolvidos e conferindo maior legitimidade à componente de defesa.

Nesse quadro, o eixo Brasil–Portugal aparece, ao mesmo tempo, como parte do problema e parte da solução: se, por um lado, a assimetria de capacidades e as prioridades externas concorrentes restringem o alcance da cooperação, por outro, o potencial de mobilização de recursos, conhecimento e influência política desses dois países oferece base concreta para a construção gradual de um espaço de segurança lusófono mais denso, desde que haja vontade política e mecanismos institucionais adequados para aproveitar as oportunidades identificadas.

## Considerações Finais

A análise desenvolvida ao longo do artigo permitiu sustentar a hipótese de que a CPLP dispõe de condições objetivas para ser concebida como um "espaço de segurança", ainda que esse estatuto permaneça em construção e condicionado a variáveis políticas, econômicas e institucionais. O argumento central foi que o eixo Brasil–Portugal funciona como vetor estruturante dessa agenda, ao articular capacidades militares, massa crítica acadêmica e instrumentos diplomáticos capazes de irradiar normas, práticas e projetos de cooperação para o conjunto dos Estados-membros.

Em primeiro lugar, a reconstrução da trajetória normativa e institucional da cooperação em defesa na CPLP mostrou que a Comunidade evoluiu de um fórum predominantemente político-diplomático para um arranjo com arquitetura própria de segurança e defesa. A consolidação do Protocolo de Cooperação no Domínio da Defesa, a criação do CAE/CPLP e a institucionalização de instâncias como o SPAD e as Reuniões de Ministros da Defesa evidenciam a existência de um "núcleo duro" de governança em defesa, ainda que de caráter essencialmente cooperativo e não integrador.

Em segundo lugar, o exame das estratégias nacionais de defesa de Brasil e Portugal, associado às suas linhas de atuação no Atlântico Sul e no Atlântico Euro-Africano, indicou um nível significativo de convergência de percepções estratégicas. Ambos os países identificam o mar como eixo estruturante de sua inserção internacional, valorizam a projeção para a África e reconhecem a CPLP como plataforma privilegiada para articular interesses comuns em segurança marítima, capacitação de forças e construção de confiança mútua. Essa convergência, todavia, convive com assimetrias de capacidades, prioridades domésticas flutuantes e diferentes ritmos de engajamento político.

Em terceiro lugar, o mapeamento dos instrumentos de cooperação, com destaque para os exercícios FELINO, as iniciativas de formação conjuntas e a produção de pensamento estratégico, revelou que a CPLP produz efeitos concretos em termos de interoperabilidade, circulação de doutrina e socialização de elites militares. Esses mecanismos não apenas reforçam a confiança entre as Forças Armadas dos Estados-membros, mas também permitem experimentar respostas coordenadas a cenários de crise humanitária, operações de paz e ameaças transnacionais no espaço atlântico.

Por outro lado, a discussão sobre limites e assimetrias demonstrou que a consolidação da CPLP como espaço de segurança enfrenta obstáculos relevantes. Entre eles, sobressaem a persistência de restrições orçamentárias e de capacidades militares em vários Estados-membros; a sobreposição com outras agendas regionais e multilaterais; a oscilação da prioridade atribuída à CPLP nas políticas externas de Brasil e Portugal; e a sensibilidade de alguns regimes políticos a agendas normativas vinculadas a democracia, direitos humanos e Estado de Direito. Esses fatores reduzem a previsibilidade da cooperação, fragmentam iniciativas e dificultam a passagem de uma lógica predominantemente declaratória para compromissos mais vinculantes.

Ainda assim, o balanço apresentado neste trabalho sugere que há uma "janela de oportunidade" para o aprofundamento da agenda de defesa comum na CPLP. A centralidade crescente do Atlântico Sul e das rotas atlânticas alargadas para cadeias energéticas, minerais e alimentares; a pressão por maior segurança marítima e proteção de infraestruturas críticas; e a necessidade de respostas cooperativas a ameaças híbridas e ilícitos transnacionais criam incentivos adicionais para a coordenação entre os Estados-membros. Nesse contexto, o eixo Brasil–Portugal pode atuar como catalisador, desde que conjugue liderança compartilhada, sensibilidade às assimetrias internas da Comunidade e abertura à participação efetiva dos demais membros.

Como desdobramento, o artigo indica três linhas de ação estratégicas para reforçar a CPLP como espaço de segurança:

a) aprofundar a articulação entre os documentos de defesa nacionais e os instrumentos de cooperação da Comunidade, de modo a transformar afinidades discursivas em compromissos operacionais mais claros. Uma oportunidade real de transformar afinidades discursivas em compromissos operacionais é estabelecer, no âmbito da Defesa/CPLP, um mecanismo simples de alinhamento entre os documentos nacionais de defesa e os instrumentos da Comunidade, traduzindo objetivos convergentes em entregáveis verificáveis. Na prática, isso pode ser feito por meio de uma matriz de correspondência (documentos nacionais/instrumento CPLP/produto operacional), culminando na definição de um pacote mínimo de interoperabilidade associado ao ciclo do Exercício FELINO, com procedimentos padronizados de comando e controlo, comunicações, logística e coordenação civil-militar, revistos a cada edição com base em lições aprendidas sistematizadas pelo CAE/CPLP.

b) densificar o pilar marítimo da CPLP, com ênfase em segurança marítima, proteção ambiental, combate a ilícitos e desenvolvimento de capacidades navais e de guarda-costeira, articulando iniciativas de Brasil e Portugal com as prioridades dos parceiros

africanos. Um exemplo factível para densificar o pilar marítimo da CPLP é criar um programa plurianual de capacitação e resposta no Atlântico Sul, organizado por módulos curtos e *demand-driven*, combinando treino, assistência técnica e exercícios de mesa voltados a tarefas de guarda-costeira. Brasil e Portugal podem coordenar, com os parceiros africanos, um ciclo anual que inclua 1) formação em consciência situacional marítima e procedimentos de patrulha e inspeção, 2) protocolos operacionais para busca e salvamento, resposta a derrames e proteção ambiental costeira, e 3) práticas de cooperação no combate a ilícitos marítimos (como pesca ilegal, tráfico, inclusive humano e contrabando), com metas simples e mensuráveis (equipes treinadas, procedimentos comuns adotados e exercícios realizados), ajustadas às capacidades e prioridades nacionais de cada Estado-membro.

c) Consolidar uma comunidade epistêmica luso-afro-brasileira em defesa, capaz de produzir diagnósticos compartilhados, cenários prospectivos e propostas de políticas que alimentem tanto a tomada de decisão político-militar quanto o debate público. Um exemplo factível para consolidar uma comunidade epistêmica luso-afro-brasileira em defesa é institucionalizar uma "rede de análise" ligada ao CAE/CPLP, com calendário regular e produtos padronizados, capaz de transformar pesquisas dispersas em insumos úteis à decisão. Na prática, essa rede pode funcionar com grupos temáticos mistos (civis e militares) e entregas semestrais, como um diagnóstico conjunto de riscos e tendências, cenários prospectivos de curto e médio prazo e um conjunto enxuto de opções de política (*policy briefs*) para os Ministros da Defesa, complementados por relatórios públicos sintéticos que ampliem a transparência e o debate qualificado sobre segurança e defesa no espaço lusófono.

Por fim, a agenda de pesquisa permanece aberta. Estudos futuros podem, por exemplo, aprofundar a comparação entre a CPLP e outros arranjos de segurança regionais; avaliar empiricamente o impacto dos exercícios FELINO na capacidade de resposta conjunta a crises; ou analisar, em maior detalhe, como as mudanças recentes na política externa e de defesa de Brasil e Portugal reconfiguram o potencial da Comunidade para atuar como espaço de segurança. Ao propor uma leitura que combina dimensões normativas, institucionais e estratégicas, o artigo pretende contribuir para esse esforço coletivo de compreensão e de construção de uma agenda de defesa comum no universo lusófono.

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# DECODING DIPLOMATIC NARRATIVES: CHINA'S POLITICAL DISCOURSE WITH AFRICAN PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING COUNTRIES – A FOCUS ON ANGOLA

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## Abstract

This study contributes to a broader research project examining China's high-level political discourse (HLPD) with Portuguese-speaking countries (PSCs), with the present study focusing specifically on the Republic of Angola. Previous analyses within the project have addressed China's engagements with Portugal and Brazil (Peng et al., 2025). Political discourse serves as a strategic tool through which leaders shape public perceptions of foundational principles, diplomatic priorities, and policy orientations - an approach that is explicitly articulated in Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy. As China's Head of State, Xi Jinping has consistently emphasized the construction of a narrative system aimed at enhancing the country's international communication capacity and projecting a comprehensive national image. The Annual Report on the Development of Cooperation between China and Other Countries (2017–2019) documents a marked intensification of high-level exchanges between China and PSCs. Against this setting, the present study investigates China's HLPD in its diplomatic engagements with Angola, representing the African PSCs within the broader project framework. The overall research design categorizes PSCs into three regional groupings: Ibero-American, Asian, and African. Angola is examined as a case study within the African grouping. This study draws on official Chinese sources, primarily the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and analyses English-language translations of high-level statements and communications. A total of 23 high-level political communication events (HLPCEs) between China and Angola - featuring President Xi Jinping, former Premier Li Keqiang, and Foreign Minister Wang Yi -were examined. These events, spanning from March 2013 to October 2022, were subjected to a discourse-semiotic analysis to decode their textual content and identify recurring narrative elements. The findings reveal a consistent emphasis on mutual and sustainable cooperation, particularly in the domains of trade and technology, alongside efforts to foster interpersonal ties and joint development. The analysis also highlights a discernible trend toward the deepening of bilateral relations between China and Angola. The study is structured as follows: (1) Introduction; (2) Literature Review; (3) Critical Discourse Analysis; (4) Methodology; (5) Discussion and Findings; and (6) Conclusion..

## Keywords

Angola, China, Political Discourse, Semiotics, International Relations, Portuguese-speaking Countries.

## Resumo

Este estudo contribui para um projeto de investigação mais amplo que examina o discurso político de alto nível (DPAN) entre a China e os países de língua portuguesa (PLP), sendo o presente estudo focado especificamente na República de Angola. Análises anteriores no âmbito do projeto abordaram o envolvimento da China com Portugal e Brasil (Peng et al., 2025). O discurso político constitui uma ferramenta estratégica por meio da qual dirigentes moldam percepções públicas sobre princípios fundamentais, prioridades diplomáticas e orientações políticas - uma abordagem explicitamente articulada no Pensamento de Xi Jinping sobre a Diplomacia. Na qualidade de Chefe de Estado, Xi Jinping tem enfatizado de forma consistente a construção de um sistema narrativo destinado a reforçar a capacidade de comunicação internacional do país e a projetar uma imagem nacional abrangente. O Relatório sobre o desenvolvimento da cooperação entre a China e outros estados (2017–2019) - documenta uma intensificação das relações bilaterais marcada das trocas de alto nível entre a China e os PLP. Nesse contexto, o presente estudo investiga o DPAN da China nas suas interações diplomáticas com Angola, representando o grupo africano de países de língua portuguesa no âmbito do projeto mais amplo. O desenho geral da investigação categoriza os

PLP em três agrupamentos regionais: ibero-americano, asiático e o africano. Angola é analisada como estudo de caso dentro do agrupamento africano. Este estudo baseia-se em fontes oficiais chinesas, principalmente do Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros, e analisa traduções para a língua inglesa de declarações e comunicações de alto nível. No total, foram examinados 23 eventos de comunicação política de alto nível (ECPAN) entre a China e Angola - envolvendo o Presidente Xi Jinping, o ex Primeiro Ministro Li Keqiang e o Ministro dos Negócios Estrangeiros Wang Yi. Estes eventos, decorridos entre março de 2013 e outubro de 2022, foram submetidos a uma análise discursivo semiótica para decifrar o conteúdo textual e identificar elementos narrativos recorrentes. Os resultados revelam uma ênfase consistente na cooperação mútua e sustentável, particularmente nos domínios do comércio e da tecnologia, bem como esforços para promover laços interpessoais e o desenvolvimento conjunto. A análise também evidencia uma tendência discernível para o aprofundamento das relações bilaterais entre a China e Angola. O artigo estrutura se da seguinte forma: (1) Introdução; (2) Revisão da Literatura; (3) Análise Crítica do Discurso; (4) Metodologia; (5) Discussão e Resultados; e (6) Conclusão..

**Palavras-chave**

Angola, China, Discurso Político, Semiótica, Relações Internacionais, Países de Língua Portuguesa.

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# DECODING DIPLOMATIC NARRATIVES: CHINA'S POLITICAL DISCOURSE WITH AFRICAN PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING COUNTRIES – A FOCUS ON ANGOLA[1,2]

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## Introduction

The economic foundations of China–Angola relations are pivotal to understanding the broader political dynamics that underpin their bilateral engagement. Since the acceleration of Angola's post-war reconstruction in the early 2000s, oil-backed credit lines extended by China's policy banks have financed a substantial portion of the country's infrastructure development. This arrangement established a resource-for-infrastructure model that strategically linked Angola's export profile to China's energy security needs (Corkin, 2013). Consequently, trade - particularly in crude oil - emerged as the centrepiece of bilateral political discourse, accompanied by narratives emphasizing project contracting and macro-level economic cooperation.

By 2022, China accounted for over 40 percent of Angola's total exports, underscoring the enduring economic interdependence and the centrality of commodities in the relationship

[1] Acknowledgments: This study builds on the methodological framework developed in Peng, Leandro and Costa (2025), A semiotic decoding of political discourse between China and Portuguese-speaking countries, JANUS.NET, e-journal of international relations, 16(1), 297–323. While retaining the original analytical design and coding strategy, the present research applies this approach to a different national context - specifically, the Republic of Angola - within the broader project on China's high-level political discourse with Portuguese-speaking countries. The authors acknowledge the official institutional sources that provided the textual corpus for analysis and express their gratitude to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback. They also gratefully recognise the support of the University of Macau (China) through research grant SGR2023-00026-FSS, Geopolitics of Brazil and the South Atlantic, and the use of Microsoft Copilot to refine the academic English of this manuscript, in accordance with institutional ethical standards.

[2] Abbreviations: CDA — Critical Discourse Analysis; HLPCE — High-Level Political Communication Events; HLPD — High-Level Political Discourse; HLPN — High-Level Political Narrative; HoS — Head of State; PRC — People's Republic of China; PSCs — Portuguese-Speaking Countries

(International Trade Administration, 2024). Understanding how political discourse is shaped by these material foundations is essential for analysing China's strategic posture in Lusophone Africa and Angola's reciprocal diplomatic responses. This interdependence also informs the structure of diplomatic engagement, shaping discursive themes around development, economic diversification, and governance reform.

Building on this foundation, high-level visits and multilateral forums have served as key platforms for strategic signalling. During Premier Li Keqiang's 2014 visit to Luanda, Angola was characterized as an "important cooperative partner," with Li noting that "both sides are each other's opportunity for development" - a formulation that encapsulates official narratives of complementarity, mutual benefit, and practical cooperation (State Council of the PRC, 2014). Similar rhetorical patterns were evident during the 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), where President Xi Jinping and President João Lourenço reaffirmed their commitment to deepening cooperation and expanding exchanges across economic and social sectors (FOCAC, 2018; Xinhua, 2018). These diplomatic moments positioned Angola as a central actor within China's Africa policy and linked it to the institutional framework of China–Portuguese-speaking Countries cooperation, anchored in Macao - a platform established in 2003 to facilitate trade, finance, and policy coordination with Lusophone partners (Alden, 2017).

Beyond commodity trade, China's political discourse has increasingly incorporated themes such as people-to-people connectivity, technology transfer, and governance exchange. In his remarks at the 2018 FOCAC Summit, President Xi Jinping reiterated China's willingness to "deepen cooperation in all areas" - a phrase that, alongside recurring expressions like "mutual benefit" and "win-win," reflects a stable and strategic lexicon in China's high-level diplomatic rhetoric (FOCAC, 2018). While oil and infrastructure remain the economic core of the relationship, both Angolan and Chinese officials have increasingly emphasized industrialization, agricultural modernization, and economic diversification. These themes collectively reframe development cooperation as a long-term strategic agenda rather than a series of discrete projects (Xinhua, 2018). Such discursive shifts are significant, as they not only legitimize existing ties but also articulate future pathways for cooperation in terms that are intelligible to both governmental and public audiences.

This study therefore investigates how China articulates its high-level political discourse (HLPD) in its engagements with Angola, analysing the rhetorical strategies and thematic patterns that structure bilateral communication. The research window is March 2013 to October 2022, aligning with the first two terms of China's Head of State. The corpus consists of 23 high-level political communication events (HLPCEs) involving the Head of State, the Head of Government, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, drawn from official English-language sources and analysed using a discourse-semiotic approach to decode textual content and recurrent narrative elements. This Angola case is part of a broader project on China's HLPD with Portuguese-speaking countries and follows the same design and coding strategy. Section Two briefly reviews the China–Angola relationship and the theoretical frameworks that inform the analysis. Section Three presents the semiotic approach to interpreting HLPD and explains how the discourse is constructed within the

bilateral interaction framework. The conclusion synthesizes China and Angola's cooperative preferences, future development trends, and potential challenges for the partnership.

## Literature Review

The primary objective of this research is to examine how Chinese political actors strategically integrate multiple discursive elements to construct coherent political narratives, with particular emphasis on high-level political speeches.

Discourse extends beyond simple conversations: it represents a structured sequence of statements and devices that form what is known as a "discourse world" or "discourse ontology." Through carefully chosen language and terms, discoursers create a narrative framework in which ideas and information are organized to present a particular version of reality, which the audience (or receiver) interprets (Chilton, 2004). Political discourses are especially influential, as they organize and sometimes manipulate information, events, and actions into stories: defining who did what, to whom, when, where, and why. The elements of these stories, known as discourse referents, each serve a specific role within their context. Political discourses thus provide the foundation for narratives that advance particular political agendas. In other words, combining different discourses into a storyline creates a platform for building and promoting political narratives (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Costa, 2020 a, 2023). The power of discourse lies in its capacity to shape, steer, and influence public beliefs and perceptions of society and the world. Political discourses leverage this capacity to transform abstract concepts into reasoning and justifications for political actions (Chilton, 2004; Tannen et al., 2015). Such discourses can significantly affect public behavior and decision-making on issues such as national identity, security, societal structures, and governance. Empirical corpus-assisted analysis of longitudinal public texts demonstrates that sustained lexical patterning influences national representation over time, reinforcing the analytical view that political discourse functions as a site where meanings are structured and stabilized (Yu & Feng, 2025).

**Figure 1.** *The Formation of Political Narratives*

| Types of Political Discourses ▶ | Political Narrative ▶ | | Audiences ▶ Perceptions | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Congratulatory messages<br>Political speeches<br>Meetings<br>Editorials (newspapers and magazines)<br>Interviews (…) | Storyline<br>Discourse referents<br>"Good stories"<br>Ideologies<br>Power structures | Intended to foster positive public perspectives | Simplicity<br>Appealing<br>Positive<br>Seeking retribution,<br>Adherence and support | General Public<br>Decision-makers<br>Media Outlets |

Source: Authors

Narratives are carefully constructed assemblages of discourses, selectively organized into coherent, logical, and persuasive stories (Livholts & Tamboukou, 2015). Language and rhetoric are essential in shaping these narratives, weaving together events, characters, and settings to reveal layers of meaning beyond mere facts. As Hinchman and Hinchman (1997) and Riessman (2008) emphasize, the power of narratives lies in their ability to "select, organize, and emphasize various discourse elements," thereby influencing how an audience interprets and engages with the information presented.

Building on this, political narratives are particularly influential because they consist of logical sequences of political discourses that fit within specific contexts, often arranged chronologically. Driven by political intentions, they deploy characters, settings, and plots to simplify complex issues, shaping public perceptions and individual stances. Effective political narratives combine logical structure with emotional appeal, transforming political matters into compelling, accessible stories. By intertwining political discourses with narratives, political actors frame their messages in ways that resonate with audiences, generating strong effects on public opinion and decision-making.

Understanding the dynamic interplay between what politicians intend to communicate (the narrative) and the reality of political events requires careful narrative analysis (Shenhav, 2006, p. 247). As Costa (2020 b, p. 27) argues, "every political or social fact needs a story," and a well-constructed story can capture the audience's attention and provoke engagement. In the case of the Belt and Road Initiative (B&RI), narratives play a crucial role in shaping public perception, guiding how political events and intentions are communicated and understood, and ultimately driving responses and participation in political discourse.

While narrative analysis focuses on structure and storytelling, discourse analysis examines the language itself. Adding a semiotic perspective allows the analyst to explore the signs and symbols embedded in texts, revealing deeper, layered meanings. This combined approach is particularly effective for dissecting political narratives, as it uncovers the strategic use of symbols in shaping messages. This analytical convergence is also reflected in studies of strategic storytelling in government communication, which show that symbolic framing plays a central role in cultivating legitimacy and aligning audiences with foreign-policy agendas (Arceneaux, 2024). It clarifies how narratives are constructed, conveyed, and interpreted, and offers insight into political communication's role in shaping public opinion and the broader political landscape.

For example, Sengul's (2019) study of Australian right-wing populism demonstrates how linguistic choices and symbolic imagery create compelling narratives around "national identity," "otherness," and "crisis." These narratives shape public sentiment by positioning national identity against perceived threats, thereby mobilizing support and influencing political discourse. Similarly, El-Nawawy and Elmasry (2016) use semiotics to analyze the "strongman" leadership archetype, highlighting the interplay between visual and textual symbols. In China's high-level political communications, symbolic terms such as "prosperity," "harmony," "common destiny," and "(consultative) democracy" are frequently used to infuse Confucian and patriarchal ideals into political discourse. Corpus-

based analysis of Chinese diplomatic speeches further shows that the systematic repetition of official terminology contributes to processes of political legitimation and audience alignment (Zhang & Tang, 2024). These words tap into cultural values and social norms to enhance the speaker's appeal and legitimize authority. A semiotic lens enables the analyst to unravel these meanings, revealing the ideologies, power structures, and cultural frameworks that drive political narratives into action.

Ultimately, semiotic discourse analysis provides a comprehensive tool for understanding how political entities use language and symbols to shape meaning, establish authority, and influence societies. This approach deepens comprehension of the complex role that political rhetoric plays in shaping both the political landscape and public consciousness, as Costa (2020 a, pp. 27–28) argues:

> *"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 been used to examine the rhetoric of various political figures, including 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). Empirical corpus-based critical discourse analysis of English-language Chinese diplomatic speeches identifies recurring official lexicon as a structuring element in narrative construction (Lu & Zhou, 2024). Despite extensive research at the global level, political discourses and narratives in China remain underexplored. This study seeks to address this gap by shedding light on Chinese political communications. Specifically, the research conducts a qualitative analysis of Chinese political discourse in relation to Angola. The selected samples consist of political speeches, which serve as public declarations of political intent directed toward specific audiences. As a form of political discourse, these speeches can become central to the development of political narratives. By organizing these speech samples chronologically, the study illustrates how a comprehensive narrative emerges, considering a broader political context.

## Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) treats language as social practice that is both shaped by and constitutive of power relations and ideological commitments. It asks how texts position actors, authorize courses of action, and naturalize particular worldviews through recurring linguistic choices and argumentative structures (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Fairclough, 1992, 1995; van Dijk, 1993; van Leeuwen, 2008; Wodak & Meyer, 2001).

This approach is appropriate for high level political discourse because leaders' speeches, joint statements, and official media are not simple records of events. They are carefully designed interventions whose wording organizes expectations among domestic and foreign audiences, and whose uptake is mediated by institutional channels that lend authority and reach. Applications of Fairclough-inspired critical discourse analysis to state policy and institutional genres demonstrates how modality, evaluation, and intertextual framing operate together to articulate and legitimize governmental positions within broader political contexts (Gulestø et al., 2025).

Building on this vantage point, the present study reads interstate communication as patterned selections from a shared repertoire of terms and moves. In official Chinese sources, formulations such as "mutual respect", "win-win cooperation", "common development", and "non-interference" appear as more than stylistic flourishes. They function as signifiers that project roles for leaders and ministries, cue policy instruments, and prompt audiences to interpret bilateral engagement through a cooperative frame. A semiotic lens complements CDA by treating these tokens as signs with social functions and by asking how their repetition across events builds a recognizable storyline that is intelligible to multiple audiences (van Leeuwen, 2008). Related work has applied a semiotic reading to Chinese political communication with Portuguese-speaking partners, which underscores the value of integrating discourse analysis with attention to signs and symbols in official texts.

The Angola case requires situating discourse within a political economy that connects oil-anchored finance, large project contracting, and long-term development pledges. Scholarship on Angola's credit lines and construction sector explains how state policy, policy-bank lending, and enterprise activity became entwined during the reconstruction decade, creating institutional pathways through which official discourse about cooperation and development is made actionable (Alves, 2013; Corkin, 2012, 2013; Wolf, 2017). This structural configuration continues to shape Angola's fiscal and development landscape, as International Monetary Fund (2025) analysis underscores the economy's ongoing exposure to oil price volatility, while World Bank (2025) assessments foreground debt sustainability as a defining parameter of medium-term planning. These constraints delineate the material conditions under which political language is produced and circulated. Critical discourse analysis does not reduce texts to these conditions, yet it treats them as the context of production within which words like cooperation, enterprises, relations, and development can do legitimating work. This linking of textual form to institutional setting clarifies why high-level statements often pair abstract values with concrete vehicles such as investment promotion, enterprise participation, or specific cooperation mechanisms.

Operationally, the analysis draws on an Angola-specific corpus assembled from authoritative public sources in English, including statements and readouts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, official summit texts associated with the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation, and reports by Xinhua that consolidate leaders' remarks. The corpus is organized as high-level political communication events that involve the Head of State, the Head of Government, and the

Minister of Foreign Affairs during the window from March 2013 to October 2022. This structured repository, referred to as corpus of Chinese HLPD towards Angola, provides the unit of analysis for the CDA-semiotic reading in this study. As the corpus consists of English-language institutional texts, translation and circulation are incorporated into the analysis rather than assumed to be neutral processes of transfer (Zhao & Wang, 2025).

The procedure proceeds in two linked stages. First, it treats each event text as a purposeful artefact and codes lexical items that anchor roles, instruments, and goals in the discourse. Recurring tokens that function as signs are identified and grouped into thematic nodes, with attention to co-occurrence that indicates how tokens are bundled into familiar policy formulas. Second, it reads across events to reconstruct the higher order narrative that the texts assemble over time, asking how official news copy, summit declarations, and ministerial releases circulate the same repertoire to varied audiences. This design relies on reproducible coding of public documents and avoids any inference about hidden motives that cannot be grounded in the texts themselves. Such staged coding enables diachronic analysis of representational change through systematic lexical tracking (Yu & Feng, 2025).

Two clarifications arise from the research design. The first pertains to scope: the application of critical discourse analysis in this study is limited to examining the pragmatic functions of language in official sources. It does not extend to inferring authorial intent beyond what is explicitly conveyed in the texts. The second concerns sequencing: Section 2.1 outlines the analytical framework and source base but does not present empirical findings or interpretive trajectories. These are reserved for the subsequent analysis. This structure ensures that interpretation remains methodologically grounded, avoiding premature conclusions while situating the study firmly within the Angola-specific material and the institutional channels through which that material is produced and disseminated (FOCAC, 2018; MFA, 2014, 2015; Xinhua, 2018).

## Methodology

The study is structured in three distinct phases. First, data collection was conducted within a defined timeframe, followed by the encoding of selected texts into line codes. Second, high-level political discourse (HLPD) was analysed using grounded theory to identify dominant thematic patterns. Third, these HLPD codes were assembled to construct the overarching high-level political narrative (HLPN) (Table 1). This methodological design enables a systematic interpretation of bilateral communicative events. Through semiotic decoding of HLPD, the study uncovers recurring narrative structures and identifies areas of potential cooperation between China and Angola, thereby clarifying shared strategic objectives and plausible trajectories for future development. Such progression from coding to cross-event synthesis facilitates diachronic reconstruction of representation through systematic textual annotation (Yu & Feng, 2025).

## Step 1 Collecting and organizing sources of HLPN relating to High-Level Political Communicative Events (HLPCEs)

In this section, the analytical model used to examine China's political narratives toward Angola is outlined (Table 1). The aim is to standardize how events are sampled, categorized, and prepared for coding so that narrative patterns can be compared consistently across the research window.

Step 1A: The research period is March 2013 to October 2022, aligning with the first two terms of China's Head of State (HoS) (Figure 3). This window is appropriate for two reasons: first, China and Angola further consolidated their strategic partnership during these years under the broader framework of China–Africa cooperation; second, under Xi's leadership, China's external profile expanded, making it analytically relevant to observe how China's discourse was received among Portuguese-speaking African partners.

**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: The sample includes only HLPCEs featuring three core Chinese principals: HoS President Xi Jinping, former Head of Government Li Keqiang, and Foreign Minister Wang Yi—given their agenda-setting roles. Political relevance guided inclusion. The final Angola dataset contains 23 HLPCEs, capturing the breadth of high-level interaction. Illustrative entries include Xi's 2015 talks with President José Eduardo dos Santos, Wang Yi's 2018 joint press appearance with Minister of External Relations Manuel Domingos Augusto after talks in Luanda, and a 2022 exchange between Xi Jinping and President João Lourenço.

Step 1C: Records of bilateral engagement were compiled from authoritative Chinese websites in English, notably the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Xinhuanet. HLPCEs were classified as: (1) speeches and messages, (2) meetings, and (3) newspaper articles. This typology structures the corpus and supports consistent interpretation of China–Angola interactions across event types.

## Step 2 HLPD analysis of each HLPCE — Employing NVivo 14 for textual analysis, and transforming content of HLPCEs into HLPD textual codes (Table 1)

Step 2A: NVivo 14 was used for import, coding, and thematic visualization. Parent nodes were created for each period (for example, "Period 1: March 2013–March 2018," "Period 2: April 2018–October 2022"), with child nodes to capture finer categories such as "Cooperation," including sub-themes like "Global Cooperation" and "Practical Cooperation." Queries for word frequency and co-occurrence were run to surface recurrent lexemes, thereby refining theme boundaries and ensuring interpretive depth within the China–Angola narratives under review. NVivo-assisted coding facilitates transparent reduction and systematic documentation of analytical decisions in qualitative content analysis (Nicmanis, 2024).

Step 2B: Sentiment labels (positive, negative, neutral) were assigned to coded references. This layer enriches the analysis of both parent and child themes, allowing the study to track how tonal variation aligns with shifts in topic salience across events and periods.

Step 2C: Matrix coding queries generated periodized outputs—Period 1 (Table 2) and Period 2 (Table 3)—and a consolidated overview (Table 4) presented in the conclusion. This enables a granular view of theme intensity and sentiment across the two phases of the China–Angola discourse, highlighting change and continuity over time.

## Step 3 Decoding of HLPN via Semiotics

Step 3A: Discourse analysis is integrated with semiotics at both the text and narrative levels. Semiotic discourse analysis identifies meanings, symbols, and communicative devices within specific statements, while semiotic narrative analysis traces how these elements combine to form the overarching HLPN that structures China–Angola relations.

Step 3B: The final interpretive pass evaluates cooperation priorities, development pathways, and challenges in the relationship, and it outlines plausible directions for future engagement based on how the narrative is assembled and repeated across the corpus.

**Table 1.** Research Methodological Design

**(China → PSC: The Case of the Republic of Angola)**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Text Analysis**<br>Themes, patterns, meanings and language structures | → ↘ | **High Level Political Discourse Analysis (HLPD)**<br>The social and political decoding and relationships of the language: Audiences, keywords, figures of style, adaptation and | → ↗ | **High Level Political Narrative (HLPN) Identification**<br>The assembly the analysis of several discourses and unveil the story they tell all |

<table>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td colspan="2">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).</td><td></td><td>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)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Step 1 – Preparation:<br>Data Selection, Collection, Organization and Sources</td><td colspan="2">Step 2 –<br>HLPD Analysis of Each HLPCE</td><td>Step 3 –<br>Semiotic Decoding - The HLPN</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">1A:<br><u>Setting</u> the study timeline.</td><td rowspan="2">2A: <u>Identify</u> the keywords frequency in each HLPCE, to establish the theme correlation with the dominant message of the discourse.<br><br>2B: <u>Decoding</u> keywords adapted or not and its perceived impact in (1) Positive; (2) Neutral; (3) Negative.</td><td rowspan="2">Nvivo 14 Data Analysis Software</td><td rowspan="2">3A:<br>(ALL CE TOGETHER)<br>↧<br><u>Apply</u> the semiotic decoding of CE, to unveil the HLPN, as the result of the constructed sense of whole HLPD.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">1B:<br><u>Select</u> 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).</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">1C:<br><u>Identify</u> the HLPCE official sources in English.</td><td colspan="2">2C:<br><u>Evaluate</u> keywords in the political context.</td><td>3B:<br><u>Identify</u> the China's cooperative preference, future development tendency and challenges may meet during engagement with Portugal.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Source: Authors – Version 25.</td></tr>
</table>

## Discussion and Findings

This section analyses the thematic content of high-level political discourses (HLPDs) between China and Angola during the first two terms of President Xi Jinping's leadership (March 2013–March 2018 and April 2018–October 2022). Across this period, notable shifts are observable in key themes aligned with the three analytical perspectives outlined earlier. These shifts are systematically presented in Tables 2 and 3, which illustrate the evolving narrative structures and discursive priorities within bilateral engagements.

## Between March 2013 and March 2018

Across the first term of China's Head of State, the Angola corpus shows a tightly clustered lexicon around four parent themes: cooperation, enterprises, relations, and development shown in Table 2, with "cooperation" most salient (59 references; 19 positives, 40 neutral), followed by "enterprises" (42; 17 positives, 25 neutral), "development" (34; 11 positives, 23 neutral), and "relations" (21; 8 positives, 13 neutral). All four are cast in positive or neutral tones, underscoring a consistently affirming diplomatic register. This pattern, derived from NVivo matrix queries on 15 HLPCEs in Period 1, provides a comparable base for interpreting shifts in emphasis across periods.

Cooperation. The discourse positions cooperation as the master frame that organizes other motifs (enterprises, relations, development). In Johannesburg on December 4, 2015, Xi Jinping told President José Eduardo dos Santos that China–Angola ties were "at the best level in history," adding that both sides should "convert the consensus reached by the two heads of state into more impetus for win-win cooperation and common development." (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China [MFA], 2015). This formulation binds bilateral aims ("win-win") to a development telos ("common development"), a coupling that recurs in the period's neutral references to "China–Africa cooperation" and "bilateral cooperation." The prominence of this vocabulary is not purely rhetorical: Angola was one of the largest users of resource-backed credit during 2004–2018, with World Bank analysis noting that Africa's RBLs were concentrated in a handful of borrowers and that Angola accounted for nearly half of the identified total by value, linking cooperation discourse to large-ticket finance for infrastructure and oil-sector projects (Mihalyi, Hwang, Rivetti, & Cust, 2022). Together, the corpus and the finance evidence make cooperation the semantic hinge of Period 1: it frames goals (mutual benefit), instruments (policy-bank credit lines), and outcomes (development). (MFA, 2015; Mihalyi et al., 2022).

**Table 2.** Analysis on China and Angola HLPN from March 2013 to March 2018

| **Parent theme** | **Most frequently mentioned child themes** | **Total number of references** (among 15 events) | **Sentiment** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Positive | Negative | Neutral |
| Cooperation | China-Africa cooperation; bilateral cooperation; international cooperation; trade cooperation; win-win cooperation. | 59 | 19 | 0 | 40 |
| Enterprises | Chinese enterprises; financial institutions and enterprises; China-funded enterprises. | 42 | 17 | 0 | 25 |
| Relations | China-AU relations; China-Africa relations; bilateral relations. | 21 | 8 | 0 | 13 |
| Development | In-depth development; development partner; development overseas; social development; raw materials development. | 34 | 11 | 0 | 23 |

Source: Authors

Enterprises. Enterprise talks functions as the operational arm of the cooperation frame. During his Luanda visit (May 9, 2014), Premier Li Keqiang explicitly linked state-to-state cooperation to firm-level action: "The Chinese government supports capable and reputable Chinese enterprises to invest in Angola, participate in Angola's economic and social development and boost local employment" (The State Council of the PRC, 2014). In the same trip he met representatives of the local Chinese business community, reinforcing the idea that enterprises and financial institutions are the transmission belt of policy (Xinhua, 2014). Academic work clarifies the institutional mechanics behind this discourse: Angola's "Angola mode" of resource-backed credit knits together government, policy banks, and SOEs to deliver infrastructure for oil - an architecture that naturally surfaces "enterprises" in public statements (Corkin, 2013; Alves, 2013). Earlier sectoral studies show how Chinese contractors' presence created procurement channels and selective local linkages in construction, again mapping the discursive salience of enterprises to concrete project pipelines (Corkin, 2012). Read against Table 2, the frequent, mostly neutral references to "Chinese enterprises" and "financial institutions and enterprises" thus signal an implementation logic: cooperation is articulated at the political level; enterprises make it legible on the ground. (The State Council of the PRC, 2014; Xinhua, 2014; Corkin, 2013; Alves, 2013; Corkin, 2012).

Relations. References to relations legitimize this implementation with a narrative of strategic continuity. On arrival in Luanda (May 8, 2014), Li Keqiang called Angola "an important cooperative partner for China" and pledged to "expand cooperation areas… and

inject new impetus into the development of China–Angola relations" (MFA, 2014). The next year Xi's "best level in history" remark cast the relationship as both historically elevated and forward-looking (MFA, 2015). In semiotic terms, relations acts as the ethos-building layer: it stabilizes expectations (strategic partnership), widens scope (from oil to education, health, culture), and primes audiences for pragmatic cooperation while avoiding adversarial cues. The absence of negative sentiment in Table 2's relations node fits this ethos: the relational script furnishes the affective warrant for enterprise-led cooperation, but in a measured, low-temperature register. (MFA, 2014, 2015).

Development. Finally, development frames the purpose and yardstick of cooperation. In Luanda on January 14, 2018, Wang Yi pledged that China would "support Angola in advancing the strategy of economic diversification and industrialization," as well as "building up its capacity for independent development" (MFA, 2018). This aligns with Xi's 2015 emphasis on "common development," and with scholarly accounts showing how Chinese demand and construction activity fed domestic-market formation in Angola (e.g., building materials, beverages), particularly in the post-war reconstruction surge (Wolf, 2017). Large resource-backed facilities channeled to infrastructure and selected energy projects further embed development discourse into financing modalities (Mihalyi et al., 2022). That Table 2 codes most "development" references as neutral (with a substantial positive share) reflects a pragmatic, agenda-setting tone: development is both the promised dividend of cooperation and the referent that organizes diversification narratives beyond crude. (MFA, 2018; MFA, 2015; Wolf, 2017; Mihalyi et al., 2022).

## From April 2018 to October 2022

As shown in Table 3 for Period 2 and building directly on Section 5(1), the April 2018 to October 2022 window compacts eight high-level political communication events into six interlinked themes: "cooperation" remained the dominant theme (18 references), closely followed by "affairs" (13) which is a category encompassing international and internal affairs, while "relations", "development", "support", and "enterprises" appeared with moderate frequency. Notably, the sentiment of these discourses was overwhelmingly positive. Across the period, Chinese officials consistently struck an optimistic tone, highlighting mutual benefit and friendship. Negative sentiments were almost absent, with only a handful of references (under "support") carrying a critical connotation – largely in the context of rejecting external interference or emphasizing challenges to be overcome. Overall, the discourse in this second period projects confidence in the China–Angola partnership, framing it as a model of South–South engagement and a cornerstone of China's outreach to Africa.

**Table 3.** Period 2 (April 2018 to October 2022) China and Angola's HLPN Analysis

| **Parent theme** | **Most frequently mentioned child themes** | **Total number of References** (among 8 Events) | **Sentiment** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Positive | Negative | Neutral |
| Cooperation | China-Africa Cooperation; practical cooperation; bilateral cooperation; the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC); investment cooperation. | 18 | 9 | 0 | 9 |
| Affairs | International affairs; African countries' internal affairs | 13 | 12 | 0 | 1 |
| Relations | China-Angola relations; bilateral relations. | 8 | 6 | 0 | 2 |
| Development | Common development; social economic development. | 7 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| Support | Long-term support; public support. | 6 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| Enterprises | Chinese enterprises. | 5 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| Source: Authors | | | | | |

Cooperation supplies the grammar around which the other motifs are organized. At the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation and in subsequent readouts, leaders framed Angola as a key partner and pledged to deepen "practical cooperation" across trade, infrastructure, and investment. Xi Jinping stated that China is "confident of the future of bilateral cooperation" and urged both sides to "cement political mutual trust," converting optimism into an expectation of implementation (Xinhua News Agency, 2018). In this period, cooperation is not a free-standing value but a policy method that folds the other themes into its operational logic (FOCAC, 2018). The material basis for this confidence lies in the finance-and-contracting architecture that underwrote Angola's reconstruction. Scholars describe how oil-anchored credit lines and state-linked contractors formed the "Angola model," aligning ministries, policy banks, and enterprises in resource-for-infrastructure bargains that made cooperation legible in roads, power, housing, and logistics (Alves, 2013; Corkin, 2013). World Bank analysis shows Angola captured a large share of Sub-Saharan Africa's resource-backed loans, which helps explain the persistence of enterprise and investment tokens in official phrasing during 2018–2022 (Mihalyi, Hwang, Rivetti, & Cust, 2022). The discourse rarely rehearses loan mechanics, yet its repeated pairing of cooperation with investment and construction

signals the material pipelines through which political rapport becomes visible in projects and jobs.

Affairs rises to prominence by fusing respect for sovereignty with coordination in multilateral venues. In Beijing in 2018, Xi emphasized that China "firmly supports the people of African countries in opposing foreign interference, and [in] independently choosing their path of development," a formulation which Angolan leaders publicly welcomed (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China [MFA], 2018; Xinhua News Agency, 2018). The theme also looks outward: in 2020 Xi said China was ready to "closely coordinate and cooperate with the Angolan side on multilateral occasions and international affairs" to "jointly safeguard international fairness and justice" (MFA, 2020). Affairs thus elevates practice into doctrine and supplies a vocabulary that answers external criticism without naming critics.

References to relations are fewer than references to cooperation but carry cumulative pragmatic weight. Leaders repeatedly invoke the strategic partnership, stress continuity, and promise elevation. On the 2020 call, President Xi told President João Lourenço that "Angola is an important cooperative partner of China in Africa" and that China stood ready to "steer the direction of bilateral relations and take the China–Angola strategic partnership to a higher level" (MFA, 2020). Read semantically, relations functions as ethos: it stabilizes expectations, widens scope, and signals that the partnership is robust to shocks without recalibrating its premises.

Development acquires sharper definition as leaders reframe it from reconstruction to transformation. In January 2018, Wang Yi pledged that China would "firmly support Angola in exploring a development path suitable to its national conditions," including "advancing the strategy of economic diversification and industrialization" and "building up its capacity for independent development" (MFA, 2018). At FOCAC the same year and again in 2020, Xi linked cooperation instruments to Angola's plans, calling to "promote new development in practical cooperation between the two countries, and boost Angola's economic and social development" (MFA, 2020). External work is sober about localization and downstream linkages, yet it also documents domestic-market formation in sectors aligned with the official storyline (Wolf, 2017). In this corpus, development becomes the horizon against which the sufficiency of cooperation is judged (FOCAC, 2018; MFA, 2018).

Support fuses the political and economic strands and validates loyalty through reciprocal acts. Chinese statements promised that China would "firmly support Angola" across diversification, industrialization, and stability, while Angolan statements reciprocated with endorsements of China's positions on questions described as core interests (MFA, 2018, 2020). During the pandemic, the language of support anchored itself in observable deeds: Xinhua announced that China would "send [an] anti-epidemic medical expert team to Angola," a move that supplied concrete referents for a consistently positive tone (Xinhua, 2020). The few negative labels coded here target third-party obstacles rather than bilateral divergence, strengthening a back-to-back posture against external turbulence.

Enterprises appear as the on-the-ground agents that translate policy into outcomes, even if the node registers fewer mentions than in Period 1. Xi said China would encourage "competent Chinese enterprises to undertake investment cooperation in Angola," and Angolan leaders "welcome[d] more investment from Chinese enterprises in Angola," a reciprocal signal that links commercial activity to practical cooperation (MFA, 2020; Xinhua, 2020). Official texts begin to register quality and localization by praising job creation, industrial parks, and alignment with national needs. Independent research warns that some contractors can become enclaves with limited linkages, a concern Angola has tried to address through reform, which explains why statements pair investment language with training and sustainability (Corkin, 2012).

Seen as a system, the six themes assemble a single high-level political narrative rather than six parallel tracks. Cooperation supplies the grammar; affairs articulate doctrine and international posture; relations confer ethos and continuity; development provides the horizon against which sufficiency is judged; support demonstrates reciprocal commitment; enterprises furnish the mechanism that makes the story visible in projects and jobs. The sentiment profile is overwhelmingly affirmative, and the rare negative notes are aimed at unnamed externals. Read cumulatively, the storyline suggests a mature partnership that moves beyond oil-for-infrastructure toward a development alliance grounded in sovereignty and South–South solidarity.

The cumulative effect is to turn cooperation from a declaration into a program of action. Pledges to "promote new development in practical cooperation" and to "boost Angola's economic and social development" are coupled to support commitments to "firmly support Angola," and to affairs language that commits both sides to "closely coordinate … on multilateral occasions and international affairs" (MFA, 2018, 2020). In this composition, relations supply the stable frame within which development objectives and enterprise activity can be sequenced, portraying implementation not as ad hoc contracting but as an integrated pathway to common advancement.

Period 1 established a grammar of win-win cooperation and project-led rebuilding, Period 2 writes the next chapter, bundling sovereignty, multilateralism, and transformation into a more articulated script. Angola is cast as an "important cooperative partner," Chinese leaders voice certainty about the "future of bilateral cooperation," and both sides pledge to align instruments with national plans (Xinhua News Agency, 2018; MFA, 2020). These statements cue ministries, policy banks, and firms that the partnership's centre of gravity is shifting from quantity to quality. The corpus therefore records a forward-leaning narrative in which vocabulary, institutional channels, and enterprise activity are braided into a single storyline of common advancement.

In sum, the April 2018 to October 2022 storyline consolidates the earlier repertoire and broadens it into a full-spectrum partnership that integrates economic delivery with geopolitical signalling. The NVivo counts and sentiment labels, the authoritative quotations, and the supporting scholarship point in the same direction: a confident narrative that treats Angola as a long-term peer in China's Africa policy. In this sense, Period 2 reads as consolidation plus recalibration toward higher-value, locally embedded

growth and clearer joint positioning in global forums and rule-making arenas. As shown in Table 3, cooperation remains the master frame, affairs and relations furnish principles and ethos, and development, support, and enterprises provide the vehicles that make the story measurable in infrastructure, jobs, and capacity-building.

## Comparative Discussion

China–Angola high-level political discourse from March 2013 to October 2022 unfolds within a political-economy nexus that links oil-anchored finance, enterprise-led delivery, and an increasingly institutionalized strategic partnership. Authoritative statements by President Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, and Wang Yi consistently tie cooperation to development outcomes and political trust, for example, Xi urged both sides to "convert the consensus reached by the two heads of state into more impetus for win-win cooperation and common development," later committing to "promote new development in practical cooperation between the two countries, and boost Angola's economic and social development," while Wang Yi pledged that China would "firmly support Angola in exploring a development path suitable to its national conditions" and advance diversification and industrialization (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China [MFA], 2015, 2018, 2020). With this backdrop established, the next subsection reads the decade-level pattern reported in Table 4 before comparing Period 1 and Period 2 along the axes of economic cooperation and bilateral relations.

## Common Themes

This section sets the common-information baseline for March 2013–October 2022; as Table 4 shows, it is the consolidated NVivo matrix of all 23 high-level political communication events in the corpus and it enumerates the four anchor themes and their sentiment profile: cooperation (77 references), enterprises (47), development (41), and relations (29), all coded positive or neutral with no negatives, which furnishes the decade-level profile against which the period shifts are interpreted. Read semiotically, this is not an accident of phrasing but a communicative choice that normalizes the instruments of statecraft (investment promotion, contracting, trade facilitation, policy coordination) and reserves explicit affirmation for moments of reassurance, upgrade, or doctrine. In other words, Table 4 captures a calm center in which economic and political tokens point in the same direction and never contradict each other.

The co-occurrence logic embedded in these anchors is consistent. Cooperation names the work to be done; enterprises mark the transmission belt from pledges to projects; development specifies the horizon against which sufficiency is judged; relations supplies ethos and continuity. When Xi called ties "at the best level in history" and urged both sides to "convert the consensus reached by the two heads of state into more impetus for win-win cooperation and common development," the statement paired relations-as-ethos with cooperation-as-mandate and development-as-telos, all in one move (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China [MFA], 2015).

**Table 4.** Analysis on China and Angola's HLPN from March 2013 to October 2022

| **Common Parent theme** | **Most frequently mentioned child theme** | **Total number of References** (among 23 HLPCEs) | **Sentiment** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Positive | Negative | Neutral |
| Cooperation | China-Africa cooperation; bilateral cooperation; international cooperation. | 77 | 28 | 0 | 49 |
| Enterprises | Chinese enterprises. | 47 | 20 | 0 | 27 |
| Development | Social economic development. | 41 | 14 | 0 | 27 |
| Relations | China-Angola relations; China-Africa relations; bilateral relations. | 29 | 14 | 0 | 15 |

Source: Authors

When Wang Yi pledged to "firmly support Angola in exploring a development path suitable to its national conditions" and in "advancing the strategy of economic diversification and industrialization," support and development were locked together to define what worthwhile cooperation would mean going forward (MFA, 2018). And when President Xi told President João Lourenço in 2020 that both sides should "promote new development in practical cooperation between the two countries, and boost Angola's economic and social development," while also calling to "cement political mutual trust," the statement tied cooperation and development to relations as assurance (MFA, 2020).

The proportional story in Table 4 matters for comparison. Measured across the decade, cooperation contributes roughly two out of five anchor mentions, enterprises about one quarter, development about one fifth, and relations the remainder. That hierarchy remains intact across both periods even as emphases change. The period matrices show that the cooperation–enterprises–development–relations braid is delivery-heavy in Period 1 and quality-oriented in Period 2, but the aggregate never flips into conflictual language. Leaders' phrasing keeps the same repertoire while shifting the centre of gravity. For example, Li Keqiang's Luanda message that "the Chinese government supports capable and reputable Chinese enterprises to invest in Angola, participate in Angola's economic and social development and boost local employment" welds cooperation, enterprises, and development into a single operational script (The State Council of the PRC, 2014). Later, President Xi's promise to encourage "competent Chinese enterprises to undertake investment cooperation in Angola," and President Lourenço's welcome of "more investment from Chinese enterprises in Angola," reposition the

enterprise node from EPC contracting toward investment composition and local value capture (MFA, 2020; Xinhua, 2020). The aggregate numbers reflect that rhetorical pivot without breaking the anchor hierarchy.

Table 4 also clarifies how doctrine overlays, rather than displaces, the economic core. In Period 2, two non-anchor themes - affairs and support - rise into view in the matrices, carrying sovereignty and reciprocity. Yet the decade aggregate remains anchored in cooperation, enterprises, development, and relations, and those anchors never carry negatives. When Xi stressed that China "firmly supports the people of African countries in opposing foreign interference, and [in] independently choosing their path of development," and President Lourenço praised cooperation "without attaching any political conditions or interference in African countries' internal affairs," the doctrinal nodes reinforced the cooperative baseline instead of replacing it (MFA, 2018; Xinhua, 2018). This is why the aggregate feels steady even as world conditions grew more turbulent: negativity is displaced outward onto unnamed third parties, while the anchors remain positive or neutral.

Finally, Table 4 makes sense of the tone. Positives crest at visible moments of upgrade and reassurance - FOCAC cycles, leadership meetings, and pandemic-era pledges - while neutrals dominate routine references to instruments and sectors. President Xi's assurance that China is "confident of the future of bilateral cooperation," his promise to "promote new development in practical cooperation," and Wang Yi's repeated "firmly support Angola" formulation are the punctuation marks in an otherwise even register (MFA, 2018, 2020; Xinhua, 2018). The aggregate pattern thus gives us the interpretive key for reading the period shifts that follow.

## Economic Cooperation Comparison

Economic cooperation emerges as a unifying thread across both periods, but its emphasis and tone evolved markedly from Period 1 (March 2013–March 2018) to Period 2 (April 2018–October 2022). Economic cooperation is the grammar of action in both periods, but the meaning of delivery shifts from project throughput to investment quality and resilience. In Period 1, the matrix records 156 anchor mentions split as cooperation 59 (19 positive, 40 neutral), enterprises 42 (17 positive, 25 neutral), development 34 (11 positive, 23 neutral), and relations 21 (8 positive, 13 neutral). The cluster tells a clear story: state-to-state cooperation is translated into outcomes through firms, with development framed as the dividend and relations supplying legitimacy. Li Keqiang's Luanda formulation - "supports capable and reputable Chinese enterprises to invest in Angola, participate in Angola's economic and social development and boost local employment" - makes the implementation logic explicit (The State Council of the PRC, 2014; Xinhua, 2014). Xi's 2015 line "convert the consensus reached by the two heads of state into more impetus for win-win cooperation and common development", ties leadership rapport to executable cooperation (MFA, 2015). These are the verbs and objects that drive the Period 1 counts.

The institutional substrate behind that rhetoric is well documented. Oil-backed credit from policy banks financed large EPC contracts by state-linked firms, an arrangement often called the Angola model (Alves, 2013; Corkin, 2013). Sectoral work shows Chinese contractors established procurement channels and selective local linkages, which helps explain why enterprise and cooperation references were frequent and tonally neutral: delivery became bureaucratically routinized (Corkin, 2012). Country-level analysis of resource-backed loans (RBLs) indicates Angola accounted for a large share of Sub-Saharan Africa's stock by value, anchoring the discourse about "win-win cooperation" in visible project pipelines (Mihalyi, Hwang, Rivetti, & Cust, 2022). Period 1's development node already looks beyond reconstruction, as Wang Yi pledged to "firmly support Angola" in diversification and industrialization, and to help build "capacity for independent development," turning development into a yardstick for cooperation quality (MFA, 2018).

In Period 2, the economic lexicon holds but its predicate tightens. Cooperation remains the top anchor at 18 mentions (half positive), yet the rhetoric recasts what counts as success. In the 2020 call, President Xi promised to "promote new development in practical cooperation between the two countries, and boost Angola's economic and social development," and to "cement political mutual trust," coupling delivery to assurance during oil and pandemic shocks (MFA, 2020). The matrix shows enterprises contracting to 5 mentions, but the corpus is explicit that enterprise guidance is not retreat; rather, it is reframed as a push toward investment composition and local value capture. Xi said China would encourage "competent Chinese enterprises to undertake investment cooperation in Angola," and President Lourenço "welcome[d] more investment from Chinese enterprises in Angola," an exchange that locates firms inside a diversification agenda (MFA, 2020; Xinhua, 2020).

The development node also shifts from reconstruction dividend to transformation horizon. Wang Yi's 2018 pledge to support Angola's "economic diversification and industrialization," together with Xi's 2020 call to "promote new development," align HLPD with Angola's reform priorities under Lourenço (MFA, 2018, 2020). External scholarship tempers expectations about depth of localization, Chinese contractors can operate as enclaves, and RBLs carry cyclical risks, yet the Period 2 storyline actively moves toward quality and fit rather than raw project counts (Corkin, 2012; Mihalyi et al., 2022; Wolf, 2017). The tonal discipline persists, with positives reserved for upgrades and reassurance. Crucially, the aggregate shows no negatives attached to the four anchors; the few negatives in Period 2 appear under support and target "foreign interference," not bilateral friction. The comparative arc is therefore coherent: Period 1 institutionalizes a reconstruction-through-projects bargain; Period 2 preserves that grammar while pivoting toward investment quality, domestic capacity, and risk-aware delivery.

The continuities matter. Across both periods, cooperation remains the master frame and enterprises remain the mechanism. What changes is the centre of gravity: from EPC throughput and credit-for-infrastructure toward enterprise-led investment that is explicitly asked to serve diversification, technology transfer, and jobs. This is why the same vocabulary can credibly tell two different time-slices. In 2015, "convert the consensus… into more impetus" carried the flavour of pipeline expansion; by 2020, "promote new

development in practical cooperation" reads like a promise of composition and resilience. Both are cooperation; the metric of sufficiency has evolved (MFA, 2015, 2020).

## Bilateral Relations and Diplomacy

Diplomacy legitimates and amplifies the economic storyline, moving from ethos-building to articulate doctrine and reciprocal signalling. In Period 1, references to relations are fewer than cooperation and enterprises but carry decisive affective weight. On arrival in Luanda in 2014, Li Keqiang called Angola "an important cooperative partner for China" and pledged to "inject new impetus into the development of China–Angola relations," widening scope beyond oil into education, health, and people-to-people exchange (MFA, 2014). In 2015, Xi's superlative that ties were "at the best level in history," coupled with his instruction to "convert the consensus… into more impetus for win-win cooperation and common development," converts praise into program and binds political warmth to enterprise delivery (MFA, 2015). The Period 1 matrix codes all four anchors positive/neutral, and relations functions as ethos - stability without adversarial cues.

In Period 2, the diplomatic narrative retains its warmth while articulating its doctrinal commitments more explicitly. During the 2020 call, President Xi reiterated that Angola is "an important cooperative partner of China in Africa" and stated that China would "steer the direction of bilateral relations and take the China–Angola strategic partnership to a higher level," transforming continuity into a logic of elevation (MFA, 2020). Two themes render this logic visible.

First, affairs links sovereignty to multilateral coordination. In Beijing in 2018, Xi affirmed that China "firmly supports the people of African countries in opposing foreign interference, and [in] independently choosing their path of development," a position that Angolan leaders publicly welcomed. President Lourenço praised cooperation "without attaching any political conditions or interference in African countries' internal affairs," offering reciprocal validation (MFA, 2018; Xinhua, 2018).

Second, support establishes a back-to-back posture. Wang Yi pledged that China would "firmly support Angola" in its diversification and industrialization efforts, while President Lourenço "firmly supports the Chinese side's position on issues concerning its core interests," a pairing directed at unnamed third-party interference (MFA, 2018, 2020). During the pandemic, this support acquired a tangible referent when China announced it would "send [an] anti-epidemic medical expert team to Angola," an instance that aligns rhetoric with concrete action (Xinhua, 2020).

The periodized reweighting mirrors the political calendar without breaking the aggregate calm of Table 4. Within the anchor set, relations rise in relative share from Period 1 to Period 2, echoing the language of elevation, while affairs become the second-most salient Period-2 node overall and support remains overwhelmingly positive with rare negatives directed at "foreign interference." President Xi's assurance that China is "confident of the future of bilateral cooperation" and his call to "closely coordinate and cooperate […] on multilateral occasions and international affairs" show how relations now carry not only

ethos but also coordination (MFA, 2020; Xinhua, 2018). The diplomacy storyline thus does two jobs at once: it protects the development program with sovereignty language and amplifies it through multilateral alignment.

The comparative picture is a broadening from friendship-plus-projects to friendship-plus-projects-plus-principles. Period 1 stabilizes expectations and legitimates enterprise-led delivery; Period 2 makes those premises explicit as doctrine, elevates the partnership, and ties bilateral assurances to a shared stance in international forums. That is why the same corpus can plausibly predict the "future of bilateral cooperation," call to "cement political mutual trust," and promise to "take the China–Angola strategic partnership to a higher level," while continuing to invite "competent […] enterprises" to invest. The matrices, the quotations, and the aggregate in Table 4 point to one narrative: a trusted, mutually beneficial modernization drive, voiced in a calm register that treats disruption as exogenous and bilateral cooperation as common sense.

## Conclusion

This study asked how China's high-level political discourse toward Angola between March 2013 and October 2022 constructs and evolves a high-level political narrative across two periods, and what that narrative reveals about the strategic trajectory of bilateral cooperation and relations. The answer is that authoritative Chinese discourse organizes recurrent tokens - cooperation, development, enterprises, relations, support, and alignment on international affairs - into a coherent storyline that moves from oil-anchored reconstruction toward a diversified, sovereigntist, and increasingly institutionalized partnership. The corpus shows that leaders' language consistently fuses material delivery with political trust, turning economic interdependence and project execution into a legitimation script for long-term alignment. In this script, cooperation is the master frame, development is the telos, enterprises are the transmission belt from policy to projects, and relations and multilateral "affairs" supply ethos and doctrine. Read across both periods, the narrative is cumulative rather than cyclical, adding layers of sovereignty, multilateral coordination, and quality-oriented growth while retaining the lexicon of mutual benefit and South–South solidarity.

The implications for bilateral strategy are clear. The discursive braid of cooperation, development, and friendship signals a durable alignment in which each government now treats the other as a strategic constant. Analysts capture this trajectory by observing that China and Angola "see each other as necessary strategic allies for the foreseeable future" (Yoshikawa, 2025). Elite talk repeatedly pledges to "firmly support each other" on sovereignty and development choices (Xinhua News Agency, 2024), and Angola's adherence to the One-China principle is mirrored by Beijing's assurances that it backs Angola's stability and diversification as a matter of principle (Xinhua News Agency, 2024). Such rhetorical solidarity maps onto practice: Luanda's voting and coalition behavior in international fora tends to align with Beijing, while China has varied its tool kit - new investment, rescheduling, sectoral projects - to cushion Angola during adverse shocks (Forum Macao, 2017; Yoshikawa, 2025). The discursive pay-off is soft power: a positive

story about "trustworthy old friends" that helps convert repeated cooperation into long-horizon political goodwill.

Regionally, the narrative resonates beyond the dyad. Because Angola is the pivotal Lusophone economy in Africa, high-visibility wins in Luanda diffuse reputationally across the Portuguese-speaking sphere. The discourse of "mutual benefit" and visible delivery has coincided with a broader reweighting of external influence in Lusophone Africa, where China now "exerts the strongest developmental influence" in many contexts, above traditional Ibero-Atlantic actors (Peet, 2021). Forum Macao functions as a multilateral amplifier that re-packages the same themes - cooperation, development, pragmatic delivery - for Lusophone audiences (Forum Macao, 2017). The Angola storyline therefore serves a demonstration effect: a signal to peers that Chinese finance, contracting, and policy coordination can be mobilized without the conditionalities that often accompany Western engagements, or as Chinese sources frame it, to deliver growth without political strings (Xinhua News Agency, 2018).

Globally, the discourse stitches the bilateral case into Beijing's claim to speak with and for the Global South. In set-piece moments, Chinese leaders describe the partnership as "mutual help between good friends" and exemplary cooperation "among developing countries," casting China as a "reliable friend and sincere partner" (Xinhua News Agency, 2024). Angola's reciprocal endorsements strengthen this projection, especially where Luanda echoes calls for an "equal and orderly multipolar world" (Xinhua News Agency, 2024). In this framing, the dyad is not an anomaly but evidence of a broader institutional imaginary: a solidaristic Global South reshaping norms of non-interference, development-centred cooperation, and a more representative multilateral order (Xinhua News Agency, 2018). This positioning incorporates Angola into a coalition narrative that amplifies China's influence in agenda-setting arenas while enabling Angola to diversify partnerships and expand its policy space.

The forward trajectory implied by Xi's third term is continuity with selective recalibration. The core idea of friendship, "win-win," mutual support will persist; what shifts is the emphasis on the quality, sustainability, and localization of cooperation. With Angola entering a post-oil adjustment and seeking to upgrade value chains, Chinese discourse is already pivoting to themes of industrial policy, agricultural modernization, and technology-enabled diversification, vowing to help Angola "achieve agricultural modernization, industrialization and economic diversification" (Nyabiage, 2024). We can expect thicker references to signature concepts such as a community of shared future, as well as more explicit links to Beijing's global initiatives. The multilateral register is likely to become more pronounced, with both parties reiterating solidarist language on multipolarity and developing-country representation (Xinhua News Agency, 2024). If previous patterns persist, forthcoming messaging will continue to tighten the alignment between political principles and enterprise implementation: directing firms to localize operations, expand training, deepen supply-chain linkages, and coordinate industrial parks and logistics corridors with Angola's own development plans.

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# NOTES AND RELECTIONS

# EXAMINING REALISM & ITS LIMITATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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Realism has long been regarded as the cornerstone of international relations (IR) theory, tracing its roots back to ancient thinkers such as Thucydides, Thomas Hobbes, Niccolò Machiavelli, and Kautilya. Yet, this perception is not only historically dubious but also analytically misleading. When examining the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, the emergence of new actors such as China and India, and research on "Cold War 2.0," realism theory dominates the discussion in international forums on topics of power, security, survival, and state strengthening. However, my ambition in this essay is to offer an analysis of the readings by Mehmet Tabak, Jonathan Kirsher, and Alexander Vidman on Realism. Their book needs to be analysed in the forum of intellectual tradition, such as the Realism paradigm, Realism in IR, Realism in Foreign Policy, and its shortcomings, which they attempt to rewrite on Realism. This essay is divided into three parts. First, I examine Tabak's position of realism as a disarrayed tradition both philosophically and in scientific traditions. He analyses *Realism in International Relations*, and forcefully challenges the so-called "consensus view" that reflects realism as a unified, ancient, and self-contained school of thought. Secondly, I then discuss Kirsher realism in an uncertain world, emphasising the realism and its basis for the American world order. Thirdly, I analyse Vidman's folly of realism in relation to the "realist" philosophy of US foreign policy in Russia and Ukraine. As this essay will demonstrate, realism's disjointed evolution, contested foundations, and practical failures expose it not as a timeless doctrine but as a backfilled, unstable tradition that continues to construct more confusion than consensus.

## Realism as a disarrayed tradition

Mehmet Tabak argues that realism should be neither considered an *ancient* nor a *sui generis* intellectual tradition. His book critically examines the "consensus view" of realism from three interconnected points: First, realism emerged during the inter-war period and, until the early 1980s, was conceived by every reputable IR scholar as a relatively theoretical development. Second, this actually existing realism has evolved into a disarrayed tradition to the present, lacking internal coherence. The third section demonstrates that, following incremental development throughout the 1970s, the full-

formed consensus *view* took shape in the early 1980s. This delayed formulation raises an interesting question: Why was such a narrative constructed so late, and without convincing evidence to support it? Tabak argues that the consensus view was created to meet the needs of certain scholars at a time when intellectual trends, such as those influenced by Kuhn and Lakatos, were in vogue, and new developments in the practice of international politics necessitated the formulation of new theories.

In the early 1970s, calls for a new paradigm in IR grew louder, given the proliferation of the Kuhnian discourse and the perceived shifts from the state-centric international system to "transnational relations." This desire urged the invention of the claim that IR had been dominated by a state-centric paradigm. For example, Joseph S. Nye and Robert O. Keohane among the prominent figures of this movement, contended in 1971 "that the state-centric paradigm," which "assumes that states are the only significant actors in world politics and that they act as units" is "becoming progressively more inadequate as changes in transnational relations take place" (Nye & Keohane, 1971, p. 721). Their influential work, *Power and Interdependence*, built on these critiques and proposed an alternative paradigm, explicitly positioning it against what they now labelled as realism.

Examining the consensus view, K. J. Holsti asserted that realism has its roots in the writings of Hobbes and Rousseau, although it was, by the 1980s, considered to be in disarray (Holsti, 1985, p. 1). Others, like Richard N. Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein, the realist tradition," is virtually as old as recorded history, tracing its origins to Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* (Rosecrance & Stein, 1993, p. 6, 14). However, the actual consent of early realist discourse, particularly in 1930s America, was highly inconsistent and consisted of an "array of contradictory positions" (Vitalis, 2015, pp. 88–89). During this period, "realism was not so much a well-articulated doctrine as a general Zeitgeist understood to transform simultaneously politics, literature, science, and philosophy" (Guilhot, 2017, p. 79). A standard survey of IR, published a year later, reported that "Thucydides is usually credited with being the first writer in the realist tradition as well as the founding father of the international relations discipline" (Viotti & Kauppi, 1987, p. 25). Authors like Mansbach and Vasquez also treated the "realist paradigm" as a historical tradition since, in their view, these three "fundamental assumptions" "have been passed down from generation to generation by historians as varied as Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Ranke," and were received by such twentieth-century realists as "Nicholas Spykman, E. H. Carr, Hans J. Morgenthau, George Kenan, and Robert Osgood" (Mansbach & Vasquez, 1981, pp. 3–5). To make a long story short, the consensus view had become the "consensus view" by the mid-1980s, often based on the assumption that it had been sufficiently validated by the likes of Keohane and Gilpin. The "consensus view" was inspired by the debates in the 1960s and 1970s about scientific thinking and research, including Kuhn's use of the term "paradigm" to describe well-defined scientific disciplines.

Moreover, like Carr and Morgenthau, many other IR scholars have justifiably regarded realism as a new theory. For instance, the historian Frank Tannenbaum lamented in 1952 that realism had recently "won wide acceptance by teachers and scholars in the field of international relations". Despite this, international theory, including realist strands, was seen as underdeveloped even into the 1960s. In 1960, Martin Wight observed in 1960s that earlier international theory was fragmented and largely inaccessible to the layman" (Wight, 1966, p. 20). Similarly, scholars like Cox and Harrison described that field as

unsettled and chaotic and in confusion as the contemporary world scene which it seeks to comprehend" (Cox, 1962, p. 261; Harrison, 1964, p. 3). In 1972, Hedley Bull noted that it would be a mistake to suggest that the principal realist theories, as realist thinkers agreed on only a few basic points, such as the importance of power, and otherwise lacked a shared doctrine (Bull, 1995, p. 189).

The publication of Kenneth N. Waltz's seminal work Theory of International Relations in 1979 marked a major turning point by significantly advancing neorealist thought. Yet Robert Gilpin, while embracing the consensus view of ideological and methodological diversity among so-called realists like Waltz, admits that they often had little in common, "except perhaps that they have all written on international relations from a rather disparate set of professional and political perspectives" (Gilpin, 1984, p. 287). Unsatisfied with Waltz's approach, many new-generation scholars opted to self-identify as non-realists, including Keohane, who eventually spearheaded competing theories, such as liberal institutionalism (Keohane, 1986, p. 7). As Tabak notes, until the early 1980s, the prevailing view among IR scholars was that realism was a modern theoretical development, one that lacked the consistency or coherence required by a distinct intellectual tradition. This actually-existing realism is too disarrayed to be meaningfully classified as a *sui generis* intellectual tradition. As Guilhot succinctly puts it, realism in international relations is mainly "a twentieth-century phenomenon."

In parallel, neoclassical realism further complicated the picture with idiosyncratic outlooks and numerous insights borrowed from many neorealists and the vast pool of "classical realists," ranging from Thucydides to Morgenthau. This proliferation has resulted in what some have called "an embarrassment of Realisms" (Wagner, 2007, p. 12). Thus, the field is now populated by numerous sub-variants: Christian realism, democratic realism, Enlightenment realism, leftist realism, liberal realism, progressive realism, radical realism, realistic Wilsonianism, utopian realism, willful realism, and environmental realism or ecological realism, illustrating that realism has never truly been a singular, well-defined tradition (Raschi & Zambernardi, 2018, p. 371; Lieven, 2020; Patrick, 2020).

Lastly, realism is internally disarrayed. As there are many different sets of alleged "realist" core beliefs in the existing literature, meaning that there is no consensus on just what these beliefs are Mearsheimer's well-known version of the "three core beliefs" of pan-realism, that states are central actors in world politics; that they behave as unitary actors; and that power calculations drive their decisions (Mearsheimer, 2001, pp. 17–18). Yet these are not universally accepted, nor do they set realism apart as a distinct paradigm. In short, the commonly supposed three core beliefs of realism do not qualify as the differentiating specifics of any sui generis paradigm or research program. This verdict also applies to additional assumptions that are commonly depicted as realist core assumptions. One of them is pessimism regarding "power politics" in international relations (Gilpin, 1984, pp. 289– 90; Grieco, 1990, p. 27). Also, many realists are not such chronic pessimists. For example, Carr was not a chronically pessimistic thinker either, given his efforts to incorporate a good dose of optimism into his theory of international politics (Chapter 2). Although some of Morgenthau's works are unrealistically pessimistic, many of them exhibit different shades of strong optimism and utopianism, namely, a belief in the possibility and desirability of a world government (Chapter 3). Due to his optimistic, "utopian" views, John H. Herz, another famed

"classical realist," was decried by some as an unauthentic realist (Thompson, 1979, pp. 941–42). Their respective works do not individually or collectively provide a coherent definition of realism, nor do they offer a progressive research program.

## Realism in Practice

Jonathan Kirshner, in his *An Unwritten Future*, argues that classical realism now represents a minority perspective within contemporary International Relations (IR) theory. The broader realist community is largely dominated by structural realism, a framework that models states as identical units distinguished only by their relative power capabilities. Since the 1980s, this school of realist thought has become so predominant that both its supporters and critics often equate realism entirely with structural realism. Not surprisingly, as Tabak's illustration shows, while classical realism and structural realism do share some foundational ideas - since both identify under the realist label – they differ significantly in scope and assumptions. In fact, the theorists who, in the middle of the twentieth century, developed the approach now called classical realism do not see themselves as part of a sub-school; they simply thought of themselves as realists, just as Mozart and his contemporaries never labelled their music "classical". Structural realism, by contrast, confines its analysis to states operating within an anarchic international system, focusing solely on relative capabilities and systemic power dynamics.

Classical realism, on the other hand, includes much more than just power. It considers both 'power' and 'purpose,' and insists that understanding world politics requires attention to both material and normative dimensions. Classical realist also holds to a reserved analytical modesty due to their dyed-in-the-wool sensitivity to the fundamental, unbridgeable distinction between the natural and social sciences. Moreover, classical realism emphasises the persistent dangers inherent in anarchy, the need to respect the limitations and strengths of power, and the inevitability of recurring conflicts, all within the context of irretrievable uncertainty.

Krishner uses Thucydides as a case in point. While his *History of the Peloponnesian War* recounts an ancient conflict between two slaveholding city-states, filled with battles between spear-wielding hoplites, its insights into the dynamics of power and politics remain highly relevant. Despite the text's age, incomplete structure, and disputed authorship, IR scholars still find it valuable. In *The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War*, Donald Kagan's scholarship is often eager to contest Thucydides' accounts; he blames Athens for the conflict (Kagan, 1969, p. 269). For Kagan, Athens's serial troublemaking eventually "put the Spartan war party into power," and even then, a sluggish Sparta had to be roused into action by the Corinthians and other allies that had suffered at the hands of Athenian aggression (ibid. pp. 285).

In contrast, G.E.M. Croix in *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War* reaches the opposite conclusion. Engaging Kagan explicitly as a foil, Croix rejects the view "that Athens was the aggressive party in 433–1" and reports that he has no "doubt that the real aggressors were Sparta and her allies" (Croix, 1972, p. 65). Both Kagan and Croix, if with somewhat different shadings, highlight the role of the Corinthians in considering the origins of the war. Thucydides reminds his readers of the stark consequences of anarchy, where behaviours may be restrained, norms may be respected, and actors might behave in a

civilised fashion. Also, everywhere, the balance of power profoundly shapes decisions. This is considered the peripheral conflict that emerges as the proximate cause of the war, the confrontation between Corinth and Corcyra. This is why the attentiveness to power dynamics, where balance of power is much more consequential than its distribution at any moment in time, is Thucydides' most visible influence on contemporary IR theory. Classical realism emerged as a recognisable school of thought in the middle of the twentieth century, in response to the international traumas of that time. To establish the contours and core elements of the paradigm, Kirshner draws principally on the contributions of five figures: E. H. Carr, George F. Kennan, Hans Morgenthau, Raymond Aron, and Robert Gilpin. In so doing, it remains necessary as always to take note of the usual truckload of qualifications, of which three in particular stand out.

But for realism, or it should be said for classical realism, which focuses on what goes on within states and societies (whereas structural realism, of course, tends to "black box" such things). It is an oversimplification, but a productive one, to describe the contours of world politics in the seventy-five years from 1945 to 2020 as shaped and characterised by "an American order." Later, the United States chose a different path after World War II, as it sought to learn from the past and avoid the catastrophic blunders of the interwar years. The intervention of the Americans had decisively brought the mass slaughter of the Great War to a conclusion, but after flirting with internationalism, the United States chose not to join the League of Nations, and then to pursue shortsighted economic policies, and finally to hide behind isolation and timid neutrality as the fascist powers embarked on their bids to conquer Europe and Asia.

## Contradictory Realism

In *The Folly of Realism*, Alexander Vindman deliberately uses what seems like a contradiction in his book title to highlight a central issue: the long-standing overreliance on the "realist" philosophy of US foreign policy has played a major role, though not solely, in the blame for the persistence of Western delusion regarding Russia.

The realist school of thought, championed by figures such as Henry Kissinger, John Mearsheimer, Stephan Walt, and Kenneth Waltz, rose to prominence during the Cold War in reaction to the idealism of leaders like Woodrow Wilson. Wilsonian idealism held that the US had a moral vision to spread democracy and freedom in foreign lands. In contrast, realists argue that advancing vital US interests, defined as aggressive national defence, immediate commercial prosperity in trade, and short-term crisis aversion in pursuit of greater stability, should serve as the main standard for American engagement abroad.

This realism dominated US policy during the George H. W. Bush administration, and to some extent, in the Clinton administration (Chapter 2). A key example was their intense focus on nuclear disarmament after the fall of the Soviet Union. Ukraine and other newly independent states were pressured to give up their nuclear weapons to Russia, with little concern for the broader implications. During the late 1980s, there was no serious effort to tie denuclearisation to Russia's behaviour or to support the democratic aspirations of the post-Soviet republics.

That narrow focus, Vindman argues, backfired. Without a commitment to Western democratic values, even the realist supposed priority of projecting US interests was

ultimately undermined. Realism's tendency to avoid immediate conflict led not to a long-term but a deeper crisis. The results of the 2014 and 2022 crises stemming from the Russian war on Ukraine were shaped by these early post-Cold War decisions (Chapter 7).

At that time, US leaders feared nuclear proliferation more than anything else. They saw the collapse of the USSR as a threat that could create multiple new nuclear states or result in a loose nukes scenario. So, realism at its most short-term and transactional prevailed, against any supposedly misguided idealism about supporting the self-determination of the new republics as a fundamental Western value. Well before the fall of the USSR, the goal of Bush's administration prioritised preserving arms control deals with the Soviets over supporting independence movements in the Soviet republics.

There was a viable alternative, one that wasn't blind idealism or zombie liberal internationalism, nor isolationism couched as restraint, or morally bankrupt realism, which served short-term interests and was, in that sense, purely transactional (Chapter 5). But a mix of those short-sighted strategies that dominated US foreign policy only helped Russia regain a position to re-engage in regional aggression and nuclear extortion of the West.

This deeply ingrained realpolitik approach persisted through both Republican and Democratic administrations. The US remained focused on the war on terror as a paramount concern, confident in its global dominance and slow to adapt. The realist school, operating across party lines throughout the Clinton and Bush presidencies, was quick to deride the statement as nothing but chest-beating provocation. According to McCain, Henry Kissinger, the father of foreign-policy realism himself, called him to say the speech had gone too far or used such rhetoric as unnecessarily provocative. As reported by the *New York Times*, Charles King, a professor of international affairs at Georgetown University, encapsulated the objections, blaming rhetoric like Mr McCain's for encouraging "Georgia to try to push maximalist positions 'We've got to get this territory back at all costs, and if we get it back, the United States will support us'" (Cooper & Bumiller, 2008).

In the end, the realism approach for achieving security through denuclearisation had not brought about a real threat reduction but had only left Ukraine and the West vulnerable to new forms of nuclear blackmail. Despite McCain's cogent and pointed advice, it was not taken in 2008 and 2009, either by the outgoing Bush administration or the incoming Obama administration, which did not take his advice seriously. The post-Soviet history of US relationships with Russia and with Ukraine—presented in this book as a test case for the prevailing US approach to international relations in general makes overwhelmingly clear that realism isn't, in its own too-simplistic terms, realistic. Vidman's account of the US relations with Russia and Ukraine offers a broader lesson: realism, for all its claims to hard-nosed pragmatism, has failed in practice. By sacrificing the West's values, the West failed to deter a dangerous but deterrable adversary and missed the chance to build a strong alliance with a strategically vital partner, i.e., Ukraine. Vindman concludes that the history of missteps in US policy for Russia and Ukraine demonstrates the folly of realism, and while it is now very late to abandon our folly, it's still not too late.

## Conclusion

Realism, as presented in the essay, is a complex and fragmented tradition, which is not a unified or ancient doctrine, as many believe. It functions more as a label for a variety of loosely connected approaches than as a coherent theory or even a paradigm. So, an attempt to classify or canonise realism is historically dubious and often serves strategic academic or political ends rather than reflecting the true evolution of international thought. As Tabak argues that realism is not a timeless, unified school of thought, which is what he highlights, the consensus view of realism was just constructed in the 1980s, shaped more by academic and political needs than historical continuity. It was scholars like Keohane and Nye who pushed the idea of a dominant state-centric paradigm, i.e., realism, in order to propose their own alternatives, such as liberal institutionalism. Despite historical evidence, realism has always been internally fragmented and inconsistent. In Kirshner's view, classical realism is a minority view today compared to structural realism. However, thinkers like Thucydides still offer insight due to their focus on uncertainty, power dynamics and human motivation. While in practice, the overreliance on realist thinking in US foreign policy is heavily criticised in *The Folly of Realism*. The theory of realism that focuses on stability, deterrence, and short-term national interests often fails to account for long-term strategic concerns, which include moral concerns of self-determination. Thus, realism is less a coherent school of thought and more contested, often reshaped to serve the evolving needs of scholars and policymakers, sometimes at the expense of clarity, consistency or effectiveness.

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## NOTES AND RELECTIONS

# SHAPING GLOBAL RELATIONS THROUGH INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION: RECENT TRENDS AND OPTIONS

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The nations across the globe continue to struggle due to lasting impact of Covid-19 pandemic. This has resulted in the weakening of the commercial relationship between the countries. To enhance investors' participation, it is must that its dispute resolution mechanism should be effective in reality. International arbitration has been a great support in strengthening relationships with investors. Unfortunately, this pandemic has disrupted many nations' FDI inflow in the last two years. The 2022's FTI Consulting report has reflected on the changes which have been incorporated into the international arbitration practice after this pandemic.

This paper will demarcate the current trends which have been followed across different industries and geographies to indulge in international arbitration practice. Queen Mary's 2021 International Arbitration survey has shown the various factors which have affected the positioning of the "destination seat". Welcoming technology in arbitration would be beneficial for accepting it as the mode for settling disputes. This will guide the nations in improving their performance and will be maintaining their contractual obligations. The developing economies must indulge in such practices to overcome their challenges. By maintaining ethnic diversity and security the parties would be able to maintain international standards for fostering global relations.

## Introduction

Since the world is hit by economic and financial loss by the Covid-19 pandemic investors' participation has been very limited. With a huge amount at stake, the cross-border relationship has been impacted by this pandemic which has resulted in disputes between the parties. International arbitration practice has been beneficial in resolving matters confined to trade activities. To maintain and enhance GDP it is essential to indulge in those activities which are useful in maintaining economic balance. The World Bank has



reflected that in 2022 the world trade volume will be surging to almost seven percent.[1] IMF data has depicted that cross-border trade concerning goods would rise to seven percent. This demarcates that it is crucial that FDI inflow should be improved to enhance the financial stability of the nations.[2] The filing of international arbitration has been affected by this pandemic. There has been a surge in the average value of claims in 2020. For instance, the German Arbitration Institute in 2020 recorded the average value of claims to EUR 13.9 million as compared to EUR 3.8 million four years back.[3] Unfortunately, due to a lack of transparency and inconsistency, there has been difficulty in tackling investment matters.

The 2020's Queen Mary survey has demarcated that ISDS requires changes for more efficiency which has gained seventy-five percent acceptance from the investors.[4] This shows that resolving investor and State matters mode of dispute resolution has been playing a meaningful role worldwide. Post-Brexit has resulted in the formation of a new agreement between the EU and the UK to enhance investor participation.[5] To maintain economic standards, it is symbolic to maintain growth in international arbitration practice. The 2021's International Arbitration survey has reflected the current adaption and the upcoming changes which are preferred by the users. This survey depicts the trends which are prevailing in the business community to resolve their commercial disputes. For instance, London and Singapore are among the most approachable seat for arbitration lately. To maintain neutrality judicial support has been beneficial which has resulted in proper award enforcement.[6] In the near future client meeting by online mode and encouraging the practice of paperless work to require the assistance of trained persons to attain its sustainable development goal.[7] Before this pandemic international arbitration was still considered to be the preferred way for solving cross-border matters. Forty-eight respondents supported this viewpoint in 2018's Queen Mary survey.[8] To attain the goal of speedy relief, privacy, enforceability, flexibility, and neutrality this practice is appreciated worldwide.[9]

## Geographies

Sadly, UAE legal system has been lacking in establishing a federal arbitration law. There have been circumstances that reflect that the court has received uneven applications and

[1]IMF, WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK xvi (1st ed. 2021).
[2]*World Investment Report 2021*, UNCTAD, (2021), https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/wir2021_en.pdf.
[3]*International Arbitration after the pandemic*, FTI CONSULTING, (2022), https://www.fticonsulting.com/-/media/files/emea--files/insights/reports/2022/apr/international-arbitration-after-pandemic.pdf?rev=99711bd4cbed4c0aac79a728e96a7144&hash=434F6C319A7AC48D1943F0AC3A3B1F75.
[4]*2020 QMUL-CCIAG Survey: Investor's perceptions of ISDS*, ARBITRATION QMUL, (2020), https://arbitration.qmul.ac.uk/media/arbitration/docs/QM-CCIAG-Survey-ISDS-2020.pdf.
[5]Kirstin Schwedt et al., *Investment protection in the EU-UK trade and cooperation agreement*, KLUWER ARBITRATION BLOG (Jan. 9, 2021), http://arbitrationblog.kluwerarbitration.com/2021/01/09/investment-protection-in-the-eu-uk-trade-and-cooperation-agreement/.
[6]*2021 International Arbitration Survey: Adapting arbitration to a changing world,* ARBITRATION QMUL, (2021), https://arbitration.qmul.ac.uk/media/arbitration/docs/LON0320037-QMUL-International-Arbitration-Survey-2021_19_WEB.pdf.
[7]*Id.*
[8]*2018 International Arbitration Survey: The Evolution of International Arbitration*, ARBITRATION QMUL, (2018), https://arbitration.qmul.ac.uk/media/arbitration/docs/2018-International-Arbitration-Survey-report.pdf.
[9]*Id.*



enforcement proceedings have been time-consuming.[10] This shows UAE's legal framework governing arbitration practice hasn't been insufficient in addressing modern arbitration practices.[11] The setting up of "Dubai International Financial Centre" along with LCIA and "Emirates Maritime Arbitration Centre" shows a well-organized initiative to have better performance. In 2019 there has been a twenty-nine percent surge in the number of cases filed which shows better performance than the previous year.[12] Recently in 2021, an ICC case management office has been opened in their global market.[13] Since a year has passed it has been managing ICC arbitration users in the GCC. Due to the Covid-19 impact and economic influence, there has been a surge in cases in GCC which are required to be handled with care for maintaining their damages viewpoint.

Under the African practice, there has been a jump in the number of cases that have been resolved through the arbitral centers. Welcoming acceptance has been given to arbitration mode for resolving disputes by the parties. There has surge in arbitral centers in Africa which shows that this mode is gaining recognition in this nation. The lawyers have been indulged in attaining the skills which are essential for the successful delivery of arbitration practice.[14] There are several States which are following the BITs and are facilitating resolving the disputes between the investors and States by this mode. Being a signatory to ICSID many states are obeying its guidelines.[15] There have been twenty-seven percent progress in the registered cases by following this Convention and its facility rules.[16] This shows that the parties from this nation's States have increased to seven percent and have indulged in ICC arbitration practice.[17]

The European practice reflects that disputes concerning the UK and EU are governed by the "Hague Choice of Court Agreements Convention". After departing from the EU now the UK still follows this framework for having court judgment enforcement. Although it has its limitation as it applies only to the exclusive jurisdiction clauses.[18] London is a "destination seat" and is in process of introducing trade agreements it would be required to be observed if they cover ISDS than relying on BITs for protection.[19] With well-established centers, the UK has been a preferable option for the parties. As there has

[10] *Supra* note 3.
[11] H Al Mulla and A Mackenzie, *UAE approves New Federal Law on Arbitration*, GLOBAL ARBITRATION NEWS (Mar. 19, 2018), https://www.globalarbitrationnews.com/2018/03/19/uae-approves-new-federal-law-on-arbitration/.
[12] *Supra* note 3.
[13] *ICC Court to open 5th oversea case management office in ADGM*, ICCWBO (Dec. 21, 2020), https://iccwbo.org/media-wall/news-speeches/icc-court-to-open-5th-overseas-case-management-office-in-abu-dhabi-global-market/.
[14] M Ostrove et al., *Developments in African Arbitration*, GLOBAL ARBITRATION REVIEW (May 10, 2018), https://globalarbitrationreview.com/review/the-middle-eastern-and-african-arbitration-review/2018/article/developments-in-african-arbitration.
[15] Hartwell, *Norton Rose Fulbright International Arbitration Report,* NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT, (2019), https://www.nortonrosefulbright.com/-/media/files/nrf/nrfweb/knowledge-pdfs/emea_15747_newsletter__international-arbitration-report-_issue-13.pdf?revision=&revision=4611686018427387904.
[16] *The ICSID Caseload- Statistics: Issue 2021-1*, ICSID WORLD BANK, (2021), https://icsid.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/publications/The%20ICSID%20Caseload%20Statistics%20%282021-1%20Edition%29%20ENG.pdf.
[17] *ICC Dispute Resolution 2020 Statistics*, NYIAC, (2020), https://nyiac.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/ICC-Dispute-Resolution-2020-Statistics.pdf.
[18] *Supra* note 3.
[19] *International Arbitration in 2021*, FRESHFIELD BRUCKHAUS DERINGER, (2021), https://www.freshfields.com/4925a6/globalassets/our-thinking/campaigns/arbitration-10kt/08486_pg_dr_international-arbitration_interactive_aw.pdf.



been a surge in the caseloads performed by these centers.[20] They are not only confined to Covid-19 concerned matters but they are covering issues confined to ESG matters too.[21] There have been changes introduced in the arbitral rules of LCIA and ICC which shows these centers are keeping themselves updated despite having a competition with other centers.[22]

In the North American context recently the USMCA has been introduced and NAFTA has been replaced by it.[23] As per the new practice now USMCA has provided ISDS a limited approach to some sectors and it is not providing between the US and Canada. This agreement gives a restricted scope concerning investment protection confined to Mexico and the US. Although it is not facilitating foreign investors which is a matter of concern as it is limited to NAFTA. With the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been the utilization of technology to perform the procedure. The remote hearing has been welcomed across the nation it can be seen even today that this practice is still in continuation.[24]

Interestingly, Brazil has been among the Latin nations which have been contributing the second highest nationality where parties have shown their participation in ICC cases. There has been a climb in arbitral institutions and as a result of ICC's office and case management, their performance has been improved.[25] The EU- Mexico free trade agreement has been brought into practice which will be beneficial for the appealing process and transparency in the arbitration mechanism.[26]

## Recent Trends

Under the energy sector, it has been noted that forty-one percent of cases were considered under ICSID. Twenty-six percent of the caseload in LCIA is confined to this sector.[27] Since European nations have increased their energy transition there have been changes brought in the real practice which has resulted in a surge in disputes. Switching to gas, the conflict between Ukraine and Russia has impacted the relationship in this sector. The primary energy has become costly and the contractual obligations have changed after these unfriendly events. Due to fluctuations in energy prices, there has been a surge in investment and contractual disputes. With stranded assets and participation, the sector is exposed to more risks and failures which has resulted in unhealthy ends. Maintaining the practice of healthy climate change the governments are making amendments to their policies which have contributed rise in global disputes.[28]

Due to social distancing and restrictive movement during this pandemic there has been a surge in material prices, profits have been reduced and financial instability has arisen

[20] *Supra* note 3.
[21] *Id.*
[22] *Trends in International Arbitration*, BURFORD CAPITAL (2022), https://www.burfordcapital.com/insights/insights-container/burford-quarterly-2022-arbitration-trends/.
[23] *Supra* note 3.
[24] *Id.*
[25] Alison Ross, *ICC opens hearing centre in Sao Paulo*, GAR (Mar. 16, 2018), https://globalarbitrationreview.com/article/icc-opens-hearing-centre-in-sao-paulo.
[26] *EU and Mexico announce the Finalization of an updated Free Trade Agreement*, AKINGUMP (Apr. 29, 2020), https://www.akingump.com/en/news-insights/eu-and-mexico-announce-the-finalization-of-an-updated-free-trade-agreement.html.
[27] *LCIA Annual Casework Report 2020*, LCIA (2020), https://www.lcia.org/News/lcia-news-annual-casework-report-2020-and-changes-to-the-lcia-c.aspx.
[28] *Supra* note 3.



under the activities of this sector. Financial distress has impacted cross-border construction projects which have resulted in a climb in construction disputes.[29] It is expected that in the coming years under the natural resource sector there would be a rise in resource nationalism.[30] This would result in the highest risk under this aspect as these resources are now under government control. The policies and regulations are formulated in such a manner that future projects would come across resource nationalism at its extreme. While focusing on ESG it is expected that the supply and its security would be affected. For instance, in the mining sector, there are chances that there would increase in matters related to this sector.[31]This shows that geographical competition would rise due to the difficulties which have arisen due to this pandemic. The 2022's FTI Consulting report depicts that there will be an imbalance of power, complexity in agreements and joint ventures, and investment participation will be affected under such circumstance arbitration practice would be a great support to resolve their concern.[32]

In sectors such as the financial market due to the complexity of the disputes, arbitration has been preferred since the arbitration clause has been the common practice under financial matters. Brexit and LIBOR interest discontinuation after this pandemic has resulted in a surge in participation in the travel and financial market which has considered arbitration to resolve their issues. Matters confining to confidentiality, specialized arbitrators, and speedy redressal have been among their prime concerns. With a panel of recognized international market experts in the finance sector, it has published its new arbitral rules for maintaining commercial ethics.[33] This reflects that international arbitration forums are beneficial in governing financial instrument documentation. Significantly, with the support of the national legal framework IP rights, it becomes the responsibility to handle multi-State matters to safeguard these rights. ADR guidelines by WIPO have contributed to solving these matters through expert determination, mediation, and good offices.[34] The 2022's FTI Consulting report states that license fee matters would be considered to be resolved by international arbitration as it involves a huge amount at stake concerning the patents.[35] Further, ICDR has allowed the tribunal to set the arbitration's cost and apportion that reflects the arbitrators under this would be compensated by hourly rate.[36] The ICC court plays a remarkable role in ensuring the ICC's rules implementation through arbitration.[37]

[29]*Supra* note 3.
[30]J Blanco and M P Machado, *Resource Nationalism surges in 2020, Covid-19 worse* outlook, MAPLE CROFT (Mar. 4, 2021), https://www.maplecroft.com/insights/analysis/resource-nationalism-surges-in-2020-covid-19-worsens-outlook/.
[31]*Resourcing the Energy Transition: Making the World go round*, KPMG INTERNATIONAL (2021), https://home.kpmg/ky/en/home/insights_new/2021/03/resourcing-the-energy-transition.html.
[32]*Supra* note 3.
[33]Ian McDonald et al., *Prime time for updated arbitration rules for financial disputes? A review of the P.R.I.M.E Financial Arbitration Rules 2022*, MAYER BROWN (Jan. 5, 2022), https://www.mayerbrown.com/en/perspectives-events/publications/2022/01/prime-time-for-updated-arbitration-rules-for-financial-disputes-a-review-of-the-prime-finance-arbitration-rules-2022.
[34]*WIPO Caseload Summary*, WIPO (2021), https://www.wipo.int/amc/en/center/caseload-2021.html.
[35]*Supra* note 3.
[36]IDRP art. 37 (2021).
[37]David Salton*, Recent trends in International Arbitration and 2021 International Rule*, CONSTRUCTION LAW JOURNAL 81, 83 (2022).

## Current Options

The 2021's Queen Mary survey depicts that ninety percent of the respondent have preferred international arbitration mode for resolving cross-border matters. This shows that the support of local courts and judicial encouragement has been made to prevail neutrality and impartial practice in the legal system. Making the arbitration rules and institutions inviting requires administrative support.[38] Thirty-two percent of respondents have agreed that with administrative strengthening the virtual hearings will become more approachable.[39] This survey has shown that to make institutions or rules alluring for the users it is essential that there should be arbitrators belonging to different diversity. Twenty-four percent of the respondent have consented that with the support of a well-structured procedure multi-party and complex matters can be taken into consideration. By incorporating provisions for conducting in-person and virtual hearings the arbitral process will be smoothly conducted. In this survey, twenty-three percent of the respondent supported this viewpoint. Twenty percent of the respondent have stated that by having adequate electronic filing and document-sharing facilities the process can be more convenient. Interestingly, it is suggested that there should provision confining to expedited procedures. Almost twenty-five percent of the respondent supported this change should be introduced in the practice. There should be cost sanctions related to delay by the arbitrators which have been recommended by twenty-one percent of the respondent in this survey. To enhance the case management practice rules should be made to provide power to the arbitrators. This shows parties' and counsel's behavior has to be as per the directions of these rules. [40]

These are the choices that are reflected recently by this survey to make international arbitration practice flexible and party autonomy prevails properly. The adaption requires to be a welcoming step to enhance cross-border transactions. In this, the respondent has expressed their concern about avoiding having lengthy written submissions. Sixty-one percent of respondents agreed with this approach. Thirty-eight percent supported the concern that while addressing procedural matters oral hearing can be excluded.[41] To sacrifice the practice of document production was agreed by the twenty-seven respondent. This survey has shown that in-person hearing can be less encouraged. Twenty percent of respondents shared that now users are similar to virtual hearing. There should be a removal of early case management conferences. Fifteen percent supported the view that there should be no cross-examination. Further, thirteen percent said no to party-appointed experts as it can be used as a mode for creating pressure. In this survey, it has highly suggested that to maintain flexibility it is essential to be cost friendlier steps to have greater efficiency. There has been an improvement in gender diversity. Fifty-six percent of respondents agreed that this has been beneficial for maintaining impartiality and neutrality in the process.[42]

Encouragement has been made to utilize cloud-related storage. Among them, eighty-seven percent agreed that if offline hearing can't take place online would be preferred.[43]

[38] *Supra* note 6.
[39] *Id.*
[40] *Supra* note 6.
[41] *Supra* note 6.
[42] *Id.*
[43] *Supra* note 6.

Such a process has resulted in maintaining greater efficiency, and diversity in the arbitral process. Due to online hearings, the arbitrators can attain dates and in this survey, sixty-five percent of respondents supported it. There is a need to focus on the adoption of soft laws which promote the practice of green arbitration. The "green pledge" needs to take seriously by the arbitrators. Carbon offsetting requires to be reduced which can be possible if there is less traveling and more hearing by online mode.[44]

## Challenges

Unfortunately, one-third of the respondent have expressed their concern that there is a requirement to improve ethnic diversity. It is the responsibility to carry the onus of enhancing diversity through their arbitrator choices. Since still thirty-four percent have emphasized that there is no growth done concerning ethnic diversity reflects that there is a necessity to have improvement. [45] It is found that AI still requires improvement in arbitration practice. Users were forced to adapt to online hearing during the Covid-19 pandemic. One needs to understand that AI can't substitute for human arbitrators as well as counsel. There is a requirement to maintain confidentiality and cybersecurity needs to prevail properly. The arbitrators online do come across online disturbances while proceeding with the online mode. Due to variations in time zones arranging the online hearing has been a difficult task. Virtual hearing has its difficulties during and after this pandemic.[46]

To improve visibility, it is essential to indulge in awareness camps focusing on promoting and educating students. To build proper visibility more mentoring programs should be organized to train the arbitrators.[47] Appointing authorities as well as institutions that follow an express policy for incorporating suggestions and appointing candidates belonging to larger diversity should be given the responsibility of an arbitrator. In 2021's Queen Mary survey fifty-nine percent of respondents admitted to this practice and forty-six have shown their consent that there should be counsel which would emphasize engaging the clients to appoint arbitrators belonging to greater diversity.[48] To keep interactions engaging forty percent of the respondent have agreed to conduct substantive hearings in person and virtual way. Of this sixty percent have supported that post covid client meetings would take place in offline and online modes. This depicts that the best interest of the client should be the priority of the arbitrators to follow any form the arbitration practice. There is a need to have reliability on technology, be environment friendly, express provisions in rules and laws to provide recognition to online hearings, and good quality hearings are the fundamental requirements which are required to be fulfilled in near future.[49]

[44] *Id.*
[45] *Supra* note 6.
[46] *Supra* note 6.
[47] *Id.*
[48] *Supra* note 6.
[49] *Id.*

## Future Trends

To make a nation arbitration friendly there are countries that are encouraging resolving ESG matters. It is expected that with a surge in contractual disputes in near future it can be under this ambit. The disputes between States and investors focusing on ESG aspects are among the new trends in international arbitration practice.[50] Also, in the future third-party funding is expected to enhance its strength. There is a need to have clarity concerning alternative means for maintaining investors' protection. With an objective to maintain standards ICCA's Guidelines and Code of Conduct meant for Adjudicators concerning global investment matters are published recently in 2021. This encourages the practice to maintain uniformity in its implementation. By creating awareness about the investment treaty focus has been made on encouraging a platform for their protection. It has welcomed blockchain, AI, and cryptocurrency matters which can be addressed under tech issues through arbitration. Investment treaties are helpful in creating a developed banking community that can prevail by incorporating arbitral procedures in these matters. Since there has been involved in renewable as well as low carbon projects if an issue arises it can be addressed under the ambit of construction arbitration which in the coming years requires assistance while focusing on new technology and its impact on the climate. This display that it is predicted that these practices will be constructive in strengthening international arbitration practices across the globe.[51] This shows that in the future the clients and the arbitration community would be engaging in these trends in much more depth and would have their own challenges with the passage of time which requires adequate monitoring and implementation of the new rules to maintain investors friendly relationships.

There has been a surge in caseloads which has indulged arbitral institutions in initiating funding and focused on adopting financial rules globally. For instance, ACICA has welcome third-party funding. A reasonable disclosure rule meant for third-party funding has been adopted by ICC. In nations like Latin America, the ECLAC has estimated that there will be a fall in its average growth in 2021. For nations that are facing oil and gas issues such as Bolivia and Venezuela, it is expected these disputes can be resolved by it. Due to complex issues and investors' protection international arbitration would be a great support.[52] To be a "destination" seat international arbitration must have effective sanctioning during the arbitral process and power should be vested in third parties.[53] Providing recognition to the seat and maintaining an impartial practice in the local legal mechanism would be beneficial in making a seat desirable.[54]

## Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought instability and has led to restrictions in supply which have resulted in the cancellation and postponement of projects. Since most of the sectors were badly affected by this pandemic the parties weren't able to fulfill their contractual obligations. This has resulted in impacting the connectivity between them. As a result,

[50]Ashley Jones, *International Arbitration in 2022: Top Trends*, LEXOLOGY (Feb. 7, 2022), https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=41db7bca-0ee0-4685-9250-22cdcaf5e399.
[51]*Supra* note 50.
[52]*Supra* note 22.
[53]*Supra* note 8.
[54]*Id.*

there has been a surge in these matters, and the relationship between the investor with the State has been put at stake. Cross-border issues are expected to have risen and international arbitration will be the most preferred way to resolve these disputes. The "new normal" practice has been welcomed worldwide across many nations which have considered this method to be efficient and cost friendlier to facilitate its process. With a rise in complexity in the economy in the near future, the output and investment flow are expected to get worse under such circumstances arbitral institutions would play a significant role.[55] There has been a surge in international arbitration filing till 2020 but unfortunately, with this pandemic, the FDI flow has fallen and the nations are now making an effort to recover from its impact. With the reform of ISDS and EU emphasis has been made on establishing an investment court which would be beneficial for gathering growth in international commercial activities.[56] With 2021's ICC rules emphasis has been made on preventing conflicts of interest. This has resulted in developing the relationship between the arbitrators as well as new representatives.[57] In the arbitral panel, there is a need to promote diversity for which among the counsel team there is a requirement of promoting diversity.[58] Users should be updated with transformative technology. The green arbitration practice would be beneficial in attaining the goal of sustainability. To be a desirable seat it is necessary that the seat must comply with all the valuable traits of international arbitration which would promote addressing cross-border issues amicably. AI utilization has been appreciated globally for specific tasks for enhancing international relations[59].

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[55] *Supra* note 3.
[56] *Id.*
[57] Salton, *supra* note 37.
[58] *Supra* note 6.
[59] *Annual Arbitration Survey 2023: The rise of machine learning,* BCLP (2023), https://www.bclplaw.com/a/web/tUW2SW6fjHrpXVrA7AfWkS/102932-arbitration-survey-2023-report_v10.pdf .

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# NOTES AND RELECTIONS

## ERANETISATION

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'Eranetisation' is the latest term to join the overall academic and policy-making jargon of the European Studies. The term refers to the modalities of the socialisation and acculturation environment faced by various experts who are interested in the cutting-edge, context-specific, and societal challenge-driven advanced research and innovation solutions hosted by the European Research Area framework field. This supranational governance construct has developed its unique milieu with its own Bourdieusian field dynamics, performances grounded in this distinct post-Westphalian habitus, and understandings of its sui generis doxa. To turn towards the European Research Area in various capital pursuits means to expose oneself to the supranational steering structures and channel individual or institutional interests along the lines of the EU-defined issue framings and rules of engagement. However, 'Eranetisation' looks beyond these formalities. The study of 'Eranetisation' is meant to better grasp the full scope of the European Union's intellectual resonance domestically and internationally in the advanced research, science, innovation, and technological advancement domains. 'Eranetisation' explains the attractiveness of the European Research Area. Through an in-depth enquiry into the collegial rapport-building routines, 'Eranetisation' elaborates that the European Research Area is a globally renowned magnet of the leading scientific achievements.

## Introduction

The European integration is ornated with its ability and propensity to generate various effects and incentive structures across multiple domains. The expanding reservoir of terms is fuelled by the perpetual inventiveness of policymakers and the advanced research sector. The 'Brussels Effect,' coined by Anu Bradford, is among some of the most widely debated and studied recent inventions (Eustace, 2024). 'European Dream' retains its appeal as a reference point for an ideal work setting and geopolitical belonging to an integrated space where quality goods, talent, and information circulate freely and securely (Prainsack & Toom, 2013, p. 78). 'Eurocracy' refers to the understanding of European Union (EU) institutions as a united social space with its unique interactive dynamics and quests for an influential position (Gaïti & Georgakakis, 2024, p. 454).

'Brusselisation' retains its enduring saliency. The term facilitates the analytical enquiry into the particularities of the socialisation milieu experienced by officials working or seconded to Brussels (Maurer & Wright, 2021, pp. 858, 861). 'Brusselisation' has a special role because it has served as an inspiration to coin a new term, 'Eranetisation.' The recently introduced European Research Area-related expression is a testimony to the ever-expanding EU capacity and the growing EU international standing. Each of these terms refers to the increasing ability of the EU to adopt and implement a joint stance internally and articulate its supranational interests internationally with an increasing capacity to shape the opinions and preferred action modes among a broad range of interlocutors.

In essence, 'Eranetisation' refers to the intellectual process of a comprehensive socialisation among beneficiaries of the EU-funded initiatives tied to the strategic governance framework of the European Research Area. This ad-hoc or incremental exposure and immersion into the European Research Area results in a better awareness about the valued competencies among various intellectual circles hosted by the European Research Area. Consequently, more engagement in sharing one's expertise with peers fosters like-mindedness and solidifies shared cognisance. Consequently, many of these interactions lead to more consolidated estimations concerning the best or preferable options for joint action. Facilitated by various funding mechanisms that are shouldered by the EU Framework Programmes and routine complementarities brought by other EU funding programmes with some advanced research and innovation support component (for some examples, see Stone, 2024, pp. 193, 198), 'Eranetisation' enables the study of the governance steering mechanisms and specific incentive structures that the EU has put in place to direct the talent flows and collegial networks towards increasingly consolidated efforts in addressing the contemporary grand challenges. 'Eranetisation' offers a more in-depth explanation about the value of bilaterally or multilaterally tailored research-intensive solutions to issues and challenges faced across the globe. 'Eranetisation' is an analytical enabler to study how politically recognised, the most pressing societal issues are faced by adopting tailored supranational policy measures and programming tools to pool the required talent, expertise, and know-how towards resolving these urgent needs. This is accomplished within a single integrated and internationally considerably open intellectual framework field, the European Research Area.

## Bourdieu-inspired practice theory

The notion of 'Eranetisation' emerges from the contemporary Bourdieu-inspired practice theory scholarship (Author, 2023). The contemporary reading of fields, habitus, capital, doxa, and agents are essential elements for the study of ever-evolving relationality ties of peer circles in multiple contexts, including the advanced research one. The burgeoning Bourdieu-inspired scholarship is heterogenous. This diversity of current research output does not stem only from the vast choice of chosen research methods and selected empirical contexts (Sus, 2024, p. 437). The way scholars across multiple disciplines and in various parts of the world have reinterpreted and re-actualised Bourdieu's ideas has given way to a myriad of perspectives on the fields, habitus, capital, doxa, and agents. This multitude of new thinking on Bourdieu's intellectual inheritance does not pose a

major challenge for 'Eranetisation.' Instead, it is treated as a valuable repository of diverse and highly relevant considerations that many authors bring into the academic spotlight when addressing intellectual riddles guided by their practice theory reasoning.

To clarify the understanding adopted in the study of Eranetisation, the framework field constitutes several subfields that may change in number and structure over time. Subfields may merge, become obsolete, or multiply. These changes largely depend on two aspects. The first one is centrally or supranational policy-level defined steering measures. The second one is the choices made by agents themselves to seek and maintain temporary or lasting allegiances with certain peers. The second aspect brings into the analytical picture various understandings and configurations of advanced research cores and peripheries shaped by multiple EU funding instruments, including the socio-economic implications that this positionality is claimed to maintain in Europe (Péti et al., 2024, p. 17), its neighbourhood (Góra, 2023, pp. 188-189) and elsewhere in the world (Echeverría-King et al., 2024, p. 405).

Habitus refers to the usual intellectual and social environment where the routine actions of agents occur. Habitus is socially conditioned. The longer the time that the agent has spent in one specific field, the more familiarity with the habitus and its collective rhythms this agent has obtained. Habitus informs the agent about various conditionalities that shape the overall field and a specific subfield or certain subfields at a certain period of time. The temporality is stressed because habitus evolves along with the field. Habitus is not static.

Capital refers to various cherished resources that are at agents' disposal to be exchanged, traded, and converted during their relational encounters and interactions in the framework field. The routines associated with the capital transactions follow the overall predispositions conditioned by habitus and doxa. Thereby, habitus and doxa provide implicit intellectual and social guideposts for capital pursuits exerted by agents. They interact in the field and its subfields in their attempt to increase their centrality and nodality through peer recognition and acclaim.

Doxa is informative about the tacit and perceptive aspects that feed into the relational dynamics among individual researchers and between two or multiple research circles structured as an expert group or a consortium. Doxa provides individually held and collectively upheld understandings of what is self-evident, self-explanatory, and outright obvious. Doxa embodies a certain type of truth that is considered natural by agents and guides their routine practices and relationality to others (Vakalopoulos, 2023, p. 262). One particular doxa governs a framework field and its subfields. However, depending on the length of time spent by an agent within the field and its subfields and individual prior experiences, including their earlier habituses and upheld doxas, the understanding among agents of the governing doxa may vary. The way a doxa of the field and its subfields resonates with each agent may vary because of these unique experiential and socialisation layers they have obtained throughout their academic and professional careers and diverse encounters.

The savviest agents who have the most in-depth understanding of the doxa are the ones who might prove to be the most versatile in capital transactions. Having a clear understanding of the uncontested truths captured by the doxa contributes to the boldness and ambition of an agent to engage in high-value capital acquisition pursuits and

promotion of their own centrality within the field. Agent's doxic aptness offers a sense of firm rootedness in the field, a deeply held appraisal of habitus, certitude of one's prowess in sustaining a central role in the field, and the ability to engage in highly valued capital exchange, trading, and co-creation.

## Supranational routines

The dynamic evolution of the EU should be even better reflected in the progression of the European Studies scholarship. While state-centred studies (for example, Abrantes & Vaz-Pinto, 2024) and country comparisons are widespread in European Studies, many supranational and post-Westphalian aspects of the EU deserve to be placed more prominently on the research agenda. Eranetisation is among the intellectual means to accomplish this need for a more supranationally and post-Westphalian-oriented analytical gaze. It is one of the intellectual avenues to make supranationally steered dynamics more understandable and better known among diverse audiences. The full added value of research, public funding, and other types of EU-offered support deserves more scholarly enquiry. Those are distinct incentive and steering measures that should not be equated with the national ones.

The in-built supranational nature of these instruments and strategic frameworks requires a recalibrated intellectual predisposition and commitment to colleagues worldwide that takes as the core commitment the aspirations of the European project, not one EU Member State. The post-Westphalian socialisation processes surpass amicable and close ties among EU Member States. A study of post-Westphalian socialisation processes requires studying in greater depth how agents build rapport with other fellow Europeans when contributing to various initiatives of the EU. The importance of this analytical enquiry is founded on the claim that the EU captures the grandest *sui generis* geopolitical and geoeconomic initiative of the 21st century. This joint endeavour is structured according to specific EU rules, practical guidance, and accountability requirements. The intellectual productivity and multifaceted societal value are not attained simply through accurate execution of the practical guidance and satisfactory completion of the accountability requirements. The full intellectual magnitude of the EU-fostered encounters in various formats, such as the strategic governance frameworks of which the European Research Area is one example, is attained through dedicated service among agents who have obtained an in-depth understanding of the contemporary requirements and nature of the European project and the specificity of several EU instruments tied to their area of expertise. Most importantly, their intellectual predisposition and corresponding actions are guided by the commitment to the post-Westphalian ideals and values. In such a manner, their supranationally-minded engagement facilitates the projection of the EU norms, values, ideas, knowledge, and preferred course of future action in a well-concerted manner with other fellow Europeans towards their colleagues and peers across the world.

It is enduringly important to look beyond the quantitative country comparisons to get a more fine-grained understanding of other allegiances than individually cherished institutional, academic discipline, local, regional, and country-specific ones. Without grasping those interactive components that predefine and anchor agents' motivations to the European Research Area, it is not possible to realise the full value added delivered

by this EU strategic framework. The intellectual virtuosity exerted by the responsible EU institutions in designing and overseeing the governance modalities and funding tools supporting the European Research Area to strengthen the international projection of its post-Westphalian stance deserves to be addressed in more nuance in the future scholarly enquiry. Namely, the European Research Area is an admirable and multi-dimensional resource for putting many commitments presented through the EU external action into practice and tangible actions on the ground across the world.

## Concluding remarks

The importance of the continuous study of Eranetisation is linked to the unique administrative and socialisation space created for the strategic steering of advanced research and science to address the contemporary challenges via the European Research Area. The specificities of the governance set-up and the rules of engagement differ from those characterising other EU policies and administrative spaces, such as the meeting rooms and virtual convening spaces of the EU institutions where Brusselisation is fostered among a vast number of officials representing several administrative ranks and institutional affiliations.

The continuous strengthening of European unity with an international outreach component evolves in multiple formats and forums. The European Research Area is one of such essential strategic frameworks. Since its launch in 2000, the European Research Area has experienced a significant expansion and evolution. Thus, the study of Eranetisation should account for the fluid nature of this framework and subfield-specific developments at specific points in time. Only with such attention to the temporality of certain collegial relationality patterns is it possible to properly account for the nature of Eranetisation. At the centre of the Eranetisation scholarly enquiry is a social process of peer ties, expert-level interactions, and reproduction of certain stances and truths through shared practices of capital transactions. These reproduction patterns are not static. This attests to the enduring saliency of the enquiry into the characteristics of Eranetisation and the exploration of what draws most past, present, and aspiring beneficiaries of the EU funding and participation in the project consortiums.

The types of capital exchanged and co-created across the European Research Area are diverse. Scientifically excellent and collegially praised accomplishments are only one of them. The discussions revolving around the third mission of academia are the most emblematic examples of multiple forms of capital. These deliberations refer to the myriad of roles and functions shouldered by the contemporary academic and advanced research sectors. Moreover, the European Research Area is expected to offer solutions to various societal challenges. Thereby, the multitude of expertise brought to, exchanged, and co-created within the European Research Area requires acknowledging that there is no one standardised capital traded across the European Research Area. Those are multiple types of capital or capitals. These are transmutable capitals. They are constantly shuffled across the European Research Area framework field.

The Eranetisation studies will not lose their importance because a better and more nuanced understanding of what drives various entities towards the European Research Area framework field and what keeps the longstanding agents in it are crucial answers to the European project at large. Equally, those who are reluctant to participate after

their first involvements with this governance framework deserve equal attention to better grasp what stands in the way of certain talent and expertise to become 'Eranetised' and fed into the thematically relevant formats shouldered by the European Research Area.

Multiple instruments that support the European Research Area are aimed at offering feasible, pragmatic, and tailored solutions to some of the most pressing contemporary challenges faced in various parts of the globe. Thus, the study of Eranetisation is instrumental to understanding the incentive structure that pools in the EU supranational direction various expertise for it to be channelled in time-bound, action-oriented interventions across the world that cover multiple EU policy areas. The actions hosted by the strategic framework field of the European Research Area address issues across a broad scope of EU policies. Thereby, Eranetisation captures a structural incentive that is not restricted solely to the research and innovation domain. Eranetisation functions as a complementary technique to facilitate the attraction of niche-specific or world-class expertise to the EU-supported action that does not substitute the steering and convening measures adopted for other EU policies. Eranetisation occurs simultaneously to those other processes as a complementary socialisation element to the benefit of concerted action. Therefore, so-to-say, 'going ERA' is among one of the measures of how to contribute to supranationally defined milestones.

Importantly, other EU policies and their corresponding policy steering wheels might deliver incentive measures different from those fostered through 'Eranetisation'. Consequently, future research should attempt to demarcate the boundaries of 'Eranetisation' and distinguish this intellectual and collegiality-driven, result-oriented incentive measure from those projected through the implementation means chosen for other EU sectorial policies or issue-specific frameworks. Complementarities between 'going ERA' and being influenced by other EU supranational incentive structures should be properly accounted for. It is essential to avoid transforming 'Eranetisation' into an overstretched or empty signifier.

The wealth of EU financial resources allocated for diverse programming tools, such as the EU Framework Programmes and other schemes, ensures the required rich empirical sources for this research thread. There are plenty of avenues for a more in-depth enquiry into the multifaceted forms of 'Eranetisation' experienced across diverse professions and experts engaged in the daily collaborative routines of the European Research Area. Notably, scholars and academic staff are naturally placed in the limelight. Nevertheless, other EU beneficiaries, such as academic administrators and private and non-governmental establishments, should not be neglected because of their unique mandates and perspectives on the value and assets offered by the European Research Area.

Most importantly, the open-mindedness characterising the present-day European Studies towards cross- and multi-disciplinary research designs and collective scholarly engagements works in favour of a comprehensive and nuanced future study of 'Eranetisation'. Altogether, this is not a groundbreaking exploratory path for the European Studies. 'Eranetisation' is a noteworthy incremental sign of the overall expansion and evolution of European Studies occurring simultaneously with the development of the EU itself as an ever more capable, increasingly consolidated, and influential supranational entity with a solid international footprint and diverse ties to various parts of the world.

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## NOTAS E REFLEXÕES

# A GUERRA SEM ROSTO: ESTRATÉGIA, ÉTICA E PÓS-COLONIALISMO EM OS *CUS DE JUDAS*

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## Introdução

Publicado originalmente em 1979 – apenas cinco anos após a Revolução de 25 de abril – *Os Cus de Judas*, de António Lobo Antunes, afirmou-se como um testemunho literário incontornável para a compreensão da Guerra Colonial (1961–1974) e das suas repercussões profundas na sociedade portuguesa. No âmbito das Relações Internacionais, a obra transcende a dimensão estritamente ficcional ao inscrever a experiência individual da guerra no processo mais amplo de descolonização que reconfigurou o sistema internacional na segunda metade do século XX. Ao evidenciar o colapso do império colonial português, o romance enfatiza igualmente o subsequente reposicionamento de Portugal numa ordem internacional pós-colonial, marcada pela redefinição das hierarquias de poder e das relações entre os antigos impérios e os territórios recém-independentes.

A atualidade da obra reside precisamente na necessidade de revisitar o passado colonial não como um episódio histórico definitivamente encerrado, mas como um processo cujas implicações persistem na memória coletiva, na identidade nacional e nas dinâmicas políticas e diplomáticas contemporâneas. Nesse sentido, a leitura de *Os Cus de Judas* inscreve-se num contexto de renovado debate público sobre justiça transicional[1], memória histórica e legado do colonialismo, temas que continuam a gerar um amplo debate na sociedade portuguesa.

Contudo, *Os Cus de Judas* não é apenas um mero romance sobre a guerra: é também um exercício de resistência contra o esquecimento, uma denúncia da desumanização inerente ao conflito armado e uma reflexão incisiva sobre os seus limites éticos. O próprio título remete para um espaço inóspito e hostil – o lugar onde "Judas perdeu as botas" – metáfora que condensa o sentimento de abandono, deslocação e absurdo vivido pelos soldados portugueses em Angola. Através dessa geografia simbólica, o texto revela a

[1] No plano conceptual, a justiça transicional é entendida como o conjunto de mecanismos jurídicos e políticos destinados a lidar com legados de violência massiva (Teitel, 2000). Embora Portugal não tenha desenvolvido instrumentos formais dessa natureza relativamente à Guerra Colonial, o debate público recente sugere a emergência de formas simbólicas de reconhecimento e elaboração histórica.

dimensão traumática da experiência colonial, sugerindo que a guerra não termina com o cessar das hostilidades formais, mas prolonga-se no âmago dos seus protagonistas. Tal como confessa o narrador:

"*Tão esquisito, entende, que me pergunto às vezes se a guerra acabou de facto ou continua ainda, algures em mim, com os seus nojentos odores a suor, e de pólvora e de sangue*" (Antunes, 1979, p. 157).

Esta persistência do conflito no plano subjetivo permite articular a obra enquanto uma análise mais ampla sobre memória coletiva e o trauma pós-colonial. A presente "Nota e Reflexão" sustenta que *Os Cus de Judas* antecipa debates centrais das Relações Internacionais – nomeadamente a centralidade da ética na gestão da violência e a dimensão política da memória no espaço pós-colonial.

## A Guerra como Fenómeno Não Linear

Ao longo da narrativa, António Lobo Antunes recusa apresentar a guerra como uma dinâmica conflitual pautada pela racionalidade estratégica[2]. Pelo contrário, o narrador evidencia a erosão do sentido e da linguagem num contexto de conflito:

"*Nunca as palavras me pareceram tão supérfluas como nesse tempo de cinza, desprovidas do sentido que me habituara a dar-lhes, privadas de peso, de timbre, de significado, de cor, à medida que trabalhava o coto descascado de um membro ou reintroduzia numa barriga os intestinos que sobravam, nunca os protestos me surgiram tão vãos, nunca os exílios jacobinos de Paria se me afiguraram tão estúpidos.*" (Antunes, 1979, p.43).

A guerra surge, assim, desprovida de coerência interna, marcada por uma lógica errática que encontra eco na conceptualização proposta por Abel Cabral Couto em *Elementos de Estratégia* (1988). Para Cabral Couto, a guerra constitui um fenómeno de natureza intrinsecamente complexa e imprevisível, cujas dinâmicas tendem a escapar a qualquer tentativa de controlo racional. Esta leitura permite enquadrar o romance no debate mais amplo sobre os limites da racionalidade estratégica em contextos de guerra irregular e conflito assimétrico.

No romance, essa não linearidade manifesta-se de forma particularmente evidente através de três dimensões centrais: (i) os soldados, imersos num estado de alienação que os impede de compreender o propósito último do conflito; (ii) a natureza frequentemente contraditória e absurda das ordens recebidas; e (iii) a figura de um inimigo simultaneamente omnipresente e invisível, que se confunde com a paisagem e com a população civil. Estes elementos consolidam a perceção de que o horror da guerra se autonomiza dos seus próprios intervenientes, adquirindo uma dinâmica quase autónoma, destituída de finalidade inteligível.

A própria estrutura narrativa da obra – marcada por analepses e prolepses constantes, bem como por um fluxo de consciência fragmentário – reforça essa ideia de descontinuidade. O leitor não é conduzido de forma condescendente pelo autor, sendo

[2] A racionalidade estratégica refere-se à articulação coerente entre meios e fins na condução da guerra, subordinando o uso da força a objetivos políticos definidos; formulação inspirada na conceção clausewitziana da guerra como continuação da política por outros meios

antes confrontado com um relato convulso e descontínuo que espelha, no plano formal, a desordem psicológica e moral do conflito.

## A Falência do Comando Militar e a Ética na Gestão da Violência

Na continuidade da crítica à racionalidade estratégica do conflito, o romance aprofunda a sua denúncia ao expor o cinismo e a incompetência do comando militar. As figuras de autoridade surgem frequentemente retratadas como burocratas distantes da realidade operacional, mais preocupados em preservar uma aparência de controlo do que em compreender a dimensão humana da guerra:

"*Os majores em reboliço abandonavam os copos de uísque, de cubos de gelo substituídos por dados de pôquer, para eretos como soldados de chumbo barrigudos, saudarem a entrada de uma senhora que qualquer coronel subitamente urbano comboiava, deixando atrás de si, percetível na tremura dos galões, um rastro cochichado de cio de caserna*." (Antunes, 1979, p.13).

Esta representação literária contrasta com a conceção defendida por Abel Cabral Couto em *Elementos de Estratégia* (1988), onde o autor sublinha a responsabilidade ética dos comandantes, cujo imperativo de ação deveria consistir numa gestão prudente e deliberada da violência, impondo-lhe limites claros e subordinando-a a um propósito estratégico previamente definido.

Todavia, o que se observa em *Os Cus de Judas* é precisamente o inverso: uma estratégia marcada por limitações crónicas no plano ético e operacional. Em primeiro lugar, a violência tende a autonomizar-se, convertendo-se num fim em si mesma, destituída de uma finalidade clara. Em segundo lugar, os soldados são retratados como vítimas de uma máquina institucional que os consome, desprovidos de apoio psicológico ou orientação moral consistente. Por fim, a guerra surge descrita como um "*monte de destroços e ruínas*" (Antunes, 1979, p. 172), alimentado pela "*estúpida violência das bombas*" (ibidem), imagem que reforça a perceção de um conflito sem direção nem responsabilidade claramente assumida.

A obra sugere, assim, que quando a liderança militar se aliena da realidade tática e humana do conflito, a violência tende a degenerar num processo de institucionalização da barbárie, onde o sofrimento dos combatentes deixa de constituir critério relevante de decisão. Nesse sentido, a falência do comando não é apenas operacional, passando a ser sobretudo ética.

## Memória e Trauma: A Guerra que Não Acaba

Em *Os Cus de Judas*, de António Lobo Antunes, a guerra não termina com o silenciar das armas. Pelo contrário, ela prolonga-se na memória daqueles que lhe sobreviveram, como uma ferida aberta que resiste à cicatrização. O regresso do narrador a Lisboa não representa um verdadeiro retorno à normalidade, mas antes a transição para uma nova forma de conflito – agora interior e silencioso.

As imagens do conflito persistem de forma intrusiva, assombrando o quotidiano e impedindo qualquer reconciliação plena com o passado. O narrador sente-se perseguido

por "*caixões que me aguardam*" (Antunes, 1979, p. 157) mergulhando numa melancolia crónica que denuncia a impossibilidade de dissociar a experiência vivida da identidade presente. A guerra, nesse sentido, deixa de ser um acontecimento delimitado pelo tempo para se transformar numa condição existencial.

Esta representação literária aproxima-se daquilo que identificaríamos como perturbação de stress pós-traumático, suscitando um debate contemporâneo relevante sobre os efeitos psicológicos duradouros do conflito em antigos combatentes – temática que tem vindo a ser progressivamente discutida em Portugal (Ribeiro, 2004). O romance antecipa, assim, uma reflexão que ultrapassa o seu tempo histórico, ao revelar que a violência institucionalizada produz marcas que não se extinguem com a assinatura de acordos ou com o fim formal das hostilidades.

Mais do que narrar o passado, fica demonstrado que a guerra raramente pode ser "superada" ou "esquecida". Ela impõe-se a quem a viveu como uma memória persistente, exigindo confrontação crítica e um reconhecimento público das suas consequências humanas. Neste sentido, o trauma individual descrito pelo narrador converte-se também em metáfora de uma memória coletiva inacabada, tal como analisado por Ribeiro (2004) no contexto das disputas pós-coloniais sobre identidade e lembrança.

## O Contexto Histórico e a Guerra Colonial em Angola

A Guerra Colonial em Angola (1961–1974) constituiu um conflito de natureza assimétrica, no qual as forças portuguesas enfrentaram movimentos independentistas como o Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA), a Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA) e a União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA). No plano estratégico, Portugal adotou predominantemente uma doutrina de contrassubversão amplamente descrita por Cann (1997) como a "*Portuguese Way of War*", assente no controlo territorial, operações de neutralização e guerra psicológica. Paralelamente, verificaram-se práticas repressivas que incluíram tortura, deslocações forçadas de populações e massacres (Cann,1997). Apesar da sua racionalização, esta abordagem revelou limitações profundas na dimensão humana do conflito. A tentativa de conter os focos de insurgência foi acompanhada por uma escalada de violência que agravou a desumanização generalizada. Entre as forças portuguesas, contabilizaram-se mais de 8.000 mortos e milhares de combatentes regressaram com sequelas psicológicas duradouras (Ribeiro, 2004). Entre a população angolana, os números são ainda mais expressivos, incluindo mortos, deslocados e vítimas de repressão sistemática (Birmingham, 2021).

É este enquadramento histórico que dá a *Os Cus de Judas* uma particular relevância. O romance funciona como uma forma de dar a conhecer um sofrimento invisibilizado, expondo as consequências íntimas e duradouras da guerra. A violência não é apenas descrita enquanto fenómeno estratégico ou militar; surge antes como experiência existencial que corrói progressivamente a estabilidade emocional dos seus protagonistas:

*"As madrugadas, de resto, são o meu tormento, gordurosas, geladas, azedas, repletas de amargura e de rancor. Nada vive ainda e, todavia, uma ameaça indefinível ganha corpo, aproxima-se, persegue-nos, incha-nos no peito, impede-nos de respirar livremente."* (Antunes, 1979, p.30).

Para além da devastação material, a Guerra Colonial provocou uma profunda divisão na sociedade portuguesa. Durante décadas, o conflito permaneceu envolta num silêncio social e político significativo, sendo a literatura um dos primeiros espaços de problematização desse legado. Nesse sentido, *Os Cus de Judas* constituiu uma intervenção decisiva ao romper com essa omissão coletiva, contribuindo para o debate público acerca da guerra e das suas consequências.

## A Literatura como Testemunho: Ética, Memória e Justiça

*Os Cus de Judas* extravasa largamente a categoria de "romance de guerra" para se afirmar como uma intervenção crítica contra processos de silenciamento histórico. Ao dar voz tanto às vítimas como aos perpetradores da violência, a obra desafia as narrativas oficiais que procuraram atenuar ou justificar o conflito colonial. A literatura assume, assim, uma função ética: não apenas narrar acontecimentos, mas expor a dimensão humana da violência e interpelar o leitor quanto à responsabilidade coletiva que dela decorre. Esta dimensão testemunhal inscreve-se numa tradição literária mais ampla. Em *A Costa dos Murmúrios* (Jorge, 1988*)*, a guerra é explorada a partir das fraturas íntimas que produz nas famílias dos militares. Já a obra *Se Isto é um Homem* (Levi, 1986), constitui um exemplo paradigmático da literatura enquanto preservação da memória face à barbárie.

No contexto português, onde o debate sobre a Guerra Colonial permaneceu durante anos marcado pelo silêncio e ambivalência, *Os Cus de Judas* contribuiu para a construção de uma memória coletiva crítica, obrigando o país a confrontar o seu passado colonialista. Neste sentido, a obra funciona como instrumento heurístico para pensar os desafios contemporâneos de responsabilização histórica no sistema internacional. A obra demonstra como a literatura pode funcionar como instrumento analítico nas Relações Internacionais, revelando dimensões éticas e simbólicas que frequentemente escapam ao discurso político.

## Paralelos com Debates Atuais e Justiça Transicional

A relevância de *Os Cus de Judas* ultrapassa o seu enquadramento histórico imediato. Num sistema internacional ainda marcado por conflitos armados e processos incompletos de reconciliação, a obra recorda que a guerra não se reduz a cálculo estratégico: ela produz efeitos humanos, políticos e simbólicos de longa duração. Neste sentido, o romance dialoga diretamente com debates contemporâneos sobre justiça transicional, memória histórica e responsabilidade coletiva.

No caso português, o processo de confrontação do passado colonial tem sido caracterizado por ambivalência e relativa lentidão quando comparado com experiências como a da Alemanha no pós-guerra ou da África do Sul após o *apartheid* [3], onde mecanismos institucionais de verdade e reconciliação desempenharam um papel central na construção de narrativas públicas de reconhecimento e reparação, ainda que se trate

[3] Desmond Tutu destacou-se pelo seu papel na Comissão de Verdade e Reconciliação sul-africana, enquanto os Julgamentos de Nuremberga estabeleceram um precedente jurídico internacional para responsabilizar crimes de guerra e contra a humanidade.

de processos historicamente distintos e não diretamente equiparáveis. Portugal não implementou estruturas formais equivalentes no que respeita à Guerra Colonial, o que contribuiu para um prolongado silêncio social e político. Todavia, nas últimas décadas tem-se observado um renovado interesse público. Iniciativas como a exposição "Guerra Colonial: 50 Anos Depois" promovida pelo Museu do Aljube (Museu do Aljube, 2024) e os relatórios da Comissão para a Igualdade e Contra a Discriminação Racial (CIDCR, 2023) têm contribuído para uma maior visibilidade das consequências psicológicas e sociais do conflito.

Estes desenvolvimentos sugerem que a revisitação do passado colonial permanece um processo em curso. Ao expor a dimensão traumática e ética da guerra, *Os Cus de Judas* antecipa e alimenta essa reflexão, funcionando como catalisador de uma memória crítica que interpela não apenas a sociedade portuguesa, mas também o modo como os Estados a integram ou evitam integrar.

## O Legado de Os Cus de Judas: Literatura, Memória e Justiça

Um dos principais méritos de Os Cus de Judas reside no facto de se tratar de um dos primeiros relatos na primeira pessoa acerca do conflito colonial. A obra inscreve-se como um registo literário que persiste na linguagem, no silêncio e na experiência daqueles que viveram a guerra. Ao dar voz ao trauma dos soldados e das populações afetadas, o autor transforma a literatura num espaço simbólico de resistência, orientado para a preservação da memória e para a problematização crítica da identidade coletiva portuguesa. Num contexto em que Portugal continua a debater o legado do seu passado colonial, o livro mantém-se como intervenção relevante no aprofundamento dessa reflexão.

A receção crítica confirmou e destacou essa importância. A obra foi amplamente reconhecida como marco da literatura portuguesa do pós-25 de Abril, tendo Maria Alzira Seixo sublinhado a sua inovação formal e a coragem temática (Seixo, 1999). No plano literário, é frequentemente colocada em diálogo com *A Costa dos Murmúrios*, de Lídia Jorge, pela forma como ambas as obras evidenciam que a guerra não afeta apenas os combatentes, mas também as estruturas familiares e sociais que os rodeiam.

Para além da literatura, outras expressões artísticas contribuíram para a elaboração pública da memória da Guerra Colonial. No cinema, obras como *Non, ou a Vã Glória de Mandar*[4] abordaram criticamente o legado histórico e simbólico da guerra e do colonialismo português, problematizando a narrativa épica associada ao passado imperial. No panorama musical, figuras como José Mário Branco e Zeca Afonso[5] refletiram, de formas distintas, as tensões políticas e sociais associadas ao período. Estas manifestações culturais revelam que a memória da guerra se construiu também fora do discurso historiográfico e institucional.

Num momento em que persistem debates sobre justiça transicional, responsabilidade histórica e legado colonial no espaço pós-colonial português, *Os Cus de Judas* mantém plena

[4] *Non, ou a Vã Glória de Mandar* é um filme português de 1990 realizado por Manoel de Oliveira. Mistura reflexão histórica e narrativa poética sobre Portugal, cruzando o presente da guerra colonial em África com episódios do passado nacional.

[5] No plano musical, a crítica ao contexto político e à Guerra Colonial encontrou expressão em canções de intervenção como *Menina dos Olhos Tristes* (1971) e *A Morte Saiu à Rua* (1969), de Zeca Afonso, bem como em temas como *Inquietação* (1972), de José Mário Branco, cuja produção artística refletiu as tensões sociais, políticas e morais associadas ao período final do Estado Novo e ao conflito colonial.

relevância analítica. Ao questionar a racionalidade estratégica da guerra e evidenciar as suas implicações éticas, a obra contribui para uma reflexão crítica sobre os limites da violência organizada e sobre a forma como os Estados enfrentam – ou adiam – a confrontação com o seu passado. A releitura do romance demonstra, assim, que a memória da guerra constitui uma dimensão estruturante da identidade internacional portuguesa e influencia, ainda hoje, os modos de projeção externa do Estado no sistema internacional. Deste modo, *Os Cus de Judas* permanece uma obra central para compreender não apenas a Guerra Colonial, mas também os desafios éticos e políticos que continuam a moldar a relação de Portugal com o mundo.

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## NOTES AND RELECTIONS

# THE IMPACT OF SMALL STATES ON INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS: THE POWER OF KAZAKHSTAN IN THE UNITED NATIONS DECISIONS

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## Introduction

We see that small states are generally not effective in international relations and power struggles. From past to present, big states have directed international relations and problems, but some features and positions of small states from other states have made them countries with privileges and influence in some areas. As we examined in the article, Kazakhstan is an example of such countries. Kazakhstan used its experience and knowledge of nuclear weapons remaining in the Soviet era to limit and control these weapons. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, although Kazakhstan had a large number of nuclear weapons, It left them completely on its own will. For more than thirty years, Kazakhstan has played an active role in various organizations and initiatives, especially the United Nations, on the limitation and control of nuclear weapons, and has been both a supporter and a pioneering country. The findings we have obtained at the end of the research show that small states can also be an powerful and influential country in international relations, thanks to the features that distinguish them from other countries in some issues.

For centuries, the leadership of the great-superpowers and their conflicts of interest have always been the main focus on the international scene. Small states, on the other hand, generally tried to provide their own security by acting jointly with one or more of the big states or to indirectly influence by keeping good relations. However, especially with the end of the 20th century and the 21st century, it has been seen that small states have a say and influence in international relations by following certain policies and stages. In this regard, he can cite Sweden's influence in the European Union in establishing restrictions on the Green Environment and on chemicals that harm its forests and lakes. (Kronsell, 2002) Kazakhstan, which was one of the states that declared its independence with the dissolution of the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War, has always been one of the leading or supporting countries in the limitation of nuclear power since then. The article analyzes the period from Kazakhstan's declaration of independence in 1991 up to 2018. It specifically examines Kazakhstan's proactive stance and influential role in

international relations, particularly in the domain of nuclear disarmament. The discussion underscores Kazakhstan's significant contributions within the United Nations and other global platforms, showcasing how its policies and initiatives have shaped discussions and decisions regarding nuclear weapons control. The article provides a comprehensive overview of Kazakhstan's strategic efforts and achievements in this critical area over nearly three decades. Since a plan, action or idea does not constantly emerge every year and every month, it was deemed more appropriate to examine it within such a period.

Due to its Soviet heritage, Kazakhstan had the opportunity to emerge as a new nuclear power in the international arena. However, the founding President of Kazakhstan thought that this could be the beginning of many problems. Moreover, the administration of independent Kazakhstan would not have wanted to acquire such power, despite popular objections, which had suffered over the years from nuclear tests. The Kazakh people had suffered a great deal from nuclear tests over the years. Indeed, the central location of the Soviet nuclear tests was the territory of Kazakhstan. From 1947 to 1991, 456 tests were carried out on the territory of Kazakhstan, mainly at the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site. Of these nuclear explosions, 30 were detonated above ground, 86 in the air and 340 underground. These tests are nuclear tests with hundreds of times more devastating effects than the bombs dropped on Japan at the end of the Second World War. These nuclear tests are the main reason for some of the ongoing environmental problems and low birth rates since the establishment of Kazakhstan. As a result, after calculating the profit and loss, the founding President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev decided to give up nuclear weapons. Kazakhstan not only gave up on nuclear weapons, but later became one of the leading countries in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. (Yermilov, 2006)

Nursultan Nazarbayev, who took a leading role in nuclear disarmament, made great contributions to Kazakhstan's becoming an important central country in Asia, and its acceptance as a mediator and a respected country in international politics. At the event held on June 18, 2009 to mark the 20th anniversary of the cessation of nuclear tests, Nazarbayev proposed to declare August 29 as the day of cessation of nuclear weapons all over the world. As a result of long negotiations, it was presented to the First Committee of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly as a draft resolution on August 29, International Day for Combating Nuclear Weapons Testing, as a joint proposal of 26 states, including Kazakhstan. The proposal was unanimously adopted at the 64th session of the UN General Assembly on 2 December 2009. The decision was presented by Kazakhstan in commemoration of the closure of the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site on August 29, 1991. Adopted by the UN General Assembly, this resolution specifically calls for raising awareness of the harmful effects of nuclear weapon test explosions or other nuclear explosions, and for stopping them as one of the means to achieve the goal of a nuclear weapons-free world. (Demirtürk, 2020)

It is stated that the closure of the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site on August 29, 1991 was a symbolic decision for both Kazakhstan and the international community, and the said decision inspired the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996. In the case of Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev has been nominated several times for the Nobel Peace Prize. In 2017, Alyn Ware, Director of the Peace Science and Research

Institute in Switzerland, nominated Kazakhstan President Nazarbayev for the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in nuclear disarmament. (Aliyeva, 2017)

## A brief overview of structuring lines of Kazakhstan's foreign policy about nuclear disarmament

Kazakhstan's emergence as a global advocate for nuclear disarmament is rooted in its painful past as the primary testing ground for Soviet nuclear weapons. From 1947 to 1991, the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site witnessed 456 nuclear tests, leaving a devastating legacy of environmental degradation and health risks for the Kazakh people. In 1991, under the pioneering leadership of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan decided to close the Semipalatinsk test site and declared August 29 as the International Day Against Nuclear Tests. President Nazarbayev's decision to renounce nuclear weapons positioned Kazakhstan as a key player in advancing global disarmament efforts. Kazakhstan's initiatives have significantly influenced the progress of non-proliferation measures at the United Nations. For instance, Kazakhstan played a crucial role in the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996 and has been actively working towards its universalization. Kazakhstan's efforts have been recognized and supported at the international level. The adoption of August 29 as the International Day Against Nuclear Tests by the UN General Assembly, proposed by Kazakhstan, is a significant step demonstrating Kazakhstan's diplomatic influence. Additionally, President Nazarbayev's nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize signifies the global acknowledgment of Kazakhstan's leadership in nuclear disarmament. Kazakhstan advances its disarmament agenda through strategic partnerships and multilateral platforms. Collaborations with international organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and regional initiatives like the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone underscore Kazakhstan's commitment to regional security and global disarmament. Looking ahead, Kazakhstan continues to strengthen its role in global disarmament efforts. Challenges such as opposition from nuclear-armed states and geopolitical complexities persist. However, Kazakhstan's proactive stance, supported by scientific expertise and diplomatic competence, positions it as a strong advocate for a nuclear-free world. In sum, Kazakhstan's foreign policy on nuclear issues at the UN is shaped by its historical responsibilities, strategic vision, and proactive diplomacy. By advocating for disarmament, promoting dialogue, and strengthening international cooperation, Kazakhstan continues to shape the global agenda on nuclear security and disarmament.

## How can a Small State impact on the United Nations Agenda

The Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty, approved by the UN General Assembly on July 7, 2017, is one of Kazakhstan's most important diplomatic achievements. Because this agreement was boycotted by the nuclear powers in the UN such as the USA, Russia, China, France and the UK. However, the agreement was accepted with the approval of 122 countries. It is stated that although it does not have any sanction or binding feature, it is aimed to abolish nuclear weapons in the future. It constitutes one of the most valuable examples that small states can have an impact in international relations despite the objections of large states. (Kimball, 2022) We can say that the biggest factors in Kazakhstan's ability

to have this effect are undoubtedly the fact that it is a member of the United Nations, and that it has been damaged by nuclear tests in the past and banned them in its own country, and its efforts to limit and ban it globally.

Based on all these issues, we will examine the impact of Kazakhstan on the United Nations' policies on the restriction and prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by listing them under four headings. These; (1) **Reputation and expectation on behavior**, (2) **Expertise and knowledge as an important resources in the environmental policy process,** (3) **The importance of national policies as examples of success**, and (4) **Successful coordination of national interest**.

## Reputation: Kazakhstan as a Forerunner State in Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and Tests Issues

Caution is required when making causal links between reputation and behavior because they are subjective and interpretive. While we proceed carefully on this issue, we will come to the conclusion that the work done by the United Nations member states due to Kazakhstan's attitude is positively interpreted. In international relations, previous past experiences, historical events, negotiations, previous attitudes and behaviors determine the conditions and future of the environment between the sides. The sides hold talks taking into account their previous attitudes. We will defend the reputation it has earned for the commitments it has made and fulfilled in work on nuclear disarmament and limitation of nuclear testing in Kazakhstan. So much so that Kazakhstan has taken an active role in international negotiations, cooperation and organizations since 1991, when it gained its independence. On August 29, 1991, with a historical decree of the Founding President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, it was decided to close the Semey (Semipalatinsk) Nuclear Test Site, one of the largest nuclear test sites in the world. Other countries followed, which ended the work of their nuclear test sites, and as a result, the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996 paved the way. (Report, 2022) 29 August, which is a historical day, was accepted as the "Day of Combating Nuclear Weapons Testing" by the decision of the United Nations (UN). This year, the world celebrates the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the day in question. Thanks to the Founding President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan has emerged from the status of the world's fourth nuclear weapons arsenal and quickly became one of the leading countries in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. (Ashimov, 2020) Thanks to all these political and diplomatic activities, it has the reputation of being an "activist and "pioneer" on nuclear disarmament and its limitation.

Many policy makers, heads of international organizations, country leaders, in the negotiations on nuclear disarmament, say that Kazakhstan's international initiatives provide them with a great advantage and assistance in the work done in the United Nations and other organizations. For example, ex-UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, who visited the Semipalatinsk test site in April 2010, called on the world to stop nuclear testing, exemplary for the country's international visibility. In his speech at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Leaders' Summit in 2010, Moon used the following statements: "The President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, stopped the Semipalatinsk tests thanks to his distinguished visionary

leadership. Kazakhstan, which was once a center for nuclear armament, has now set an example to the whole world and the countries in the region as a nuclear-free zone. Kazakhstan's performance shows that reputation and past relations in international relations-studies support the suggestion that it can become important resources for small states and show their effects. (Halper, 2010)

## The importance expertise and knowledge

The need for experts on nuclear disarmament comes to the fore and the studies to be carried out on this subject are based on expert opinion. What we commonly refer to as nuclear weapons and power concerns are highly complex and detailed issues that often require input from technical and scientific experts. In this regard, Kazakhstan has been training both diplomats and scientists on nuclear weapons and disarmament for 30 years. It is one of the leading countries in terms of Uranium, which is the basic building block of nuclear power, it also acts cautiously on uranium. With the decision to disarm, Kazakhstan has also cleared the Central Asian region from possible dangers. In this context, with the agreement signed on September 8, 2006, five Central Asian countries created a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the region. Kazakhstan's founding President Nazarbayev succeeded in making this issue an effective tool of Kazakhstan's original foreign policy and still maintains its advantageous position today. On August 27, 2015, Kazakhstan and the International Atomic Energy Agency signed an agreement to establish an Enriched Uranium Bank in Kazakhstan to provide fuel supply in this area. The opening of the said organization took place on August 29, 2017 at the Ulba Metallurgy Factory with the participation of Nursultan Nazarbayev. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, a nuclear fuel bank could only be established in a country that did not have nuclear weapons. Kazakhstan has already built this trust with the work it has carried out since 1991. This proposal envisaged that all countries wishing to benefit from nuclear energy would be able to obtain energy safely and legitimately from a single center. According to this, any state that wants to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes will be able to apply to Kazakhstan for the uranium fuel it needs if it has problems with its other resources. As a matter of fact, Kazakhstan has 12 percent of the world's uranium resources and managed to produce 43 percent of the world's uranium in 2019. The state company Kazatomprom operates in the world's legitimate uranium production area, with operations in six states. (Oxford Analytica, 2017)

Scientific knowledge about nuclear power and weapons, that is, what is required to become a nuclear power, materials to be used, what elements and minerals are required, what are their chemical compositions, what are their dangers and advantages are essential. At the same time, a good knowledge of cost-benefit analysis and determination of financial instruments should be obtained while choosing policy, economic equipment and technology. With these considerations in mind, Kazakhstan has a broader level of national expertise than any other non-nuclear-powered country, and has more extensive experience in the abolition and prevention of nuclear weapons than any other United Nations member state. Similarly, Kazakhstani diplomats play an active role in decision-making processes, especially in institutions such as the United Nations General Assembly and International Atomic Energy. Despite the objections of the member states of the UN Security Council, we see the great role played by Kazakhstan in the success of the

General Assembly to pass a resolution. As can be seen, Kazakhstan's knowledge, experience and expertise on nuclear disarmament and limitation are at a sufficient level both in the context of foreign policy and in the context of trained manpower. In this case, it enables Kazakhstan to act as both a playmaker and a shaper in the resolutions and resolutions to be taken at the United Nations General Assembly. We can conclude that the experience gained from scientific sources, policies, and certain technologies can be an important factor in determining the United Nations agenda. Such knowledge and experience can serve as a source of legitimating influence in UN work or can be used as a supportive-reinforcing element in actual negotiations.

## National policies as examples of what can be done

Another way of influencing United Nations policies and resolutions is to try to "upload" national policy to the United Nations level. Up-loading can be described as a way of successfully convincing the United Nations General Assembly, its members, and commissions on the relevant issue that a particular national policy should be accepted and adopted as a standard or a policy applicable in all member states. (Kronsell, 2002)

Although the term "uploading" can be used within the European Union or other institutions and organizations, it is also valid at the United Nations (UN) level and refers to efforts to transfer national policies to the UN level or to be accepted as UN standards or policies. This article is also expressed in terms of influencing the United Nations and its policies. This process involves efforts by a member country or group of countries to support or promote policies and standards proposed for adoption by the UN Secretary-General or other bodies of the UN. National policies of member states can be influential in the preparation of UN policy recommendations, especially on issues of global importance such as the environment, human rights and health. For example, a country's environmental policy or health policy may form the basis for policies of UN agencies such as the UN Environment Program (UNEP) or the World Health Organization (WHO). At the UN level, the "uploading" strategy is used to increase the influence of member countries or non-governmental organizations in UN policy processes and to ensure the adoption of national policies at the global level. This process aims to have national policies accepted as the UN's general policy framework or international standards. For example, Kazakhstan's abandonment of nuclear weapons and its national policies in this direction have affected the United Nations policy and the attitude of the member states. As a case study, in the statement made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan regarding the decision adopted at the General Assembly in March 2018, it was emphasized that it actively participated in the creation and adoption of the agreement. It was also stated that the main provisions of the agreement meet the principled stance of Kazakhstan, which has come a long way in transforming from the fourth most nuclear-armed country in the world to the leading country in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. (TRT Avaz, 2018)

Conducting various national studies on nuclear disarmament and its delimitation issues can serve as important background information. This type of expertise is not only used to influence real negotiations or help persuade opposing countries, but can also provide important inputs and contributions to the strategy and policies of the United Nations. It

is clear that the strategies proposed in studies on nuclear weapons control and the expertise in institutions produce important factual information, experiences and calculations that can be used successfully both in the United Nations General Assembly and its relevant bodies, and when discussing and planning policies. When countries like Kazakhstan attribute the steps they have taken regarding nuclear disarmament in domestic politics to the United Nations strategies, they get more successful results and gains than other small countries. Most importantly, they can affect United Nations resolutions, strategies and plans, and prevent complications that may occur in the process of translating and implementing United Nations resolutions and directives into their own domestic law and strategies. However, all this "uploading" and plans can also have undesirable disadvantages. "Policy mismatches" can create problems of compliance and acceptance with United Nations measures and strategies. Such mismatches arise because they are incompatibilities between different policy styles and instruments in different member states. National studies focusing on common opinion and adapting to the common attitudes and views of the United Nations and its member states are generally accepted. It is essential to get the support of the international community rather than the Security Council. With the pressure of the international community, countries with nuclear power can thus raise issues such as disarmament or limitation. (Maitre, 2018)

## Negotiating from an undisputed national interest

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is the most powerful decision-making body of the United Nations. It is responsible for maintaining security and peace among member states. While all resolutions taken by other organs of the United Nations are advisory, UNSC resolutions are binding on all member states. This bindingness stems from the United Nations Charter, to which the member states are party and signed. It cannot be claimed that every issue that comes to the agenda of the Security Council is easily resolved. The main reason for this is that the permanent members of the Security Council, unlike the General Assembly, have veto voting rights and can use this right when there is a situation contrary to their national interests or if they have a different opinion about the international system. There is no limitation or regulation in which situations the permanent members can use their veto power, in other words, they can cast negative votes; they are free to cast any vote they want in line with their own opinions. The duties of the General Assembly are to make recommendations on disarmament and arms control, to hold talks that will affect peace and security, to make suggestions on all issues, and to make suggestions for the peaceful solution of problems that disrupt good relations between countries. Although it is an advisory decision-making body, it is also a suitable arena for states to develop common attitudes and behaviors. Based on all these, the organ that small countries like Kazakhstan can exert influence on is the General Assembly, the United Nations organ. While the decisions taken are not binding, national interests are still an important consideration in this decision-making space, as votes are discussed and decided on many issues and decisions are taken by absolute majority or with the approval of two-thirds of the number of members present. When negotiating in such a context, it is extremely important to present arguments against the national position in a clear and integrated manner and to convince the other party. When a

member state is seen as having no national interest in the issue, divided or unreconciled, rival parties in the negotiation process can use it as a strategy to undermine that country's proposed arguments and suggest the opposite. (Omarov, 2017)

Theoretically, there should be a collaboration and division of labor between agencies, media, NGOs and government. While actors such as NGO representatives and media organizations take part in influencing the international community, government representatives and diplomats participate in the work of the General Assembly, providing expertise and trying to create a consensus. Scientific actors such as politics, social science and communication form a scientific ground. It seems that experts and government representatives, however technical or superficial, have a common understanding of nuclear weapons control and disarmament in the interests of Kazakhstan. As a supporting power to Kazakhstan, Turkey and Central Asian Turkish states' NGOs and experts-diplomats are also helping. There is also a social consensus in Kazakhstan regarding the control and limitation of nuclear weapons. Agencies, NGOs and government work on the same page. The parties have frequent and informal contacts with each other, exchange ideas and facilitate each other's work. Since Kazakhstan has a relatively smaller state administration than the nuclear power states, the working networks of government and private organizations are close to each other and communication is easier. When a plan against nuclear proliferation is prepared, the opposition and the media react to it very little, and there is a national tendency to act together on this issue. "Kazakhstan's national interests" are at the forefront. It is not always a good thing to have such close relations between experts, NGOs, agencies and government representatives. While beneficial results are obtained when it comes to nuclear proliferation, it can have detrimental effects on corruption, bribery and the transparency of the political process.

## Concluding remarks

This article is based on the argument that small states can have an impact on international relations and have the ability to influence the policies of other states. Kazakh policy makers, diplomats, and those working in NGOs have proven themselves in international relations, especially the United Nations, on nuclear disarmament and control of nuclear weapons since Kazakhstan became independent and have been pioneers in this regard. The results obtained from these experiences over thirty years bring us to four important factors. The first of these is the image that Kazakhstan and its policy makers have drawn over the years, because the perception they created and the image they drew on all issues related to nuclear disarmament since the 1990s gave them the ability to exert power and influence. Since gaining its independence and becoming a member of the United Nations, Kazakhstan has both supported the work on nuclear disarmament and presented new proposals and plans in the General Assembly. Secondly, the role of expertise and knowledge in the policy and strategy-making process, which is striking about nuclear disarmament and its inspection, was examined and it was seen that Kazakhstan's expertise and experience in this field from the Soviet period gave it an advantage. Kazakhstan, which was the test site of the Soviets' nuclear weapons, influenced the decisions of the UN General Assembly on the control of nuclear weapons with years of experience and expertise and gained the support of other countries. Activities such as having 29 August accepted as the International Day for Combating

Nuclear Weapons Testing in the UN General Assembly, leading the establishment of the Organization for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and clearing the Central Asian geography from nuclear weapons are examples of Kazakhstan's achievements in this regard. Third, national policies and compliance of these policies with the expectations of the international community have been seen as a good example and supportive feature in the decision-making process between UN member states and themselves. Well-developed domestic policy and relevant experience provide important inputs to negotiations at the UN. Fourth, small states enjoyed a better position and persuasive power through smaller governance institutions than nuclear states. A clear, stable and fully unified national position and policy, which is necessary to persuade other states in the negotiation processes in the UN and other institutions, is a persuasive element for countries that are smaller  such as Kazakhstan and have close networks compared to large states , because the government of Kazakhstan, agencies, As NGOs and the media have a common stance on nuclear disarmament and its control, their position is strengthened against other states and representatives working against them. We can expect that Kazakhstan will continue to be a leading and supportive country and one of the countries that have a say in the field of nuclear disarmament in the future. Some reservations should be made, as it is only an example of nuclear disarmament that has been studied. The subject will gain depth and clearer information with further studies on the effects of small states on international relations. The results we present here can be used as a case study for further research.

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## NOTES AND RELECTIONS

# INDIA'S SOFT POWER SIGNIFIERS AND GLOBAL SOUTH'S POLYPHONIC NARRATIVE

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The epistemic unity in global south narratives nourished in its original habitat and attuned to the lived reality of global south stands as an indictment to the Euro-Atlantic narrative. However, a conspicuous absence of coherence in the language and modes of resistance highlighted by the hallowed quarters of international community often becomes the rationale for the dismissal of this shared sense of decoloniality. This sense has taken upon itself the combative role to resuscitate a praxis rooted in culture which does not only inhere from theology but also, politics. Akin to this narrative is the political substratum of South Asian regional blocs that has nourished and sustained different depictions of cultures coming from across the member states of this bloc. This goes beyond the political and economic solidarity of the member nations and witnesses a steady and concomitant decline of confrontational method of establishing supremacy or cementing status hierarchy on the global platform. Decolonized nations have eagerly surpassed their respective language silos and also have converged their cultural fiefdom to find a common ground and be ruled by an independent political ethic. In this context, this paper sets out to map the trajectory of evolution of India's role in developing its cultural signifiers like Yoga, Ayurveda and the festival of Mahakumbh. It will explore the possibilities of cultural rejuvenation and the potency of India's cultural capital while in conversation with other nations of South Asia. It also sets out to evaluate the potential of cultural signifiers in the making of a polyphonic narrative of the global south. This layered cultural edifice of the global south not only validates the economic potential of the countries independent of the west but also their essential worth in protecting the indigenous value system that generates political stability. A sustained effort by the west diminishing the cultural worth of countries in South East Asia had made it incumbent upon these countries to not just rise in defiance but to cultivate strong cultural roots which can bind varied voices signifying the diversity that is endemic to these countries. The position that is argued in this paper is not just a reactionary viewpoint but a proportionate response to rebalance power structures through New Diplomacy.

## Introduction

In a post-Westphalian (Newman, 2009) landscape where there is a fight for perceptibility and acceptability of exercise of power within and outside the boundaries of nation-state, the need for legitimacy and cultivation of global image goes beyond the traditional exhibits of power. The conventional methods of power-display(Ilgen, 2016) at the expense of opposition and condemnation coming from the native population and sometimes, from the global community has renegotiated the boundary between multilateral blocs and nation state. The emerging powers and in this case, Brazil, India, China and Russia are trenchant critiques of the post-Westphalian setup(Rajagopalan & Sahni, 2008) that undermines the role of nation-state as independent actors in the larger scheme of things. The post-cold war era has seen international problems ranging from energy crisis to health crisis and to environmental crisis, which can be resolved only with global actors co-opting(Nye, 2023) with each other and not when they are juxtaposed against each other. Be it territorial disputes such as seen in Africa, South-Asia, and Russia or Climate-change issue, a unilateral formula does not carry the recipe to alleviate these problems. The preeminence of US led peace negotiations has witnessed a steady decline(Vanaik, 2006) with countries like Brazil, India and China asserting their sovereignty and independence in deciding how to deal with territorial disputes with their neighbor or any other conflict faced by them. The global dictates on liberalism and democracy has been overturned by regional assertion with a preponderance on independent decision-making. The culture of less developed and decolonized societies has been largely and systematically either devalued or erased from the shared memory(Said, 2016) of the populace residing in those regions. And, therefore the aim of decolonization was not just the overthrow of colonial bondage but a calibrated effort to bring back the lost culture and in effect, the respect and pride that these newly independent countries had. The processes of colonial subjugation had a diabolical intent to distance the individual from their shared past(Bhargava, 2010) which provided social stability and resilience in the face of downright exploitation. This systematic obliteration of any and every means of constituting stable political regime suffocated their chance and opportunity to harness growth and development from the reservoir of resources amply available to them. Such political asphyxiation was not only characteristic of colonial times but has travelled through time cultivating the same fears and insecurity in the psyche of the less developed nations. This has paved way for enforcing a skewed version of democracy(Chomsky & Prashad, 2022) as if it is the universal panacea to all the ills of the society. This narrative has to be flipped and a counter-hegemonic(Gramsci et al., 2011) narrative ought to step in that delivers the countries to its full potential. However, the ruling dictum globally cannot be an overriding decision. On the contrary, it has to constantly and persistently bargain with multiple and intangible sources of power and the said overture can in collaboration with multiple power structure reconfigure the power structure put in place by the erstwhile regime making space for a renewed synergy between development, defense and diplomacy. Development, defense and diplomacy accompanied by a careful amalgamation of soft and hard power are the focal points of global strategies to be deployed by countries in order to manufacture an image that can sustain in the global pressure. Soft power(Nye, 2009), a powerful conceptual category devised in the writings of Joseph Nye has brought on the international forum means and methods to absolve and at the same time, incriminate the nations who have exhibited military strength (hard power) to safeguard their vested interest. Imposing sanctions and

trade tariffs on nations gone rogue was an important means deployed by the US to streamline the ideological warfare it led against the former Soviet Union but its continuation well after the disintegration of USSR and on a country like India is not only reprehensible but a manifestation of a US' standing in the status quo. This unexplained hostility against India in the backdrop of Russia's occupation in Ukraine using the latter's military occupation as a reason for this trade sanction against India is reflective of America's fear of India as an emerging economy with the potential to rebalance power shifts happening globally. India's attempt at carving a niche for itself in the global panorama of nation-states while having a voice and a rooted Indic philosophy that has evolved indigenously is reflective in its refusal to retract its many trade negotiation with Russia accompanied by a conscious effort to display soft power through regional blocs like BRICS+, ASEAN , SAARC, BIMSTEC etc. Soft power coined and popularized by Joseph Nye had a very particular stance on Soft power which clearly demarcated Soft Power and Power exhibited through money and military. This categorically put any attempt at influencing another country through force, compulsion or economic sanction as falling outside the ambit of Soft Power. Therefore, NDB and CRA and other developmental association(Roberts et al., 2018) are not expression of soft power but in this paper and in India's intent, Soft power is not only limited to the deepening of cultural values coming from independent countries to safeguard their status hierarchy but also economic association which has the potential to not just supplement western financial institutions but also, replace them. The need for soft power projection in the language construed by South Asian countries is anything that is not hard power. The three most important means of influencing other nations are money, imposition and attraction. Hence, the use of attraction is often used in soft power to negotiate differences on political lines. In the case of south-south dialogue, economy and attraction are the two main sources of soft power. While cinema and sports have often acted as catalyst in cementing relation between countries of the global south, the use of religion and alternative knowledge system have still not been deployed as dominant cultural themes around which countries rally. A.F.K. Organski has espoused a Power transition theory that in a way, finds solutions to structural limitation of comparatively less developed economies in rebalancing power structures. Any attempt in entrenching the power position of nations who are already situated at the higher level of hierarchy are expected to maintain the status quo while the countries who are emerging as powerful nations are expected to act as revisionist countries. This in turn modifies the international balance of power and revise the structural position of the countries determining balance of power. This is a step further away from the traditional structural realism by reconfiguring the ideational context within which the countries are exercising soft power. The value of culture is directly associated with position of the countries in the larger context of power. Structural Realism propounded by Michael Walzer talked about structural limitation as procedural qualification in the bid to further the self-interest of countries individually as well as collectively. Hence, while campaigning for a self-sustained global south narrative, we are not only assessing the soft power influence of all the countries in the global south collectively but also evaluate India's influence individually yet codependently on other states(Walzer, 2015). The big brother syndrome that seeks to assert the supremacy of one nation superseding the collective political and cultural space of countries while reinstating hierarchies is steadily replaced by an acknowledgement that all countries however small, have fed into and is directly in conversation with the larger global bloc.

The 'regional' bloc as is referred to in modern day Eurocentric understanding, has to be levelled up with the global union such as United Nations, G20, G7 and other organizations. In the interest of India and other 'rising' powers(O'Brien, 2000), the urgency to constitute a globally recognized organization reflective of the changing partnerships across the world is further underscored. This in turn sheds light on the need to pry open cultural crevices that can act as resources for shared cultural capital and establish the foundation of successful economies collaborating with each other defining a distinct dimension of global politics. In this continuously shifting narrative of outmaneuvering and outsmarting the countries of the west, the new 'paradigm' of international politics streamlines the peripheral thinking into the core. The satellite countries(Frank, 1978) are no longer limited to their role as buffer but are now capitalizing on their unique cultural and colonial experience to remodel the global landscape not in accordance with the blueprint offered by the west but a morally vibrant and culturally diverse political landscape. This paper will map the cultural potential India has in establishing an alternate knowledge system around which global south will grow and evolve under four significant signifier of Indian Cultural autonomy which is Yoga, Ayurveda, Indian Diaspora and Mahakumbh. The paper takes up the task of relinquishing the responsibility of rising economies like India, Brazil and South Africa of acting as a conduit between the developed and underdeveloped economies. The paper reimagines the emergence of global south and redraws the boundary between global north and south on its own terms and at the same time, asses the potency of this reimagination to rebalance the power structures. It particularly studies the impact of Indian cultural capital in renegotiating the way global south emerges and rewrites its power trade-offs with the presumably developed economies through international regional blocs. However, this paper does not dismiss or discredit in any way, the contribution made by other countries through their cinema, sports, food and tourism but due to the limited scope of research carried out in this paper, it focuses specifically and primarily on Indian cultural capital.

## Yoga and Ayurveda, Indian Diaspora and Mahakumbh: A 'polyphonic' narrative among many narratives

In an age of global pandemic where the resilience of health infrastructure is directly related to a united front of all countries in eradication of the said pandemic, alternative knowledge system around wellness and health helps to build a healthier community of individuals. It also highlights the presence of ancient tradition of Yoga for wellness which is not only an alternative medicinal system but a holistic answer to the mental and physical wellbeing(Mazumdar, 2018)(Marx, 2007). Mahatma Gandhi, devised and popularized a system of well-being that believed in the integration of mind, body and soul(Gandhi, 1997). This integration is reflected through individuals as self-reliant political beings thereby channelizing an ideological viewpoint as an instrument of political unity. Yoga as an ancient tradition is not only an answer to the health crisis that we face today but also a political reply to the growing anomie and hyper individuation as a result of capitalism crusaded by the West. The duality of mind and matter that rules the western philosophy is challenged systematically by Ayurveda that believes in non-dualist nature of human body. This is not just a systematic overthrow of the Western epistemology but also a foregrounding of a self-reliant nation that sustains its political uniqueness by consciously utilizing its cultural capital and sharing its wisdom to attract the admiration

and respect of countries in the regional bloc. However, the larger picture is not just about eliciting respect from the fellow countries but inspiring other South East Asian as well as South Asian countries to build on their indigenous value-systems. These cultural exchanges without any political interference forms the lynchpin of soft power manifestation in the BRICS+, SCO, QUAD, OIS etc. and other powerfully regional yet international organization. Yoga as an ancient wisdom and as a political resource uniquely deployed to further elevate the global image is counteracted by building the perception that it is a political handmaiden of the right-wing politician furthering the cause of Hinduism. There is a concertedly shaped narrative that seeks to dismantle any and every attempt made by the ruling disposition to cultivate a global image on, "Sanatan Sanskriti"(Bhargava, 2023) . This closed, non-permeable and neat categorization of religion has not only warped the political imagination of its citizenry but has underscored a need for a redefined and renewed sense of religiosity. There is no clear solution to the problem of accommodating different theological inclination within the fold of religiosity but a wider and flexible model of religion that does not chastise or abhor theism advocating cultural practices could be a way forward. This thought is neither ahistorical nor outside the ambit of scientific rationalism and has surfaced in not only closed echo chambers but also in the thoughts and deeds of nationalist leaders. The foundational element of a nation which values religion stems not just from constitutional morality that is necessarily irreligious but a morality that preaches religious solidarity and its concomitant patron which is nation-state. Hence, the over-emphasis on the constitution and its sanctimony lies not in juxtaposing it with religious morality. With Indian politics progressing into Pilgrims progress , Upendra Baxi has succinctly described the para-legal structures and the unwrittenness(Baxi, 2012) of the Indian constitutionalism coming up with a new language of rights and duties which can never be enveloped by liberal constitutionalism. It is on the contrary, the unfamiliar and uninvited guest amongst the cohort of democratic requirements in a country as diverse and large as India.

From Sardar Patel to Rabindranath Tagore, there is one unifying ideal that brought together mostly all the nationalist thinkers and that was the need to develop an authentic theory of politics which can create alternative political constructs that were strictly indigenous(Mahajan, 2013). As Rabindranath Tagore has wisely put, "**We in India must make up our minds that we cannot borrow other people's history, and that if we stifle our own, we are committing suicide. When you *borrow* things that do not belong to your life, they only serve to crush your life**". The formidable task was thus, to return to the past but what was to be called authentically 'Indian' still has to bear an interminable series of challenges(Sahu, 2020). Are we to then comprehend, what it means to be an authentic Indian. The magnitude of this question still bears heavily on the way politics is designed today. Is the question of partaking into internationalising a cultural praxis, today a closed circuit which only reaffirms patriotism of a single variant of politics that is rooted in majoritarian religion. This assumption is at the heart of politics today and marginalises the voices that may or may not be overtly religious. The transition of 'cultural' to 'political' is not the fallout of a historical continuum. It reflects the seemingly benign yet subversive elements of the state that detests attempt at uniting tactical forces. However, it would not be right in completely dismissing the liberals, seculars and self-appointed equalisers while striving to render a global image to the nation. The politics of today is the politics of visibility where what is perceptibly seen and is veritable becomes the source of power. This newly acquired power which while

recognizing cultural essentialism, do not slip into political carnage of difference. While preserving cultural particularity is the stronghold of liberal multiculturalism, the present day politics is about finding unity and commonness in the shared culture. In a way, cultural embeddedness has to be replaced by historically situated self(Mahajan, 2013). Individuals cannot be contained in straightjacketed society but in sociality(Bauman, 2013) that has a symbiotic relationship with other communities. The individuals in these communities are encumbered selves who have witnessed the constant interaction between culture of their community and the outside world. The two hundred year rule of the Britishers cannot be papered over for it has perpetual lingering presence on our society as a whole. The reinterpretation of the prefix in post-colonial by Upendra B. serves to establish this connection. Anything that transpired following the period of colonisation seeks to respond to this violent and exploitative regime while using the grammar of politics devised by the west to colonise the masses. **Post-colony** then accepts in its time frame the oppression that was meted out to our country as an indispensable unit of reference. This flawed assumption has made it necessary for the intelligentsia constituting the civil society(Gramsci et al., 2011) to invent a unique frame of reference that can act as potential conceptual source for a sense of belonging. This marks a patriotic and paradigmatic shift in bringing to light a democratic discourse which seeks to rewind the nature and content of nationalism. Anti-Hindu and Hindu apologetics have hitherto, sustained politics of appeasement undermining women's right in minority communities, perceiving outright display of Hindu sentiments as communal, feeding into the disdain of minority communities. This and other allegation have spurred the growth of intellectual as well as political resources by carefully curating a solid frame of references that can dissolve diversionary tactics. This nationalism can not only defy the claims of self-aggrandising cultural apologetics but can help in evolving a strong and structured nation-state that has the resilience to establish stable political union trumpeting any attempt at disintegrating it. The political monopoly on secularism exercised by a certain few seems to be alien if not outright unconnected with political reality. Finding semantical equivalent has come up with ideas of "Dharmanirpekshta", "Sarva Dharma Sambhava", "Vasudhaivakutambakam" (Bhargava, 2010)which have helped the intellectuals engage with the Indian insight on Secularism. Unfortunately, such attempts have decontextualized the Indian ancient tradition by studying these concept without the political universe in which it emerged. In the post-truth era, when there is a spurt in the growth of knowledge in and around religion, significance of tangible reserves to propagate and profess religious values is further entrenched. The historical continuum that unifies time and space brings to the world living breathing documents that have manifested into rituals to signify the turn of century old practices. The search of an independent political ethic that is rooted in the glorious past or what is famously referred to as "Virasat"( Heritage) and then, conflating it with "Vikas"( Development) marks a defining shift from the erstwhile method of political association that sought to distance itself from any religious marker. The path towards 'Swarnim Bharat' is paved with great political gusto while searching for a 'common ground principle' that can change the focal point of the socio-political and economic engagement. The intellectual finding of this paper has expanded the aperture of evaluation from individual engagement with spiritual values to a political assessment of an organized form of religion. The rupture has taken inspiration from premodern times where the written word of the mythological text was interpreted with greater flexibility helping the local masses to easily associate with

religious morality. In this backdrop, the crystallization of religious value in codifying beliefs have spawned a rigid classification between what is verifiably and justifiably the 'true' meaning of ritualistic practices and what is not. In an age of digital and social media where information and misinformation coexist together, false narrative impedes the spread of actual meanings associated with religious practices and helps scholars rest in their respective intellectual fiefdoms.

The most unassailable intellectual victory of John Rawls was not in arriving at a 'concept' of Justice as Fairness but in evolving an articulate methodology to arrive at it. In times when the motto of individuals as well as scholars is aimed at usurping each other and furthering their own agenda, the intellectual requirement to rise above and beyond immediate affiliation and gratification to give a 'conception' of justice (Rawls, 2005) seems to elude us. However, the crisis is not about having no encumbrances but to be able to project ourselves despite not being an unencumbered self(Sandel, 1984). In yet another theory, Subaltern (Guha, 1997) authors have articulated in not so vague terms, the idea of cultural essentialism and its inevitable exclusion of those communities that are the foundational building blocks of the newly independent country. This is a fundamental challenge to how democratic discourses are made and its impact on how people perceive politics. The subaltern challenge also challenges the historiography and the making of political memory which has devised a framework that marginalizes a section of the populace just by virtue of the fact that they are at the lower rung of our society. However, it can be argued that the exploitation and historical injustices have not frozen in time and exploitative tendencies have further augmented the demands of representational politics that not only determines the 'what' of the narrative but 'who' will set it and 'how' it has to be brought to the international forum. From Nancy Fraser to Iris Marian Young, the politics of misrecognition to the politics of misrepresentation, tells us that the model of justice that is predicated on the triumvirate of recognition, representation and redistribution has often helped in securing one to the detriment of the other. We have enlarged the scope and impact of this model onto the global forum. Global south is in common parlance, an inconsistent and incoherent entity that seeks to represent varied voices internationally but it is an honest attempt to find a representational platform that can at the least, project an image which is constantly interacting with multiple power vortices. Countries in the global south has an equal and proportionate reflex for defying the forces that seeks to create exclusive spaces for representation and the growing elite within the circle of South Asian intelligentsia have done just that. Therefore, the politics of dependency looms large even in today's time. The growth in elitism and development blockade was succinctly described by Gail Omvedt in a national context and A.G. Frank in an international context. The political predicament is not just limited to the territory of the nation-state but is slowly permeating through the boundary interacting with global forces. Amidst globalization, aggressive nationalism can take the form of Xenophobia but India's entrenched nationalist model keeps itself from ways that can progress into an outright neglect of those who are deemed as 'other'. It is important to establish a hierarchy of political ideals. It is significant to recognise our own prejudices especially when it comes to dealing with the community belonging to different religion. It is equally significant to see how far our country has come from Panchsheel to Panchamrit. Our largely ignored yet powerful reservoir of teachings in the name of Vedas, Upanishads and the fortuitous materialisation of the late Vedic teachings in the form of Mahakumbh at the length and breadth it was celebrated, tells us the all-

encompassing fervour and spirit of comradery fraternising not just with people domestically but internationally.

## Rebalancing Power structures: Rewiring Diplomacy through New Diplomacy

Diplomacy of the yester years was about building trust, reliability, truth and peaceful negotiation(Berridge, 2015). These markers have gone through an irreversible overhaul that has not only revamped these markers but have drained its essence. New Diplomacy strongly detests the older practise of following the formal procedural techniques of moving towards truth, building trust through peaceful negotiation and also, construing narratives that can make the countries reliable. This intense makeover of the Older diplomatic pathways of sending ambassadorial delegation, setting up of embassies as a sign of trust, peaceful negotiation have not just lost its moral traction but also its international viability. In this context, where social media or what was commonly referred to as 'twiplomacy' and now termed 'X' woefully depicts the formation of narrative without nuance and without a careful reflection over facts and opinions. Hasty generalisation, hyperbolic statements and polemical takes on present day international conflicts have increased the volatility of countries involved and sees military occupation as an inevitable consequence. Hard Power is thus, seen to be the only recourse left for countries acting in real self interest with Hobbesian state of nature turning into 'nature' of state. In this backdrop, if soft power is deployed to carve a niche for a country to legitimise its place in the larger international scheme, it is by no means an unjust method of asserting power or dominance. However, its larger impact on the global stage have to be assessed and the just(ness) of international pre-eminence has to be evaluated before the countries aspire to climb up in the hierarchy of countries writing or rewriting the politics of smaller less militarily equipped nations.

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# CRITICAL REVIEW

# RANITO, JOVANA JEZDIMIROVIC (2019). *REGULATING US PRIVATE SECURITY CONTRACTORS*, CHAM: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 225 PÁGINAS

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O livro de Jovana Ranito "*Regulating US Private Security Contractors",* editado pela Palgrave Macmillian, analisa o processo de regulamentação das Empresas Militares Privadas (EMPs) nos Estados Unidos da América (EUA), destacando os obstáculos políticos, burocráticos e organizacionais. Ao adoptar uma abordagem mais empírica do que estudos anteriores, como Dickinson, (2005), Stanger (2011) ou Tonkin (2013), a autora procura aprofundar o conhecimento existente sobre as práticas regulatórias e questionar pressupostos estabelecidos, bem como compreender os desafios específicos que os EUA enfrentam na regulação destas empresas, sobretudo onde as operações destas decorrem em contextos marcados por instabilidade política, múltiplas ameaças e a presença de vários atores estatais e não-estatais.

A obra está organizada em seis capítulos principais. O primeiro, introdutório, apresenta uma breve revisão da literatura, o desenho da pesquisa e a metodologia adotada, e um resumo do argumento central. O segundo capítulo discute a relevância da regulamentação das EMPs. O terceiro introduz a Teoria da Prática de Bourdieu, que sustenta o enquadramento teórico do livro. O quarto capítulo desconstrói noções pré-concebidas sobre a regulamentação destas empresas, enquanto o quinto analisa os principais obstáculos à sua efetiva regulação.

No plano metodológico, o estudo de caso centra-se no processo regulatório norte-americano de EMPs nos EUA, entre 2003 e 2015. Embora a autora não explicite a escolha deste intervalo, esta torna-se compreensível pela divisão da evolução da regulamentação em duas gerações: a primeira (2000–2010/2011), marcada pelo crescimento das atividades das EMPs e por regulamentações fragmentadas e reativas; e a segunda (2010/2011–2015/2016), caracterizada por esforços internacionais no sentido de uma

regulação mais estruturada e abrangente. A opção por um estudo de caso único é justificada pela especificidade do sistema político norte-americano e pelo facto de os EUA serem o maior contratante mundial de segurança militar privada.

A investigação adota uma abordagem qualitativa, combinando entrevistas com *process tracing*. Foram entrevistados cinquenta atores envolvidos no processo regulatório, sendo os testemunhos cuidadosamente analisados em articulação com uma variedade de fontes primárias — como legislação e propostas legislativas, iniciativas de regulação e normas nacionais e internacionais, contratos públicos, relatórios governamentais, de ONG, artigos jornalísticos, e transcrições de audiências no Congresso dos EUA— e secundárias, como artigos científicos e livros. O uso destas fontes é metodologicamente rigoroso, diversificado e equilibrado, com destaque para a aplicação da Teoria da Prática de Pierre Bourdieu, central ao enquadramento teórico da obra. Embora o estudo se inscreva numa perspetiva pós-positivista, alinhada com uma corrente crítica do construtivismo, a autora recorre pontualmente a métodos associados ao positivismo, como a recolha e análise de dados estatísticos provenientes das entrevistas, para reforçar a robustez empírica da análise.

Ranito (2019) dedica um subcapítulo à apresentação das ferramentas metodológicas da sua investigação, mas omite nesse momento a referência à aplicação da Teoria da Prática de Bourdieu neste subcapítulo. Embora essa teoria seja posteriormente abordada com clareza e rigor — com destaque para a explicação dos seus pressupostos e benefícios analíticos — teria sido metodologicamente mais rigoroso sinalizar desde logo a sua centralidade teórica. Ainda assim, a autora realiza um excelente mapeamento dos fundamentos da teoria e explica progressivamente a sua aplicabilidade à análise das práticas investigadas, sendo a partir dessa secção que a sua operacionalização se torna evidente. A combinação entre entrevistas e *process tracing* revela-se particularmente eficaz, formando uma relação dialética em que cada método complementa o outro. Aliada à Teoria de Bourdieu, esta estratégia metodológica confere à investigação um método qualitativo sólido, essencial para compreender a influência das múltiplas práticas e identidades no processo regulatório das EMPs nos EUA.

Destaca-se a variedade e qualidade das fontes utilizadas, tanto primárias quanto secundárias, numa relação consistente entre o argumento, o conhecimento prático da autora e as fontes mobilizadas. No entanto, apesar da adequação e variedade das fontes utilizadas, poderia ter sido benéfica a inclusão de estudos relevantes sobre a regulamentação das EMPs nos EUA, como os de Dickinson (2005), Tonkin (2013) e Stanger (2011). Embora metodologicamente distintos, estes trabalhos oferecem contributos relevantes para o aprofundamento e contextualização do debate, e poderiam ter enriquecido ainda mais o diálogo com a literatura especializada.

Embora o problema teórico não seja explicitamente formulado, ele pode ser inferido a partir da secção onde a autora desenvolve o seu argumento de forma mais alargada. A própria Ranito (2019, p. 7) afirma: *"The aim of this book is to explore, both from a theoretical point of view as well as in practice, challenges to the USA in the regulation of PSCs in complex environments"*. Esta formulação permite compreender a natureza do problema teórico abordado: os desafios (neste caso, enfrentados pelos EUA) na regulamentação de empresas de segurança privada em contextos de elevada complexidade.

Ranito (2019) procura demonstrar que o processo regulatório das EMPs enfrenta obstáculos políticos, burocráticos e organizacionais, resultantes das experiências diferenciadas dos diversos atores envolvidos. Apesar da construção cuidadosa e multidimensional do argumento, nota-se a ausência de uma variável essencial: a componente socioeconómica. Não se coloca, por exemplo, a questão de quem beneficia da ausência de regulamentação ou por que razão persistem, no aparelho estatal norte-americano, tantas barreiras burocráticas à sua implementação. Questões como "quem detém o capital em risco?" ou "quem lucra com este vazio jurídico?" dificilmente encontram resposta apenas através dos testemunhos recolhidos. Uma reflexão mais profunda sobre a estrutura socioeconómica que sustenta, reproduz e beneficia dessa ausência regulatória teria enriquecido substancialmente a análise.

Além disso, a obra carece de uma articulação mais crítica entre a dimensão socioeconómica e a dimensão jurídica. Ranito parte da premissa de que o direito vigente é capaz de regular eficazmente as EMPs — mas essa hipótese deveria, antes de mais, ser interrogada. Se, como argumentam Rodrigues (2008) e Pachukanis (2017), o direito é produto das relações de propriedade e da lógica da acumulação de capital, não será contraditório esperar que este limite a expansão de um setor altamente lucrativo, baseado na mercadorização da violência? A regulamentação eficaz das EMPs, sob este prisma, parece colidir com a própria natureza do direito que as deveria regular.

Também a política externa norte-americana surge como um fator negligenciado. Até que ponto o sucesso (ou viabilidade) das operações no Iraque e no Afeganistão dependeu dos contratos com EMPs? E até que ponto essa dependência inviabiliza qualquer tentativa séria de regulamentação?

Por fim, a própria existência das EMPs em zonas de vazio legal e a sua lógica operacional poderiam ser concebidas como obstáculos estruturais à sua regulamentação. Tal como a autora questiona a eficácia das soluções institucionais, teria sido igualmente relevante questionar se o próprio modelo político-económico em que as EMPs operam não inviabiliza, à partida, a sua limitação.

O estilo argumentativo da autora merece destaque: parte de "factos" aparentemente consensuais na área para, em seguida, desconstruí-los à luz das identidades e experiências divergentes dos atores envolvidos. Este processo cumulativo confere coerência interna e robustez crítica à obra. A obra apresenta notável coerência e unidade interna, permitindo ao leitor acompanhar a progressão argumentativa de Ranito (2019). Contudo, nota-se a ausência de uma conclusão geral que reúna os diversos pontos e conclusões, sintetizando a tese que a autora pretende defender. Sem essa síntese, o trabalho termina com várias conclusões específicas e dispersas, em vez de oferecer uma tese argumentativa sólida e integrada.

No plano linguístico, a autora valoriza a clareza, como se vê no cuidado com as siglas e na explicação de conceitos teóricos menos familiares ao leitor, especialmente nos capítulos dedicados à aplicação da Teoria da Prática de Bourdieu (veja o caso do conceito de 'field', na pág. 81). No entanto, apesar deste esforço, alguns conceitos de Bourdieu continuam a ser difíceis de compreender para leitores não especializados, sendo necessário, para compreender plenamente a aplicabilidade desta teoria, o leitor reler

várias vezes as passagens onde Ranito explica os conceitos-chave. Só após este esforço interpretativo é possível compreender o restante da obra.

No que aos materiais sistematizadores de informação diz respeito, embora a transcrição dos testemunhos orais seja recorrente e fundamental, outros recursos visuais ou esquemáticos são raros. Quando presentes — como a infografia da página 52, que clarifica os ramos do Departamento de Estado envolvidos na regulamentação das EMPs — revelam-se extremamente úteis. A obra beneficiaria de mais materiais semelhantes, como, por exemplo, uma infografia em rede que ilustrasse as interligações entre os entrevistados e as diferentes entidades envolvidas no processo regulatório.

Embora exista uma literatura considerável sobre a regulamentação das EMPs – destacando-se autores como Dickinson (2005), Stanger (2011) e Tonkin (2013) – as investigações que abordam o processo regulatório nos EUA são ainda escassas. Nesse sentido, a obra de Ranito (2019) representa um contributo relevante e inovador. Apesar de não apresentar uma conclusão definitiva sobre o processo de regulamentação das EMPs, a autora oferece perspetivas valiosas para os Estudos de Segurança, bem como para os debates existentes sobre os limites e a regulamentação das EMPs.

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