Advances in African Economic, Social and Political Development

George Mutalemwa
Egon Spiegel
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Lester R. Kurtz *Editors*

African Peacebuilding

Transformative Practices for Global Development

Springer

Advances in African Economic, Social and Political Development

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In loving memory of Prof. Switbert Kamazima

Introduction: Transforming Peace and Development—African and Global Perspectives

Peace and development have usually been defined and understood from dominant Western perspectives. The Africa Peace and Development Network (*Mtandao wa Amani na Maendeleo Afrika*, MAMA) is a collaborative effort to foster epistemic diversity and enhance our understanding of these crucial concepts by bringing African perspectives into the conversation. We were delighted when our first call for papers, which led to the publication of *Peace Studies for Sustainable Development in Africa* (Springer 2022), attracted a flood of submissions, almost all from African scholars. Then, the second book, *Peace as Nonviolence: Topics in African Peace Studies* (Springer 2024), contributed to the epistemology of peace as nonviolence to strengthen African pillars of lasting peace.

Two related volumes, *African Peace & Development: Theoretical Frameworks* and this volume, *African Peacebuilding: Case Studies and Transformative Practices for Development*, further expand those efforts. The first volume asks us to rethink our theories of peace and development by bringing in voice often absent from the dominant narrative. This one builds on the theoretical insights of the companion volume to explore how peace and development are cultivated through practice across Africa and beyond. Together, these studies illuminate the scholarship and imagination of communities and scholars who observe and theorize the transformation of structural violence into opportunities for renewal. The contributors bring interdisciplinary and locally grounded perspectives to the urgent tasks of peacebuilding and sustainable development.

The vocabulary that runs through this volume—peacebuilding, human rights, development, democracy, gender—often comes with genealogies narrated through Euro-American institutions and literatures. The chapters that follow show why that cannot be the whole story. When African experiences and intellectual traditions are treated not merely as "cases" but as sources of interpretation and theory, perspectives change, and what counts as evidence expands. Histories of colonialism, extraction, and racialized power move to the foreground, and normative assumptions based on Western experience and studies become topics for analysis rather than taken-for-granted starting points. Epistemic diversity sharpens the field by making

its categories more historically aware, more empirically adequate, and more ethically reflective.

Although some of these case studies reach beyond Africa, African intellectual traditions are central to their analysis, calling for dialogue between *Ubuntu*, Pan-Africanism, and decolonial perspectives, for example, on the one hand, and Eurocentric perspectives of peace and development studies, on the other. Such an approach revisits dominant understandings of power, violence, and social change, viewing them as complementary rather than competing paradigms. It also clarifies what is distinctive about many African contributions to peacebuilding: the centrality of relationality, belonging, and reciprocity, as well as practical traditions of mediation, reconciliation, and restorative justice in African culture that speak directly to the challenges of building peace under conditions of structural violence that all of humanity now faces.

Rooted in the vision of *Mtandao wa Amani na Maendeleo Afrika* (MAMA), this collection highlights a plurality of African pathways toward peace: from classrooms and community workshops to gender advocacy and institutional reform. It documents concrete cases that link peace with sustainable development, human rights, democratic participation, and environmental justice. Across its chapters runs a common theme: genuine peace requires transformation—of individuals, social systems, and the epistemic frameworks that shape them.

We invite you to join us with these published volumes and in our weekly webinar as we address the crucial issues of our time from a position of epistemic diversity.

The MAMA project would not have been successful without the generous support from speakers, participants, contributors, collaborative partners, well-wishers, and in particular the Ministry of Science and Culture of the State of Lower Saxony in Germany to which we are profoundly grateful.

George Mutalemwa
Egon Spiegel
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Peacebuilding

"Peacebuilding" is usually associated with Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung's distinction among peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding (Galtung, J. (1975). Three approaches to peace: Peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding. In Peace, war and defence—Essays in peace research (Vol. 2, pp. 282–304). Copenhagen: Christian Ejlers.) and has become a central concept in mainstream peace and conflict studies as well as post-conflict policy circles. The chapters in this section widen that frame from an African perspective, exploring how peace is built from the inner life of persons to the pedagogical and institutional life of societies, and to the geopolitical dynamics that shape everyday insecurity, where global structures impact daily life at the local level. We begin with an invitation to personal and collective healing, linking stress reduction, well-being, and nonviolence to systemic efforts such as a pedagogy integrating the humanities and social sciences and community workshops that equip young people with capacities for dialogue and cooperation. Additional chapters explore examples of peacebuilding that aim to cultivate violence-free, inclusive schools and to employ the arts as a pathway for sowing peace and widening moral imagination. Finally, we bring these perspectives to the challenging cases of violence in Ukraine, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Korean Peninsula.

Applied Humanities and Social Sciences in a Pedagogy of Peacebuilding



Gordon Mitchell

Abstract Arts-based inquiry is one option for providing space for knowledge creation. Art is a medium that lends itself to investigation and ambivalence. While engaged with one's individual creative project, the presence of others makes it a communal activity. The 'art-school format' offers a place to gain some insight and to communicate with others. Each person is engrossed in their own project (using photography, sketching, theater, or poetry), and at the same time very much aware of what others are doing. The role of the teacher is to offer occasional advice and feedback. A term paper with its typical structure—focus, current research, methodology, data analysis, conclusions, and bibliography—can be a means of academic reflection on the artistic experience.

A counter to the argument that education can lead to a better world is the observation that the well-educated are often those most likely to promote conflict. The argument can be rescued, however, if it is clarified that one is using the term 'education' in a precise way. Then follows the need to explain what we mean. This I will attempt with examples from university education, and more specifically, the Humanities and Social Sciences.

The founding myth of the modern university locates itself in Athens during the classical period. The recorded dialogues of the Platonic Socrates see teacher and students together in a passionate quest for understanding. Disagreement and argumentation are normality. Evidence and logic and preparedness to adjust one's position and the courage to change direction are valued. This wrestling with ideas in Socratic Dialogue—questioning, clarifying, explaining, and reformulating—is both individual and communal. It is neither a venue for light-hearted discussion without responsibility nor a venue for emotion and self-aggrandizement. Each participant must be prepared to expose themselves to the scrutiny of alternative viewpoints.

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There is no field of knowledge excused from scrutiny, and widely accepted knowledge is also to be interrogated. Encouraged are attitudes of curiosity, perseverance, and humility in the search for greater understandings. Any attempt to restrict freedom of thought at universities is therefore viewed as a threat to its very existence.

Other traditions of thought have historically also had a profound understanding on academic discourse. Religion is often associated with dogmatic attitudes and is not a field where one would expect to find innovative approaches to thinking. However, one of the intellectual traditions that has exercised a profound influence is from a Middle Eastern approach to religious knowledge, where interpretations can be placed side-by-side and accorded equal legitimacy as limited human efforts to understand the divine (Bauer 2021; Meier 2017). Texts (and people) are an exciting mystery; texts can have many meanings; controversy is normal; no interpretation is final; interpretations can be interpreted. This intellectual tradition of 'Talmudic Thinking' later found its expression in the philosophical discussion around Hermeneutics (Gadamer 1988). All knowledge claims are situated and shaped by the horizon of the interpreter. Understanding is an ongoing spiral, which requires self-awareness as well awareness of alternative perspectives.

There are other powerful and inspiring myths about knowledge creation, which have yet to play a greater part in the self-understanding of universities. The communal dimension of thinking in African cultures is an important reminder of the necessity for developing pedagogies of participation (cf. Waghid 2014). A communitarian attitude to social existence recognizes the need for multiple learning partners; myth and ritual offer a context for deliberative thinking, which incorporates both imagination and reason; practical application and action is the outcome of reflection; and a decolonial resistance to binary thinking recognizes the need for a fair intercultural dialogue.

The word 'myth' is a reminder both of widespread failure to live up to its expectations and of the continued capacity of an ideal to inspire. There is still a considerable gap between the ideal of students as active creators of knowledge and the reality of transmission teaching at universities. There are, nevertheless, signs of change. An example is reflective theorizing and pedagogical practice in Social Anthropology. As a discipline which emerged as part of the colonial enterprise, anti-colonial critique of its self-confident claims eventually led to serious efforts at reinventing itself.

In Clifford Geertz's seminal essay (1973: pp. 3–30), *Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture*, the business of describing a phenomenon is based on "guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses" (1973: 20). He illustrates with a story from Oxford philosopher, Gilbert Ryle. Two boys twitch their eyes: one is an involuntary twitch, the other is a conspiratorial signal to a friend—a wink. To add to the possibilities, a third boy copies the first and parodies his twitch. So, outwardly all three are doing the same thing; however, one is twitching, one is winking, and one is parodying. Furthermore, the varied horizons of observers meant that they often processed what they saw in very different ways. Such diversity of meaning came to be called 'thick description'. Analysis of symbols is always situated, incomplete, and therefore tentative.

The researcher exercises empathetic imagination; suspends judgement (temporarily); tries to describe as accurately as many perspectives as possible; recognizes the subjective and exploratory nature of knowledge; and is aware of personal bias. In this way, the researcher also becomes the object of research. Under the pervasive influence of Hermeneutical Philosophy, self-reflection has become a necessary part of social sciences and humanities research. The field notebook has a column for description and a column for noting feelings or questions. Ways are sought to allow research to become a multi-perspectival process. A guiding question is "How do I look?," which is (a) epistemological, and (b) social.

Translating such an approach into pedagogical processes requires some planning. What follows is a brief description of a student seminar at the University of Hamburg (Mitchell 2015). Participants had the task of creating an artistic product on a topic which struck them while researching a religious community. At the end of the semester, members of the community were invited to attend the exhibition. During entire process, someone was photographing the various interactions, providing data for researching the researchers. In the final session, a selection of these photographs was laid out on the tables for interpretation and self-reflection, using the method of 'photo-elicitation' (cf. Harper 2002).

'Arts-based inquiry' is one option for providing space for knowledge creation. Art is a medium that lends itself to investigation and ambivalence. While engaged with one's individual creative project, the presence of others makes it a communal activity. The 'art-school format' offers a place to gain some insight and communicate with others. Each is engrossed in their own project (using photography, sketching, theater, or poetry), and at the same time very much aware of what others are doing. The role of the teacher is to offer occasional advice and feedback. A term paper with its typical structure—focus, current research, methodology, data analysis, conclusions, and bibliography—can be a means of academic reflection on the artistic experience.

Such pedagogies offer opportunity to develop valuable thinking and social skills. The capacity for critical and creative thinking is something that can be developed. Socratic Dialogue, Talmudic Thinking, and Communitarian Thinking are needed to transform not only higher education, but all education. Pedagogies of Peacebuilding are there as a reminder of what it ought to be.

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Multi-Disciplinarity Problem and Challenges of Mainstreaming Peace Studies in Tanzania's Higher Education System



Thadeus Mkamwa

Abstract The relationship between higher education and intercultural and epistemic diversity has often been ambiguous. Higher education has developed distinctive ways of organizing, validating, and legitimizing certain forms of knowledge production. The social processes, quality assurance, and economics of scholarly publishing do not typically reward intercultural and epistemic diversity. The Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) has a new career path regulation that requires that, for academic staff to qualify to teach in the university, he or she must have studied directly related subjects. This regulation is based on skill-centred specialist approach. The regulation basically is favourable for highly focused professional practitioners because they create a protective boundary around their area of expertise, e.g. medicine and engineering, but to a greater extent not favourable for social sciences disciplines. The idea of favouring a directly related subjects approach of disciplines is rooted in a holism versus reductionism perspective (Smuts 1936). This perspective calls for scholars to study a single line of discipline in order to qualify as teachers in higher learning institutions. The holism perspective "underlies the synthetic tendency in the universe and is the principle that makes for the origin and progress of wholes in the universe" (Smuts 1936: ix). The approach raises questions on whether the interdisciplinary approach, also known as the multidisciplinary approach, poses a problem in the higher education system in Tanzania in the quest for mainstreaming Peace Studies in university programs.

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1 Introduction

Scholars differ on the advantages and disadvantages of pursuing a multidisciplinary approach in higher education systems. Scholars who favour multidisciplinarity are of the view that diversity of ideas, knowledge, abilities, and skills is beneficial to a person since our world is made up of diverse socio-economic spheres where every skill, knowledge, and opportunity is needed. Higher education around the globe is presently experiencing one of the greatest periods of uncertainty in its long history (Refer: Reimagining our future together: a new social contract for education, UNESCO 2021: 75). The relationship between higher education and intercultural and epistemic diversity has often been ambiguous. Higher education has developed distinctive ways of organizing, validating, and legitimizing certain forms of knowledge production. The social processes, quality assurance, and economics of scholarly publishing do not typically reward intercultural and epistemic diversity (UNESCO 2021). The Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) has a new career path regulation that requires that for academic staff to qualify to teach in the university, he or she must have studied directly related subjects. This regulation is based on skill-centred specialist approach. The regulation basically is favourable for highly focused professional practitioners because they create a protective boundary around their area of expertise, e.g. medicine and engineering, but to a greater extent not favourable for social sciences disciplines. The idea of favouring a directly related subjects approach of disciplines is rooted in the holism versus reductionism perspective (Smuts 1936). This perspective calls for scholars to study a single line of discipline in order to qualify as teachers in higher learning institutions. The holism perspective "underlies the synthetic tendency in the universe and is the principle that makes for the origin and progress of wholes in the universe" (Smuts 1936: ix). The approach raises questions on whether the interdisciplinary approach also known as the multidisciplinary approach poses a problem in the higher education system in Tanzania in the quest for mainstreaming Peace Studies in university programmes.

2 Multi-Disciplinarity and Career Development

Besides various challenges in career development which stem from the TCU career path regulation, i.e. Vertical Integration perspective (aka directly related subjects), there is a challenge that is currently linked with Peace Studies in higher education systems around the globe, i.e. the need to mainstream Peace Studies in Higher Education Systems. Peace Studies by nature are interdisciplinary. In order to succeed in making a nation peaceful, peace studies should be mainstreamed in every field of study. However, if multi-disciplinarity is discouraged in a higher education system, how successfully will peacebuilders and peace scholars achieve the goal of mainstreaming peace studies in a country like Tanzania? In this regard, before

examining the extent to which peace studies can be mainstreamed in higher education studies in Tanzania, an examination of whether multi-disciplinarity is a problem in career development in Tanzania is needed. This is because, as a nation, we need to mainstream peace studies for various reasons including advances in career development.

3 Statement of the Problem

The multi-disciplinarity problem in Tanzania began in recent years. The problem has come into existence with the Tanzania Commission for Universities Guidebook of Quality Assurance Standards and Regulations (2019) which requires, among other things, that in order to establish a program in a university, every program in the university should have an accepted staff-student ratio. Currently, the acceptable staff-student ratios are as follows: for Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities 1:50, for Science & Technology 1:30, for Health Sciences 1:25, and for Engineering 1:25. With this requirement, another condition for the establishment of a program stipulates that every program should have at least five lecturers (Ph.D. holders) as the minimum academic staff requirement and five MA holders, ten Bachelor Degree holders. Likewise, the qualified MA/Ph.D. holders should have studied *directly related subjects in their career path.* This means one has to study one discipline from undergraduate to postgraduate level—no interdisciplinarity is allowed. Any academic staff with multi-disciplinarity in the academic qualification is not counted in the number of the teaching staff of the institution. This phenomenon reduces the number of academic staff in the said program and consequently affects the staff-student ratio. With the paucity of senior academicians in a country like Tanzania, the requirement that academic staff must have directly related subjects in their qualification increases challenges not only in establishing degree programs but also in advancing academic staff whose degrees are not directly related. This later aspect impacts academic career development.

The negation of multi-disciplinarity can be examined from different levels. The first examination of the problem is at the national level. It is a fact that there is a great scarcity of academic staff, in particular senior academicians such as professors in the country. However, when there is a regulation that limits the availability of the necessary workforce for higher learning institutions simply because they have multiple disciplines in their career, this indirectly and negatively affects the career development of many Tanzanians who have already studied diverse programs in their life. The second way of looking at the problem is at an individual level. At this level, just like the scarcity of senior academicians at the national level, there is a scarcity of academic staff who have studied single disciplines in the country (i.e. directly related subjects). Many academicians have mixed disciplines, especially those in Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. The third way of looking at the problem is at the institutional level. There are institutional dilemmas regarding what should universities do with the multidisciplinary academic staff who are tenured. Some institutions have terminated academic staff who do not meet the directly related subjects

criterion. The fourth way of looking at the problem is on mainstreaming peace studies in academic programs. This is the main issue that is discussed in this chapter.

The question is, is this regulation helpful in mainstreaming peace studies and peace research in the country? Peace studies and research are necessary for socioeconomic development. Peace studies are also interdisciplinary by nature. When there is a regulation which discourages interdisciplinarity in an academic institution, while the same organ which discourages multi-disciplinarity is the same authority which grants accreditation to higher learning institutions to run programmes which are multidisciplinary, what message does the authority send to the public? Furthermore, there are many multi-disciplinary programmes running in various institutions in the country which are accredited by TCU; such programmes include Bachelor of Science Mathematics and Statistics, Bachelor of Philosophy with Education, Bachelor of Education with Political Science, etc. If institutions are allowed to run programs which are multi-disciplinary in nature, there should be no problems with teaching staff who have studied mixed or multiple programmes. Currently, to qualify to teach at a university in Tanzania, TCU requires that you meet directly related qualification criteria. A directly-related qualification is defined by TCU as studying in the same field with a similar programme name throughout your career development. A lecturer who has, for example, a BA degree in Education, an MA in Political Science, and a Ph.D. in Social Sciences does not qualify to teach either BA classes in Education or BA classes in Political Science, regardless of his ability and competence to do so. Another example is an Associate Professor who has a BA in Liberal Arts, an MSc in Education, and a Ph.D. in Human Resource Management. This academic staff is likewise deemed to have no directly related subjects.

Two similar examples have been cited by the Tanzania Association of Private Universities (TAPU) in their meeting with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Dodoma on the 18th of November 2022, whereby two academic staff were hired to teach Accounting subjects in that programme; one with B.Com (Accounting from UDSM), MBA (Finance/Accounting), and PhD in Accounting, and the other with B.Com (Accounting from UDSM), MBA (Finance), and CPA holder. These two lecturers were both rejected by TCU on the basis of having qualifications not directly related to the programme. In the meeting, the TAPU urged the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) to request that TCU review the directly related qualification criteria and consider for recognition an academic staff member who has opted to specialize in one subject among multiple subjects in a programme. In this regard, the request was to consider the relatedness of courses for the programme rather than the direct relatedness of the courses. The request was, therefore, to remove the clause that states that "academic staff with qualifications directly related to the programme" and replace it with a clause that simply states "qualifications related to the programme". This chapter examines the challenges and opportunities of mainstreaming peace studies in Tanzania amidst the regulators' policy and regulation which discourage interdisciplinarity which is the root or backbone for mainstreaming peace studies.

4 What Challenges Do Higher Education Regulations Bring on Multi-Disciplinarity?

Besides uncertainties in the establishment of academic programmes due to financial challenges, continued changes in higher education regulations have disturbed many academic programmes in Tanzania. Recently, regulations on the establishment of academic programmes have been unpredictable and sometimes discriminatory against young private institutions which are growing and cannot compete with old universities in recruitment and staffing. TCU Regulation 1.8.3 states that in determining student/staff ratios and disposition, consideration shall be made on the possibility of academic staff teaching across departments/schools/faculties and programmes for which some staff could be listed more than once, and the University shall be required to show proof that the arrangement does not compromise the overall academic responsibilities of teaching, research, student consultations, supervision and community engagement, and that the arrangement does not exceed the staff workload. Likewise, the Regulations 1.8.3 and 1.8.4 present the standards on staff/student ratios and the minimum required number of academic staff with the requisite qualifications which offer institutions opportunities to mainstream peace studies in Tanzania.

Regulation 1.8.3 allows for the possibility of academic staff teaching across departments/schools/faculties and programmes. It gives institutions the possibility of listing a teaching staff more than once, as long as there is proof of not compromising standards on teaching, research, student consultations, supervision, etc. However, some institutions claim that this rule is not respected by the Commission in the evaluation of academic standards. Similarly, the regulation on the academic staff career path qualification has brought more problems than it has been probably meant to do. The regulation stipulates that in their career path academic staff must have pursued directly related subjects in one discipline. This regulation may be useful and reasonable for some disciplines such as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); however, this regulation is not reasonable for Arts, Social Sciences, or Humanities since most of these disciplines are based on liberal arts and are not skill-centred. Furthermore, the regulation has been introduced without giving institutions time to prepare new staff in line with the new regulation or requirement. In the same vein, the regulation is retroactive which affects academic staff who have been trained and employed before the promulgation of the new law. Many institutions are forced to terminate academic staff who do not meet the academic vertical integration requirement, also known as directly related subjects qualification.

5 Opportunities for Mainstreaming Peace Studies in Tanzania

Is the interdisciplinarity approach a problem? It is difficult to know the source of this policy since the regulation is not applied in other countries in the East African Community. Much as the intention of introducing the regulation might not be linked with peace studies, unfortunately, the regulation affected many peace study scholars who did not study peace studies per se. Such scholars may not be able to teach peace studies or do research on peace if they happen to be living in Tanzania. Some institutions have a feeling that the regulation has been introduced in order to weaken a number of small private institutions which have neither a great pool of resources to employ senior academicians nor the resources to guarantee the availability of directly related academic staff in their career path. The regulation on the possibility of sharing teaching staff across institutions, schools, departments, etc. is an opportunity for institutions to share academic staff who are rare (TCU 1.8.3). However, the regulation from the same Regulator which prohibits interdisciplinary approaches in academic institutions poses a threat to mainstreaming peace studies in the region. It is time for institutions to prepare skill-centred specialists in peace studies in order to overcome these challenges, not only in peace studies but also in other disciplines which are not skill-centred/focused. Nations all over the world are invited by UNESCO to value diversity, especially in the way of knowing phenomena. As plurality in ways of knowing and doing becomes more widespread, knowledge ecosystems that draw from the wealth of cultures and experiences should become more valued (UNESCO 2021).

There are different initiatives to mainstream peace studies in various institutions in Africa. When I was elected President of the Association of Catholic Universities and Institutes of Africa and Madagascar (ACUHIAM) from 2016 to 2017, during that time, I was able to engage with other African and Madagascar leaders, most of them being heads of academic institutions. As leaders of Catholic universities and institutions, we also came to share the agenda of the church on peace, which was actually transferred to us through the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU). Standing as church institutions, we had a feeling that we had the capacity to contribute to peace and conflict resolution in Africa. So that was where actually the project of peace and conflict resolution came in. But now as academic institutions, our role actually is not to go to the field or probably into the army, but rather to mainstream peace studies in our curricula. And that's when the International Federation of Catholic Universities and ACUHIAM have highlighted the importance of actually preparing for at least zonal or regional centres for peace studies in order to mainstream or to lead in the mainstreaming of peace studies.

In this regard, this chapter makes reference to one particular initiative made by the Association of Catholic Universities and Institutes of Africa and Madagascar (ACUHIAM). In 2017/18, the ACUHIAM General Assembly in Nairobi Kenya made a resolution that in order to make Africa a more peaceful place, academic institutions (in particular, institutions which are members of the International

Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU)) must mainstream peace studies in all academic programmes. With this resolution, it was also agreed that at least two centres for Peace Studies should be established in Africa. The proposal was that one centre be established in East Africa and another one in Central Africa. These centres were to be centres of excellence where Catholic institutions in Africa would learn how to mainstream peace studies and carry out more research on peace studies. The implementation of this resolution has not been done for various reasons, among them financial constraints and continued changes in higher education regulations related to the accreditation of academic programmes. One limitation which delayed the implementation of the resolution was that any peace studies program should have academicians who studied peace from the undergraduate to postgraduate level. In other words, for an institution to establish a BA program in Peace Studies, there must be available as the minimum requirement five PhD/MA academic staff who have studied Peace Studies at BA, MA, and Ph.D. levels.

When we look at Tanzania as an opportune place to mainstream peace studies, the first positive aspect is the presence of good higher learning institutions. The presence of quality higher learning institutions gives us hope that we have the capacity to mainstream peace studies since we have the human resources to do it. In the same manner, by having the capacity to deliver peace studies programs to the youth, we are also able to lead the way in which our students can understand the importance of peace studies, not from foreign perspectives, but actually from the African perspective. In Tanzania, the major religious groups Christians and Muslims live in relative harmony. This is an opportunity for the country to mainstream peace studies and avoid conflicts. Christians and Muslims need faith elements and moral imagination to remind them that they can be people of different faiths, yet brothers and sisters (Lederach 2005). You can all agree that in Africa, there are various kinds of conflicts. If we look at Tanzania which doesn't have a history of many military conflicts, except the war between Tanzania and Uganda in 1978, there are numerous conflicts in society ranging from religious conflicts between Muslims and Christians to political conflicts between political organizations which have identified themselves on religious grounds (Gahnström 2012). Wijsen & Mfumbusa report that since Mwalimu's withdrawal from politics in 1985, religious tensions between Christians and Muslims have been on the rise in Tanzania. They suggest that the Father of the Nation's presence until 1999 has been reassuring. Their study showed that Mwalimu, drawing from the trust he enjoyed among the people, could always be expected to act behind the scenes to make things happen (2004). Wijsen and Mfumbusa's concern was whether the foundation laid by Nyerere would be solid enough to guarantee stability and harmony in Tanzania in the long run.

It is basically known, however, that Nyerere's legacy is still strong and influential in the country. In this regard, mainstreaming peace studies in Tanzania using Nyerere's legacy will influence people since they still have great trust in him. There are still various kinds of conflicts in our society and most of them stem from the way our societies are formed (Mfumbusa 2014; Wijsen and Mfumbusa 2004). One way of looking at how conflicts develop among people is to look at how religion brings trust among them. The cultural milieu likewise becomes the source of conflicts in

societies since we have conflicts between ethnic groups; we have seen conflicts between people in terms of trying to fight for sources of water and acquisition of land. There are conflicts between those who are keeping animals or domestic animals and those who are farming. However, since most of our students are from either pastoral societies or agricultural societies, it is easy to teach peace studies among them since the university compound fits well as the place for conflict resolution. There were also suggestions that the context of the economic and social crisis in Tanzania (Chaligha et al. 2002), particularly before the 2015 General Elections, enabled the emergence of religious revivalist groups, which increased the social and cultural saliency of religion. The emergence of political religion in turn was facilitated by the presence of group grievances, in particular on the part of the Muslims (Gahnström 2012). Despite such signs of ethnicity and political conflicts emerging in Tanzania during general elections, ethnicity in Tanzania—in whatever form—has never evolved into a decisive or indispensable factor for the political distribution of resources (Gahnström 2012: p. 2).

This situation might be traced back both to the rather inclusive political system that was put in place in Tanzania after independence that inhibited the emergence and articulation of group grievances and to the prevalence of a strong resentment among the population against the use of tribalism (Gahnström 2012: 2). The inhibition of group grievances went hand in hand with the limitations of the acceptable discourses which were brought about by one partyism after independence. Only discourses that agreed with the ruling party's ideology were allowed to filter into the public sphere (Mfumbusa 2014). It is obvious that the country has experienced some 30 years of turbulent relations that have not been explored or discussed intensively. In this regard, the former Vice President of the United Republic, Alhaj Aboud Jumbe, suggested that the doctrine of the 'supremacy of the ruling party' silenced alternative voices (Jumbe 1994). Inequality among various groups in a country may also bring conflicts (Cramer 2003). Likewise, even inequalities and injustices are now viewed through a religious lens (Nguruwe 2011). Tanzania, to a large extent, has not featured in conflicts that are related to inequality among ethnic groups. Tanzania is a multi-ethnic society with about 120 ethnic groups and its government is secular and it is not affiliated with any particular religion.

6 Should Peace Studies Be Controlled by the Government and to What Extent?

Peace studies revolve around sensitive issues such as the rise of tensions among religious divides. In developing academic programmes that mainstream peace studies, some people are of the opinion that the government should not leave much freedom to the academic institutions to decide on the programme contents. This concern has both positive and negative elements in the strategy to mainstreaming peace studies in higher education system. In one way, government control of the

contents to be taught in Peace Studies programmes may thwart institutional academic autonomy. However, too much freedom for institutions may also be dangerous if there are institutions that are ideologically biased in one way or the other. We are confident that the role of TCU as the regulator of programmes that are accredited in universities is still very important. With this regard, much as institutional autonomy is required for the free association of knowledge, quality assurance measures should be in place to make sure that peace programmes are run as expected.

Notwithstanding, the issue of delivery of peace studies or conflict resolution programmes needs to be controlled because when you are teaching about peace among conflicting people, if you are not careful, you may end up instigating conflicts or escalating the fragile situation. You may end up encouraging people to think in an antagonistic way rather than a harmonious way. If you are teaching conflict resolution among conflicting Muslims and Christians, your views or opinion about Islam and Christianity must be weighed. If you are not careful in class, you may find out that you are probably showing more problems in one religion and not in the other. In this kind of situation, you may be instigating seeds of conflict rather than helping the conflicting parties (Wijsen and Mfumbusa 2004). One of our lecturers in history at our university was trying to teach the history of Christianity and the history of Islam. But when he was touching on some sensitive issues regarding Islam, one student attacked this lecturer in class. Of course, the lecturer was right in his own way because the content he was teaching was in the curriculum, but the way he delivered the message was not acceptable. The student was of the view that the way the lecturer taught the history of Islam was demeaning the role of Prophet Muhammad.

In this regard, lecturers have to be careful and cautious when teaching sensitive issues such as religious conflicts, ethnic conflicts, and political conflicts. In saying this, one can see the challenges that institutions may face when mainstreaming peace studies in various curricula. In this regard, it is important for a programme or a course to be mainstreamed not to be fast-tracked; caution has to be made in order to make sure that nothing comes out which may bring more conflict than what the institution is trying to resolve. Generally, Tanzanians are peaceful people. The report by Chaligha et al. (2002) illustrates some aspects as follows: “even though Tanzania is a very diverse society, its citizens exhibit high levels of national identity and low levels of ethnic consciousness. Most Tanzanians define themselves in terms of occupation rather than tribe, language, or religion”, p. 2.

Much as universities or higher learning institutions are given the right to mainstream peace studies in their institutions, prudence should be taken among the universities not only in preparing the content but also in preparing those who are willing to deliver the programme or course of study. Peace studies are not only theoretical, they are also practical because they touch people’s feelings. For example, if you are presenting or discussing a case that involves genocide, the way you are presenting it should be well controlled because you may raise up people’s feelings and bring them back to what has had happened. We have seen these kinds of experiences where people are actually retrieving information; when people are recording what has happened, they end up reliving, they live the past, they start to live in the past as

if they are living now even if the incident has happened already. Peace studies are not expected to end up being anti-peace studies. Another challenging situation is when we look at religion as an agent of mainstreaming peace studies. One may ask, what kind of role do you think the Catholic Church plays on this issue? This is a relevant question since, while on the one hand, differences in religious ideologies can cause various conflicts, peace studies are to a greater extent part of the social doctrine of the church. So, explaining the role the Catholic Church plays in maintaining peace studies is important.

The church or any other religious institution has a big role to play in ensuring that we mainstream peace studies, but also that we live in peace, or we live peacefully in our societies. Experience shows that in Tanzania and in some other East African countries, whenever political leaders have problems on issues of peace and justice, or equality and peace, they run to the religious leaders and ask them, first of all, to pray for them, but secondly, ask them to talk to their followers. The government, to a great extent, is aware that religious leaders have a role to play in resolving conflicts in society (Nguruwe 2011). People listen to the church or religious leaders because religious leaders touch their people not only in their brains, but also they touch their hearts. They touch their morals and their moral obligations, and they can influence them easily. After independence in 1961 the government of Tanzania, desperate to avoid religious tensions, came up with a unique injunction, "Don't mix politics with religion." Some people say the injunction was meant to steer the country clear of what Mwalimu Nyerere called a religious trap. However, there are signs that the trap is on the verge of snapping (Mfumbusa 2014). Government leaders and religious leaders must work together to ensure that peace building strategies are realistic and practical. In this regard, mainstreaming peace studies in higher education programmes is highly recommended.

7 Conclusion

In general terms, the role of the government and other religious institutions is to support peace studies and peace-building projects. The support can first be by strengthening leadership in the universities, which are under the government or religious denominations. The church, as an example, has to make sure that one of the strategies in getting a good leader in the university is to make sure that the leader will commit himself or herself to ensure that peace studies are mainstreamed in various programmes. We normally call these courses institutional courses. They must be compulsory in the church universities. Institutional courses are courses that have to be studied whether the student is studying physics or education. They are courses that one has to take regardless of the field of study they are in. In universities such as the Saint Augustine University of Tanzania, Social Ethics and French are institutional courses. In this regard, the role of Tanzanian institutions should now be identifying peace studies as institutional courses, at least for every programme in the university.

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Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development in Africa Through Workshops for Young People



Margit Stein and Koffi Emmanuel Noglo

Abstract Scientific studies show high correlations between the level of education and the level of peaceful development and democratization of societies. This is especially confirmed for the African context. Nevertheless, not every educational initiative automatically contributes to greater peace and democracy, since authoritarian education, as is still practised in many African countries, can also cement existing social hierarchical and oppressive structures. Civic and ethical education for more peace, democracy, and sustainability is seen as a way of empowering young people for a self-determined life in society, as it is offered by the "Academie Bilimon". This approach is based on the methodology of Paolo Freire. In a transnational project, the training materials of the workshops of the "Academie Bilimon", are being written down/compiled, after having previously been passed on from workshop to workshop orally, without written teaching materials, such as a method manual. This gap is now filled with an elaborate method manual for youth education by students from Togo and Germany. These method manuals focus on identity, responsible sexuality, career development, social engagement, interculturality, democracy education, and education for sustainable development. In Freire's spirit of equal cooperation between teachers and learners, hierarchies are broken down and peers are used as "educational ambassadors". The teaching materials are already available in German and were translated and made available online free of charge in French, English, Swahili, Haussa, Ewe, and Kabiyè.

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1 Introduction: The Political and Social Situation in West Africa as a Starting Point for the Academie Bilimon's Work for Peace and Sustainability

The political-social situation in West Africa, where the "Academie Bilimon" mainly works, in countries like Togo (the headquarters of the "Academie Bilimon"), Niger, and Burkina Faso, is often torn apart and marked by unrest and violence as well as social conflicts and less "democratic structures". Even if in some cases open or hot wars no longer exist as they did during the period of decolonization, acts of violence can nevertheless be observed within the societies, for example due to ethnic and religious tensions or dictatorial or authoritarian regimes. Violence by Islamist terrorist groups such as Boko Haram in Nigeria terrorizes civilian populations and societies are also divided by politico-ethnic conflicts, for example in Togo, where during election campaign periods, different communities are often involved in ethnically motivated violence, whereby the political and economic power lies in the hands of diverse interest groups, which are not ready to cede power.

The respect for human rights and the involvement of civil society organizations are often hampered by strict controls by the state. Added to this is the difficult economic and social situation of these countries. The demographic development also seems to be uncontrolled, due to a lack of planned birth control, early pregnancies and child marriages, as well as a lack of emancipation and equal rights for women. All these have a negative impact on the social and economic development of those countries. An example for this is Niger, which has the demographically youngest population worldwide and the highest population growth. According to the 'Human Development Report 2020', Niger ranks last among countries worldwide in the 'Human Development Index'. This has consequences for the life expectancy, the level of education, and the average purchasing power of people (https://hdr.undp.org/).

This violent situation and development are reinforced by structures that exclude directly or indirectly certain segments of the population and thus create an overall system of structural violence (Galtung 1969). Violence can not only be understood as physical violence against (political) opponents, directly aiming at hurting or harming a specific person or group, according to the slogan "a subject, an object and an action" (Galtung 1969: 169). Structural violence also includes psychological violence; it is often indirect and cannot be attributed to a specific perpetrator, but is inherent in the political and social structures and beliefs of a society. These structures violate, exclude, and hinder possible developments: "Violence is defined here as the cause of the difference between the possible and the actual" (Galtung 1969, 168). That means that structural violence therefore hinders and prevents people from developing fully and freely. Instead of the term "killing", more subtle forms of oppression are used, such as "repression, arrest, expulsion, marginalisation, fragmentation" (Galtung 1990: 292).

Direct as well as structural violence passes into the culture and also manifests itself in the educational system that shapes the new generation: "Cultural violence

is defined here as any aspect of a culture that can be used to legitimize violence in its direct or structural form." (Galtung 1990: 291). Women, ethnic minorities, and people from impoverished social classes or with disabilities are particularly affected by structural and cultural violence. Here, a high level of intersectionality of oppression and exclusion along the classic lines of sexism, racism, and classism (later supplemented: bodyism) can be assumed, which were first described in the concept of intersectionality by Crenshaw (1989). Especially women from certain ethnic groups, from precarious financial circumstances, and with health impairments are threatened by exclusion, marginalization, and direct or indirect structural violence (Crenshaw 1989).

By moving from direct forms of violence to structural forms, violence becomes part of the culture in the domains of religion, governance, education, art, and language. Within its cultural form, violence and oppression are internalized by individuals. As a result, they themselves often do not know how to develop in a peaceful society and are not aware of their opportunities and rights. Therefore, the aim of the "Academie Bilimon", which talks of "the culture of dominated social groups", is to sustain and support social groups in moving out of the "culture of dominated social groups", as well as to promote democracy and were first described through education and empowerment in order to raise its beneficiaries' awareness of matters of human rights and mutual respect among citizens (local or global). The basis of the peace building work of the "Academie Bilimon" in its workshops is to strive for the critical citizen (Norris 1999) or according to Inkeles (1969) the so-called "participating citizen" or "modern citizen […] who takes an active interest in public affairs, is informed about important events and participates in civic affairs" (Harber and Mncube 2012:108).

2 Theoretical Background and State of Research: The Relationship Between Peace, Democracy, and (Political) Education

International comparative studies show that there is a high correlation between the level of education of the population and the degree of democracy in countries (e.g., Glaeser et al. 2007; Sanborn and Clayton 2014; Aléman and Kim 2015). "A survey of the literature over the last hundred years largely supports this claim, providing testament to the power of schools to bring about democratic change." (Sanborn and Clayton 2014: 773). Within the studies, evidence is provided both historically and with regard to current political processes like the 'Arab Spring' in Africa and the Middle East, which was mainly driven by academically educated young people. On the one hand, "democratic attitudes were most effectively inculcated through education", and on the other hand, there can be "noted the salving effects of educational levels on social stability, including increased toleration and greater capacity to comprehend available policy choices" (Sanborn and Clayton 2014: 773).

The correlation between education and democracy also exists at a very basic level, for example between the extent of literacy of the population and the democratization of the country. This is also the starting point for Paulo Freire's didactic-methodological approach, on which the "Academie Bilimon's" working approach is based. This approach promotes literacy and expects positive effects on the citizens' ability to participate in politics. The studies prove the connection between basic primary education and the willingness to get involved in political processes, both for the US and European countries (Milligan et al. 2004) as for African countries (Mulligan et al. 2004; Mattes and Mughogho 2009; Harber and Mncube 2011, 2012; Sanborn and Clayton 2014; Bleck 2015; Tadesse 2019), where education is linked to the willingness to vote or to stand as a candidate for a party. When countries are compared with regard to the correlation between the populations' educational levels and the effect on democratization, "the democratizing effect of education is more intense in poor countries" (Aléman and Kim 2015: 1). The links between education and democratization in Africa were particularly high when both genders had equal access to education (Sanborn and Clayton 2014).

Focusing on the studies in Africa, the results also show correlations even for basic levels of schooling. In her quantitative and qualitative survey in Mali, Bleck (2015), for example, found high correlations between a basic primary school education and the willingness of students, but also of their parents, to participate in elections. The higher the level of education of the Malian respondents was, the greater their willingness was also to stand for election or to become actively involved in politics (Bleck 2015).

In their paper "Why does democracy need education?", Glaeser et al. (2007) explore the relationship between democracy and education to formulate causal pathways. For doing this, they make review relevant studies in the field. Glaeser et al. (2007, 80/81) argue that "the evidence suggests that schooling leads to democracy, but there is no evidence that democracy leads to schooling […]. The best econometric evidence suggests that this effect is causal."

> There are 65 observations in this regression [effects of schooling on democracy] and the R^2 is 67%. Initial schooling, even in highly dictatorial regimes, strongly predicts becoming more democratic over time. In contrast, democracy does not predict growth in schooling. […] There are 68 observations in this regression and the R^2 is only 3%. (Glaeser et al. 2007: 80/81).

Glaeser et al. (2007) point out that democracies need a higher level of education than dictatorships. While dictatorships use oppression against political opponents and with incentives for the regime's supporters, democracies require a higher level of participation of critical and highly educated citizens.

> As education raises the benefits of civic engagement, it raises participation in support of a broad-based regime (democracy) relative to that in support of a narrow-based regime (dictatorship). This increases the likelihood of successful democratic revolutions against dictatorships, and reduces that of successful anti-democratic coups. (Glaeser et al. 2007: 77).

Like Glaeser et al. (2007) Mattes and Mughogho (2009) show that a high degree of "critical citizenship" (Norris 1999) can only be achieved through education. This

happens when people are educated about their rights and can identify the failures of their political regimes and know ways and means of advocating for democratic structures and reforms. Authoritarian and oppressive regimes fear well-educated and thus more critical citizens. Among other aspects, "the extremely low levels of formal education found in many African countries strike at the very core of the skills and information that enable citizens to [...] learn the rules of government, form opinions about political performance, and care about the survival of democracy." (Mattes and Mughogho 2009: 4). Mattes and Mughogho (2009: 2) articulate three different paths through which education affects citizenship and democratization:

> First of all, formal education may affect attitudes and behavior via a "positional path" by sorting citizens into differing social networks, situations and classes […]. Second, formal education may promote democratic citizenship through a "socialization path" whereby children are explicitly trained to see democracy as preferable to its alternatives, accept the authority of the democratic state and its officials, and take part in the duties of democratic citizenship. Finally, formal education may facilitate democratic citizenship via a "cognitive path," increasing both people's verbal and cognitive proficiency, as well as their ability to construct their own ideas and critical thoughts.

However, this correlation between education and democratization cannot be produced automatically. Education is therefore—in accordance with modernization theory—a necessary, but not sufficient condition for forming structures and means of democracy (Harber and Mncube 2012). "There are in reality three main ways of looking at the relationship between education and development." (Harber and Mncube 2011: 233). Education can create a more democratic society; it can leave society as it is or it can help to consolidate undemocratic structures and therefore make society even worse. The contradiction can be resolved by taking a closer look at how education is operationalized within the different studies. Education in the sense of simply building up knowledge and skills, which is often highly valued in undemocratic systems, does not create democratic consciousness and critical and democratic citizens (Norris 1999). Such education could rather lead to the consolidation of authoritarian structures (Harber and Mncube 2011). An emancipatory education is necessary to promote democracy. Not only is fact-based education important, but also civic and ethical values education. Civic education strives "for effective participation in democratic and development processes at both local and national levels […] by empowering people for effective civic engagement." (Tadesse 2019: 50).

For example, in studies in Ethiopia (Tadesse 2019), Tanzania, and Zambia (Riutta 2009), it was found that precisely this civic and ethical education played a major role in the democratization processes of countries and "created the youth who knows their rights and demands their human and democratic rights to be protected" (Tadesse 2019: 49). Diamond (1993, 1) states that "theories of democracy, both classical and modern, have asserted that democracy requires a distinctive set of political values and orientations from its citizens: moderation, tolerance, civility, efficacy, knowledge, participation" (1993: 1), which can be formed within civic and ethical education.

Schools should play a major role in this process. The role of schools in teaching for democratic citizenship has to be viewed critically. However, in African

countries, schools themselves are often trapped in directly and indirectly structurally violent hierarchical relationships and socialize children and young people into submissive obedience, as Harber, for example points out in his book titled "Schooling as violence" and in his works on schooling in Africa together with Mncube (2011, 2012). Schools often do not have a "pro-democratic tint to their teaching. Beyond the content of what is taught, the dominant style of teaching and learning in Africa's schools is often said to parrot its colonial predecessors, concentrating on rote memorization and failing to encourage practical skills, critical thinking or autonomous participation" (Mattes and Mughogho 2009, 3). Many groups of children, such as those with disabilities or from marginalized groups, are excluded. In addition, there is not only indirect but also direct school violence like bullying among students or corporal punishment and violence by teachers (e.g., in West Africa; Ghana: Leach et al. 2003; Afenyadu and Lakshmi 2003; Owusu-Banahene and Amedahe 2008; Dunne et al. 2010; Cameroon: Mbassa and Daniel 2001; Nigeria: Egbochuku 2007; Omoteso 2010). This contradicts education for democracy and peace. This stresses the enormous role of the extracurricular area of civic and ethical or values education within the out-of-school sector, where the "Academie Bilimon" comes in.

3 The Academie Bilimon's Educational Work for Peace and Democracy

The "Academie Bilimon" owes its name to the term "Bilimon", which is borrowed from the Bassar language spoken in northern Togo. Bilimon means "we are better off together". The name Bilimon is an expression of the vision of solidarity and mutual respect that is represented by the "Academie Bilimon" and with which the young people are accompanied in order to learn solidarity themselves and to be able to practise it in their daily life. Young people who have grown up socio-culturally and economically in circumstances of structural and cultural violence (Galtung 1969; 1990) often lose their sense of self-confidence, self-responsibility, and their trust in the social network. Therefore, Bilimon is not just a name, but a symbol for (re)socialization in order to be aware of those structures and (re)gain self-responsibility and solidarity, on the basis of which peaceful and socially sustainable developments can only be made possible.

According to its profile and its self-image, the "Academie Bilimon" wants to be a meeting place for political education for young people or to create a space in which young people are accompanied in such a way that they themselves are able to promote "brain gain" or "brain circulation" on their continent. In this way, a "brain drain", for example through mass emigration, is also counteracted. In this way, young people can escape the feeling of border barricades and perceive themselves as global citizens who are prepared to get involved in their societies of origin and contribute to sustainable development there, regardless of where they are currently staying.

Paulo Freire's didactics are the basis of the "Academie Bilimon's" further education work. Basically, this approach is to be understood as guiding learners from naïve curiosity to epistemological curiosity, whereby knowledge is constructed by the learners themselves. The "Academie Bilimon" workshops are based on the assumption that a citizen who trusts her- or himself and is self-aware with regard to her or his identity, who has a responsible sexual life, who can identify and knows how to implement her or his professional project and understands his or her role in society and is ready to live in solidarity with other members of society is likely to work for a peaceful and sustainable development of his or her society. This assumption is incorporated into these four modules that are the basis of the "Academie Bilimon's" workshops:

- Module 1: Guidance on identifying one's own personal and common social identity
- Module 2: Guidance towards responsible sexuality and gender equality
- Module 3: Guidance in identifying one's own professional and social commitment goals and in managing them toward achieving them
- Module 4: Guidance towards social commitment. The module includes antiracism work, intercultural and tolerance training, and education for sustainable development

To ensure that the effects achieved have a long-term and sustainable impact, the work is mainly based on a so-called "training of trainers". Here, youths and young adults are trained as so-called "educational ambassadors" who then pass on their experience and expertise, knowledge, and skills to other youths in a kind of "peer education". The focus of the "Academie Bilimon" is also on lifelong learning, which means the offer of a permanent accompaniment of the target groups.

Within a project of the Academie Bilimon and Margit Stein, professor for pedagogics at the University of Vechta the workshop materials successfully implemented by the Academie Bilimon were now written down in form of a handbook, that was translate in seven different languages (English, French, German, Haussa, Swahili, Ewe and Kabiyè) (https://www.bilimonacademie.org/materielldidactiques/bd). The concepts have so far only been passed on orally from workshop to workshop, without written teaching material, such as a method manual. This gap was now filled with an elaborate method manual for youth education by students from Togo and Germany. The materials and concepts are suitable both for the out-of-school sector, such as youth work or work in communities, and for work in the school context, where the concepts can be used in class. Writing the concepts down now has several positive effects in terms of making it easier to pass on the concepts and expanding the workshops to other countries and regions. New volunteer educational ambassadors as well as teachers and (social) educators can be trained in a more structured and qualitatively assured way. Especially during the time of the worldwide corona pandemic, digital training via online teaching based on written material are easier.

On the other hand, a basic set of written methods and materials makes it possible to extend the workshop concepts in terms of time and place beyond their original use in Togo. So far, offshoots of the "Academie Bilimon" have been founded in

Cameroon and Niger. All materials are now available in form of a handbook in seven different languages online and free of charge, so that they can also reach other interested parties or groups (https://www.bilimonacademie.org/materiel-didactiques/bd).

In this project, funded by the State of Lower Saxony in Germany, the "Academie Bilimon" (Dr. Koffi Emmanuel Noglo and educational ambassadors) and students of the University of Vechta at the Chair of Pedagogics (Prof. Dr. Margit Stein and students) worked on teaching materials of around 500 pages. The project took place within the framework of a teaching-learning research project in the summer semester of 2021 and the winter semester of 2021/22. A total of about 50 students from the fields of educational science and teaching at the University of Vechta as well as about ten educational ambassadors from Togo—also mostly students—participated in the project. The language in the seminar was German, while the educational ambassadors either spoke German or received a translation into French from other educational ambassadors or Dr. Noglo. In the digital seminars due to the pandemic, theoretical and practical input was provided by the lecturers, guest speakers, the management and the educational ambassadors of the "Academie Bilimon," and other practice partners from Africa on topics such as children's rights and youth participation in West Africa and Germany, the situation of children and young people with disabilities, and in situations of poverty.

In the second application-oriented part of the seminar, up to three students from the University of Vechta wrote or compiled a section of the handbook together with an educational ambassador. In this process, the previous concepts of the workshops of the "Academie Bilimon" were reviewed on the basis of process protocols and on the basis of discussions with the educational ambassadors, supplemented with further methods and compiled in book or manuscript form. handbooks are now available online in digital form free of charge on the homepages of the Academie Bilimon (https://www.bilimonacademie.org/materiel-didactiques/bd).

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Developing a Violence-Free and Inclusive School for Peace and Democracy in Tanzania



Margit Stein and Felista Tangi

Abstract There is a strong connection between the level of social peace and democratisation within a society and the educational level of the population. This correlation is evident even for basic levels of primary schooling and becomes stronger for higher education. However, schools as the main educational institutions only contribute to democratisation and to peacebuilding if they themselves are democratically organised and based on children's rights. This is not yet the case in many countries. The chapter begins with an introduction depicting the theoretical links between democratisation, peacebuilding and schooling in societies. In a second part a literature review is provided that proves that corporal punishment and violence are very common in schools in many African countries, irrespective of whether corporal punishment is legally banned or not in a country. A special focus is placed on the situation in Tanzania. The high amount of physical, emotional and sexual harassment and violence as well as the extent of corporal punishment has a very negative impact on the socialisation of children and youths. The chapter then describes in a third part the development of St. Therese Secondary School, which bans corporal punishment and violence and is highly inclusive.

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1 Introduction and Theoretical Background: The Role of School in the Process of Democratisation and Peacebuilding

A strong correlation can be observed between the level of social peace and democratisation within a society and the educational level of the population. This correlation is evident even for basic levels of primary schooling (e.g. Bleck 2015) and becomes stronger for higher education (e.g. Sanborn and Clayton 2014). Therefore, many authors conclude that this is a meaningful 'testament to the power of schools to bring about democratic change' (Sanborn and Clayton 2014: 773). The prerequisite here, however, is that schools themselves have undergone democratisation and are places free of human rights violations. John Dewey stated that 'the development of […] a democratic society is dependent to a large degree on the democratisation of schools and schooling' (Dewey, as cited in Harber and Mncube 2012: 104).

Schools could work towards the democratisation of societies in two ways. First, school should be a place where the structures and the functioning of an effective modern and democratic organisation could be learned. Opportunities in such an organisation should be allocated based on the principle of performance and 'bureaucratic rules and impersonal judgement [should] replace treatment based mainly on […] family ties or friendship and connections' (Harber and Mncube 2012: 108). Second, schools should be an agent of socialisation that teaches and practises peace and democracy for young people directly or indirectly. In a direct manner, knowledge about theories of democracy and democratic values should be learned, for instance as content in subjects such as literature, history, political education or geography. In an indirect manner, schools should promote democracy, as pupils should be involved in school life as individuals. Schools should enable participation and inclusion for all, irrespective of gender, social, ethnic or religious backgrounds. Teachers and pupils within such a democratic school should have the opportunity to express their opinions and views openly and be treated fairly. By practising the rules of tolerance and social coexistence in larger groups and communities, democratic values and a democratic political culture could be experienced.

Nevertheless, it is not automatic that more schooling leads to more democratisation of societies. Harber and Mncube point out that schools can be linked to democratisation or to its counterpart in three ways (Harber and Mncube 2011, 233/234; see also Harber 2004, 2009):

> First, is the dominant discourse in international debates on education and development—that education is of significant benefit both to the individual and society. […] Education might contribute politically by developing the values and behaviours required for a suitable political culture that will help to sustain a democratic political system […].
>
> The second, less heard, discourse, is that of education as reproduction […] A small number of children from poor backgrounds succeed and this provides the appearance of a meritocratic system whereas in reality it merely serves to mask the role of education in perpetuating and reproducing inequality […].
>
> The third discourse, […] is that schooling not only reproduces society fundamentally as it is but also actively makes the lives of individuals worse and harms the wider society. This is because schools both reproduce and cause violence.

Schools often exert violence directly—for example through corporal punishment—and indirectly through hierarchical and oppressive structures. Schools therefore often form a system of direct physical, psychological and emotional as well as structural violence. In authoritarian regimes schools are often part of an oppressive system of political control that dates back to the period of colonisation to suppress free expression and democratisation. In his book 'Schooling as violence' Harber (2004: 24) states that 'the dominant or hegemonic model […of schools…] is authoritarian rather than democratic. Education for and in democracy, human rights and critical awareness is not a primary characteristic of the majority of schooling'.

2 State of the Research: Violence and Oppression in African Schools

Studies on the schooling systems of African countries show that schools often fail in two ways: First, they do not succeed in forming an effective modern and democratic organisation based on fair and transparent rules and impersonal judgement and therefore fail in the socialisation of young people as 'modern citizens' (Inkeles 1969). Indeed 'many schools […] in developing countries have both "traditional" and "modern" organisational, social, cultural, economic and behavioural characteristics coexisting side by side' (Harber and Mncube 2012: 110). That means, for example, that in many schools corruption is a virulent problem and promotions of teachers and student advancement are not granted on the basis of merit but on the basis of family, ethnic, or religious ties. Furthermore, students with disabilities, from poorer families, female students and students of religious and ethnic minorities face social exclusion (Possi and Milinga 2017) and therefore have reduced enrolment rates and drop out of school much more often.

Second, schools do not succeed in banning all forms of violence and oppressive structures and are themselves authoritarian systems and therefore fail in the socialisation of young people as 'critical citizens' (Norris 1999). In schools, but also in families and neighbourhoods, children and young people are exposed to high levels of physical, psychological and sexual violence: For example, in Tanzania, a nationwide survey showed that 'nearly one in three girls and one out of seven boys experience some form of sexual violence […] among girls, 72% experience some form of physical violence, while for boys the figure is 71%. Emotional violence affects approximately one quarter of boys and girls' (United Republic of Tanzania 2016, 1). This is evidenced by various studies conducted in Tanzanian schools, including those by Kuleana (1997), Frankenberg, Homqvist and Rubenson (2010), UNICEF (2011), Feinstein and Mwahombela (2010), Yaghambe and Tshabangu (2013), Hecker et al. (2014, 2016, 2018), Tangi (2019), Stein and Bockwoldt (2016), Stein, Steenkamp, and Tangi (2019a, b), Mwidege and Tangi (2021), Ngussa and Mdalingwa (2017), Lema and Gwando (2018), by the organization HakiElimu (2020), Alistides and Mwila (2021), Mushi, Mandila and Mosha (2022), Sungwa, Jackson and Kahembe (2022) as well as the master thesis by Kulwa (2022), Kelly,

Kyegombe, Nnko, Kahema, Charles and Bond (2022), Sweetbert (2022) and Lukiko (2023) from the St. Augustine University of Mwanza, Tanzania. These numbers do not include corporal punishment in families or in schools. Studies on corporal punishment in Tanzanian schools show rates of nearly 100%. Some of the mentioned studies also depicted the extent of sexual and emotional violence and found high rates of harassment by teachers, as did the study of Stein and Bockwoldt (2016) in boarding schools run by the church in the diocese of Rulenge-Ngara.

Studies focusing on school violence in a broader sense, e.g. in the form of bullying among students in Tanzania, were also conducted by Mgalla et al. (1998), Moris (2006, 2008), Ndibalema (2013), Kamala et al. (2013), Komba et al. (2014) and Tangi (2010, 2019). There are further publications, reports or studies focusing school violence and corporal punishment in sub-Saharan Africa, for example in Ethiopia (Terefe and Desere 1997), Ghana (Leach et al. 2003; Afenyadu and Lakshmi 2003; Owusu-Banahene and Amedahe 2008; Dunne et al. 2010), Cameroon (Mbassa and Daniel 2001), Malawi (Leach et al. 2003; Bisika et al. 2009), Nigeria (Egbochuku 2007; Omoteso 2010), South Africa (Wolpe et al. 1997; Christie 1998; Human Rights Watch 2001; Bhana 2006, 2008; Nelson Mandela Foundation 2005; Hunt 2007; Liang et al. 2007; Brown and Duku 2008; South African Institute of Race Relations SAIRR 2008; Greeff and Grobler 2008; Hammett and Staeheli 2011), Uganda (Mirembe and Davies 2001) and Zimbabwe (Zindi 1994; Tshabangu 2008). Brown et al. (2008) conducted a study among young people from the following African countries: Kenya, Namibia, Morocco, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

3 Democratisation of Schools: The Establishment of the Violence-Free Inclusive Secondary School St. Therese in Nyashishi, Tanzania

A democratic school culture or ethos would […] be characterised by democratic relationships built on trust and mutual respect and therefore corporal punishment would be absent as would other forms of physical punishment and all forms of bullying, whether staff to pupil or pupil to pupil. […] More democratic schools tend to be characterised by more classroom variety (Harber and Mncube 2012, 111; see also Harber 2004, 2011).

3.1 Ban on School Violence and Corporal Punishment

A school that aims to guide children and young people towards democratic structures and habits should enable them to experience democratic participation at school. First of all, legislation prohibiting violence against children and young people in school must be introduced to ban all forms of emotional, sexual and physical violence in its direct, indirekt, and structural forms, including a ban on corporal punishment. At present, corporal punishment is not legally banned in Tanzania but allowed 'for "justifiable" correction' under the 'National Corporal Punishment Regulations' of 1979 and the 'Law of the Child Act' (Art. 13) of 2009 (Stein et al.

2019a, b). As corporal punishment has often been used abusively and excessively, a law was established in 2000 that reduced the number of strokes to a maximum of four per offence, only to be given by the However, But as studies show (see Sect. 2 above), nevertheless, many students still experience massive violence and corporal punishment by teachers. Even in countries where 'corporal punishment is banned like in South Africa, yet such incidents were observed on numerous occasions' (Hammett and Staeheli 2011: 275). Therefore, a rigid and well-observed system of sanctions for teachers who still use violence in schools must also be established as well as means for students to report incidents of violence. Children must also be protected against bullying and sexual harassment by other students.

Students must be regularly educated about their rights in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This encompasses not only the right to live safely and free from violence and sexual exploitation but also the right to live a healthy and happy life and to be heard and to become actively involved in families, schools and neighbourhoods. The child rights-focused schools that should be established should allow students to make the experience living in accordance with those rights. Children must be actively involved in the school context and be able to help shape it in a democratic manner.

In the newly established St. Therese Secondary School, all forms of violence are banned and a complaints office concerning all forms of school violence—whether by teachers or by other pupils—was established. The teachers hired for this new school are socially competent, highly professional, and work on the basis of the materials on good classroom management produced by Stein and Steenkamp (2017). Therefore, the teachers are experts in non-violent and inclusive classroom management. They live and work together with the students in family groups and guarantee a safe living and learning environment without violence and humiliation.

3.2 Ban on Discrimination or Exclusion

No discrimination or exclusion should be allowed in schools, and diversity should not only be tolerated but also be warmly welcomed. There should be a special focus on female students, students with disabilities, and orphaned students as well as on students from rural areas, who often have a lower enrolment rates. Inclusive education is a key policy objective for the education of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. In inclusive classrooms children are expected to learn to read, write and do mathematics cooperatively and without exclusion. The philosophy of inclusion helps all children to learn and benefit morally, academically and socially.

Within the newly established St. Therese Secondary School an individual mentoring and coaching by student teachers for pupils with albinism and for orphans is provided. Twenty per cent of the students are people with disabilities.

To sum up, Table 1 shows the dimensions of a violence-free inclusive school like St. Therese in Nyashshi (for more details on the school see Stein et al. 2019a, b and Koopmeiners et al. 2025).

Table 1 Aspects of a violence-free inclusive school (according to Stein et al. 2019a)

School organisation	Teachers/staff	Teaching methodologies
Establishment of a school programme for children's rights A concept protecting students against physical, psychological, emotional and sexual violence by teachers and fellow students including sanctions A concept for non-violent conflict resolution in situations of bullying among students Classroom and school councils for participation Students' representatives/students' parliament School programme for inclusion A concept for gender equality A concept for ethnic and religious diversity A concept for inclusion of persons with disabilities	Qualifications of teachers and staff Qualifications in non-violent teaching, good classroom management and positive discipline Qualifications concerning children's rights Qualifications in teaching for inclusion and in dealing with diversity Access to high-quality materials and compendia Workshops for teachers	Integration of the topic of children's rights into the curriculum and school life Concepts for teaching in heterogeneous classes and for dealing with diversity A concept of service learning High-quality, non-violent classroom management Programmes and approaches to address bullying in schools Peer-to-peer coaching and mentoring

Source: Stein et al. (2019a)



Fig. 1 Pupils in class at St. Therese Secondary School. Source: Felista Tangi

3.3 Impressions from St. Therese Secondary School

Protection, empowerment, and care are provided for all pupils, including those with albinism, are granted in St. Therese Secondary School to make them achieve an education and academic competencies of high quality (Fig. 1).

An atmosphere of happiness, satisfaction, and love for all students regardless of whether they have disabilities is provided. Teachers promote a spirit of peace. This means that students and teachers are equal learning partners. Students are free from fear of bullying and violence. All students are given an opportunity to learn equally irrespective of gender, family background, ethnic or religious background, or their disability status. Students are given an opportunity to learn science subjects using computer technology in St. Therese Secondary School. The main challenges are the shortage of computers.

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The Ukraine War and the Impossibility to Reach a Peace Deal: Could China's Mediation Bring the War to an End?



Klaus Larres

Abstract Respect for the territorial integrity of other countries and noninterference in their domestic affairs has been a long-standing principle of Chinese foreign policy. Yet, China's unwise intensification of its relationship with Russia, as has been demonstrated in the joint Xi-Putin statement on February 4, 2022, which famously has talked about a relationship that has "no limits", has already begun to haunt Beijing ("Parsing the meaning of the Xi-Putin meeting on the sidelines of the Beijing Olympics," NPR (Feb. 8, 2022): https://www.npr.org/2022/02/08/1079112810/parsing-the-meaning-of-the-xi-putin-meeting-on-the-sidelines-of-the-beijing-olym). While Beijing might not have minded some tension between Russia and the West, China was not interested in the outbreak of war and being associated with a bloodthirsty quasi-ally. It remained unclear, however, whether Xi knew about Putin's invasion plan and agreed with it when they met in Beijing in early February. While, according to the *New York Times*, the Biden administration passed some of their intelligence information to the Chinese to make China put pressure on Moscow to refrain from an invasion, Beijing might not have trusted the information it received from Washington.

The first anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine has passed and the war is still continuing without any end in sight. Russian President Vladimir Putin's initial expectation that within a matter of a few weeks, if not days, his forces would succeed in moving toward Kyiv, topple the Zelensky government and replace it with a pro-Russian puppet government, and turn Ukraine into a loyal and dependent ally, such as Belarus, proved to be wishful thinking. Putin's expectation that the West would be deeply divided and fail to support Ukraine in any militarily meaningful way has also come to nothing. At the same time, the effectiveness of the Russian

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armies, its commanding generals, and Russia's homemade military arms and equipment have all proven to be spectacularly flawed.[1]

Still, despite Ukraine's counteroffensives during the last couple of months and some notable successes, pushing the Russian armies out of Ukraine has proven to be nigh impossible, despite all the massive military aid Kyiv has received from the US and, to a lesser extent, from EU countries.[2] To all intents and purposes, a stalemate has ensued. We are witnessing a terrible war of attrition with massive and greatly damaging Russian drone attacks on Ukraine and Ukrainian missile attacks on military bases deep inside Russia itself. At the extended frontlines in the south and east of Ukraine, brutal trench warfare and hand-to-hand fighting continue unabated. It has been estimated that more than 100,000 Russian soldiers have died so far and possibly an equal number of Ukrainian soldiers and civilians.[3] Are peace negotiations imminent to end the carnage or is the war likely to continue for yet another year?

Both Russia and Ukraine have indicated repeatedly that they are ready to negotiate with each other to bring about a ceasefire. Yet, neither side seems to be serious. Moscow, however, has insisted that the four Ukrainian territories (Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson) which Russia unilaterally annexed in September 2022 have to remain part of Russia and will not be returned to Ukraine under any circumstances. Putin has also stated on many occasions that the same applies to the Crimean peninsula which Russia has annexed by force in 2014. He is open to negotiations, Putin has said, "based on [the] new territorial realities."[4] However, neither annexation has been recognized by the international community and, with the exception of Crimea, Russia is not in full military and political control of any of the four regions and recently has even lost some land there.

Nevertheless, currently still 18% of Ukrainian territory remain under Russian control (including Crimea).[5] Putin's implementation of a partial 36 hour cease fire during the Orthodox Christmas celebrations has been viewed as a public relations gesture by most western governments and Ukraine. While UN Secretary-General Guterres welcomed such a temporary respite, he stressed that it could

[1] Michael Schwirtz et al, "How Putin's War in Ukraine became a Catastrophe for Russia," *New York Times* (Dec. 22, 2022): https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/12/16/world/europe/russia-putin-war-failures-ukraine.html

[2] Jonathan Masters and Will Merrow, "How Much Aid Has the U.S. Sent Ukraine? Here Are Six Charts. Six graphics illustrate the extraordinary level of support the United States has provided Ukraine this year in its war against Russian invaders," *Council on Foreign Relations* (Dec. 16, 2022): https://www.cfr.org/article/how-much-aid-has-us-sent-ukraine-here-are-six-charts

[3] Phil Steward and Idrees Ali, "More than 100,000 Russian military casualties in Ukraine, top U.S. general says," *Reuters* (Dec. 22, 2022): https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/more-than-100000-russian-military-casualties-ukraine-top-us-general-2022-11-10/

[4] *Kyiv Post*, "Putin Says Russia Ready for Peace Talks if Ukraine Accepts 'New Territorial Realities,'" (Jan. 5, 2023): https://www.kyivpost.com/post/6424

[5] Scott Reinhard, "Ukraine has reclaimed more than half the territory Russia has taken this year," *New York Times* (Nov. 14, 2022): https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/world/europe/ukraine-maps.html

not be a substitute for a "just peace in line with the U.N. charter and international law."[6]

Ukraine, however, has shown no greater realism than Putin regarding genuine peace talks. When recently putting forward his call for a UN-brokered "peace summit" by the end of February, Ukrainian president Zelensky declared that first a war-crimes tribunal had to be held and Russia had to be prepared to pay compensation to Ukraine.[7] In Zelensky's 10-point peace plan, which he presented to the G-20 leaders' meeting in Bali in November 2022, he insisted that Ukrainian territory in its sovereign borders as internationally recognized during the last days of the Soviet Union in 1991 need to be the basis for any peace deal. This includes Crimea.[8] Clearly, Russia's onslaughts and subsequent atrocities have greatly increased Ukraine's unwillingness to enter into any compromise deals.[9]

Thus, both sides are putting forward maximalist positions as a basis for any peace talks. Both Russia and Ukraine seem to believe that they will still be able to achieve notable successes on the battlefield and are thus unwilling to enter into any serious negotiations.

1 How and When Will the War Come to an End Eventually?

It appears that the war will only come to an end by means of peace negotiations when one of two conditions is met.

1. One possibility for the end of the war would be based on the conclusion and insight of both sides that they are utterly exhausted and their economies, military capabilities, and the will and motivation of their respective populations are no longer strong enough to maintain support for the war. Putin's massive drone attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure and energy grid in the middle of winter may represent an attempt to bring this about as well as to slow the arrival of western arms in Ukraine.[10] But as long as the US and other western countries are

[6] "Ukraine Dismisses Russian 36-Hour Truce as U.N. and Turkey Seek Path to End War," *DemocracyNow* (Jan. 6, 2023): https://www.democracynow.org/2023/1/6/headlines/ukraine_dismisses_russian_36_hour_truce_as_un_and_turkey_seek_path_to_end_war

[7] Shashank Bengali, "Hard-Line Positions by Russia and Ukraine Dim Hope for Peace Talks: Both Moscow and Kyiv say they are ready to talk, but their terms for sitting down at a negotiating table suggest otherwise," *New York Times* (Dec. 28, 2022): https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/28/world/europe/ukraine-russia-peace-talks.html

[8] Ibid.

[9] Sabine Fischer, "Peace Talks Between Russia and Ukraine: Mission Impossible," *SWP Comment* (Nov. 8, 2022): https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/peace-talks-between-russia-and-ukraine-mission-impossible

[10] Ian Lovett and Yuliya Chernova, "Russia Says Strikes on Ukraine's Infrastructure Aimed at Slowing Delivery of Foreign Arms," *Wall Street Journal* (Dec. 1, 2022): https://www.wsj.com/articles/ukraine-struggles-to-reconnect-people-to-power-grid-as-russia-escalates-missile-strikes-11669898908

continuing to support Ukraine economically and militarily, Ukraine is unlikely to get to this stage in the near future.

Russia, in turn, is a large country with massive energy resources and a large population and is also unlikely to arrive at a state of exhaustion any time soon. In fact, despite all western sanctions on Russia, its economy seems to have contracted by only a mere two to three per cent during 2022 though before the war economic growth of 3% has been expected.[11] Putin's police state also makes sure that no sizable protests against the war will be allowed to develop.[12]

2. The second path to a negotiated peace settlement would be the clear dominance, if not victory, by one side on the battlefield. If Russia managed to still conquer a large part of Ukraine, including possibly the capital Kyiv, or if Ukraine were able to push the Russian aggressor from its lands and reconquer its sovereign territory in the 1991 borders, either of the victorious parties might well offer peace negotiations to the losing side to consolidate the new status quo. Yet, it is most unlikely that Russia is still capable of obtaining a military victory in Ukraine.[13] Realistically, despite the undaunted Ukrainian military aspirations, it is equally unlikely that Ukraine will manage to push Russia out of all of its territory and reconquer the entire Donbass area as well as Crimea.[14]

Thus, right now only one depressing overall conclusion appears to be plausible. It seems that both Russia and Ukraine—and thus indirectly the US and the western alliance—will continue fighting the war in Ukraine for a prolonged period of time. Unfortunately, it is difficult to see how a constructive negotiated end to the war can come about any time soon. Still, one wonders if it may be possible to overcome the war and at least achieve a prolonged temporary ceasefire with the help of influential outside mediators.

2 Are Outside Negotiators Able to Mediate to Bring the War to an End?

So far, some of the self-proclaimed mediators, among them Indian Prime Minister Modi and Turkish President Erdogan, who have helped to negotiate the September grain deal between Russia and Ukraine and achieved a number of prisoners of war swaps, have made little, if any progress, in bringing the two sides to the negotiating

[11] See above, Bengali, "Hard-Line Positions by Russia and Ukraine …"

[12] "Russian police crack down on anti-war demonstrations," *Al Jazeera* (Sept. 25, 2022): https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2022/9/25/photos-russian-police-crack-down-on-anti-war-demonstrations

[13] "Germany's Scholz says Putin can no longer win in Ukraine," *Deutsche Welle* (Nov. 23, 2022): https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-scholz-says-putin-can-no-longer-win-in-ukraine/a-63866430

[14] "Ukraine unlikely to be able to push Russia out entirely: US general," Al Majadeen (Nov. 16, 2022): https://english.almayadeen.net/news/politics/ukraine-unlikely-to-be-able-to-push-russia-out-entirely:-us

table. In his many calls with the leaders in Moscow and Kyiv, Erdogan has repeatedly proposed a ceasefire and offered to host a meeting between Zelensky and Putin. Yet, neither Putin nor Zelensky has taken him up on his various proposals. Clearly Erdogan is motivated by the terrible slaughter in Ukraine, but also clearly by geopolitical and economic as well as domestic concerns. The geopolitical and economic instability the war has caused, after all, is not to Turkey's advantage as a regional power in the Middle East and Europe. Erdogan's standing in Turkey would also greatly benefit and improve his electoral prospects significantly, if he managed to bring about an end to the war in Ukraine.[15]

Due to Russia's dependence on China for its oil and gas exports and diplomatic cover in the developing world, Chinese President Xi Jinping might perhaps be more successful in pressing Putin to make a serious offer as the basis for peace talks—if the Chinese leader were prepared to do so. But so far, Xi seems to be adamant not to steer away from his uneasy pro-Russian neutrality course, which he has pursued since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022.[16] Xi clearly does not wish to be seen as undermining Putin and appearing to be helpful to the US and the western alliance.

The Chinese government, however, likes to portray China as a "responsible major power."[17] Yet in the raging and still escalating conflict in Ukraine, China is largely absent. Beijing's view of the profound crisis in Eastern Europe is contradictory and ill-thought through. At worst, China can be seen as giving full support for Russia's aggressive behavior in Ukraine. At best, Beijing's attitude could be characterized as one of sitting on the fence.

This is hardly sufficient for the world's second largest economic and increasingly important geopolitical power. China ought to become a major mediator in this terrible conflict. Beijing should do its best to demonstrate its sense of global responsibility in one of the worst global crises for decades. Otherwise, China may be missing a major opportunity to improve its global image, which has been much tarnished during Xi Jinping's reign, achieve some degree of improvement of its difficult relations with the U.S. and other western countries and, not least, assume a responsible leadership position, which a country with the military and economic might that China has at its disposal ought to exercise.

After all, while some countries and individual leaders have risen to the occasion and realized that major new departures are needed, others seem to be asleep at the

[15] Guney Yildiz, "Putin-Erdogan Meeting In Kazakhstan: Could Turkiye Bring Peace To Ukraine?" Forbes (Oct. 13, 2022): https://www.forbes.com/sites/guneyyildiz/2022/10/13/putin-erdogan-meeting-in-kazakhstan-could-turkiye-bring-peace-to-ukraine/?sh=6b10c2eb2922

[16] "China's Position on Russia's Invasion of Ukraine," U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission (Dec. 9, 2022): https://www.uscc.gov/research/chinas-position-russias-invasion-ukraine

[17] Neil Thomas, "Great (Power) Expectations: Charting the Evolution of Chinese Foreign Policy," *Marco Polo* (May 11, 2020): https://macropolo.org/china-great-power-foreign-policy-covid19/?rp=m; Susan Shirk, *Overreach: How China Derailed its Peaceful Rise* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023).

wheel. During such a deep geopolitical and humanitarian crisis, a passive "wait and see" policy appears to indicate a deep misunderstanding of what has turned out to be a major turning point in global politics. Admittedly, quite a few countries initially wobbled and hesitated to face the new realities, but some of them managed to catch the departing bus.

The new German government, led by Olaf Scholz, comes to mind which, after turning down military aid to Ukraine and trying to continue a somewhat benign policy of engagement with Russia, has dramatically changed course as announced in the Chancellor's speech to the *Bundestag* in late February 2022.[18] Even neutral Switzerland has decided, somewhat reluctantly in view of Switzerland's role as a financial hub for the world's richest people and firms, to fully implement the severe sanctions the EU has imposed on Russia.[19] There will be a long and enduring discussion about whether or not the expansion of NATO from 1998 onwards has been responsible for escalating tension with Russia over the years and whether or not many chances have been missed to enter into a serious new European security agreement with Putin during the last few months.[20]

But no country (and no analyst) should be allowed to hide behind the 'big ifs' of history. All these do not excuse the resort to war, the destruction of towns and cities, and the brutal killing of innocent civilians. This also applies to China and its various media outlets. The Chinese leadership expected 2022 to become a joyous year. The 2022 Olympics were meant to be a success as big as the 2008 summer Olympics in Beijing and the pandemic would be overcome. The 50th anniversary of Nixon's visit to China would also be duly commemorated and the contrast between the impoverished China of 1972 and the country's global power, wealth, and influence 50 years later would impress the world. Then in October, Xi Jinping was to be "re-elected" for an unprecedented third term in power to continue with his strong leadership of the country and the further expansion of China's global influence and containment of U.S. influence in the Indo Pacific and elsewhere.

But instead, 2022 was overshadowed by the explosion of the Ukraine war in late February of that year. It became the dominant issue in global politics. China is sitting on the fence between Russia and the EU and does not dare to come down on either side. The international affairs magazine *The Diplomat's* Chauncey Jung has aptly described Beijing as having a "convoluted position of calling for countries to

[18] Olaf Scholz, "Policy statement by Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and Member of the German Bundestag, 27 February 2022 in Berlin," https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/news/policy-statement-by-olaf-scholz-chancellor-of-the-federal-republic-of-germany-and-member-of-the-german-bundestag-27-february-2022-in-berlin-2008378; Olaf Scholz, "The Global Zeitenwende: How to Avoid a New Cold War in a Multipolar Era," Foreign Affairs (Jan./Feb. 2023): https://www.foreignaffairs.com/germany/olaf-scholz-global-zeitenwende-how-avoid-new-cold-war

[19] "Switzerland slaps more sanctions on Russia," *Swissinfo.ch* (Dec. 16, 2022): https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/business/switzerland-slaps-more-sanctions-on-russia/48140714

[20] See for example the "Matlock Debate" and the various contributions in the *Krasno Analysis* of Dec. 2021 to Feb. 2022: https://www.krasnoevents.com/%2D%2Dkrasno-analysis.html

respect the sovereignty of Ukraine while [also] respecting the legitimacy of the Russian security needs."[21]

Respect for the territorial integrity of other countries and noninterference in their domestic affairs has been a long-standing principle of Chinese foreign policy. Yet, China's unwise intensification of its relationship with Russia, as has been demonstrated in the joint Xi-Putin statement on February 4, 2022, which famously has talked about a relationship that has "no limits", has already begun to haunt Beijing.[22] While Beijing might not have minded some tension between Russia and the West, China was not interested in the outbreak of war and being associated with a bloodthirsty quasi-ally. It remained unclear, however, whether Xi knew about Putin's invasion plan and agreed with it when they met in Beijing in early February. While, according to the *New York Times*, the Biden administration passed some of their intelligence information to the Chinese to make China put pressure on Moscow to refrain from an invasion, Beijing might not have trusted the information it received from Washington.[23]

In the meantime, China has helped Russia's sanction-depressed economy and relaxed restrictions on imports of Russian wheat, as agreed during Putin's visit to the Beijing Olympics in early February. China (closely followed by India) has also significantly increased its oil and also gas purchases from Russia while receiving significant discounts.[24] A skeptical article written by five Chinese history professors who criticized Russia's invasion of Ukraine on humanitarian grounds was quickly removed from the internet by the Chinese censors.[25]

On the same day, however, China abstained from the Security Council resolution on February 26, 2022, which condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine and demanded the immediate withdrawal of its forces. In all likelihood, Putin expected that China would support him and veto the resolution.[26] Clearly, China has realized that China's links with the western world, in particular the EU but also the U.S., are at least equally

[21] Chauney Jung, "China Was Woefully Unprepared for the Russia-Ukraine War: The fact that Beijing was caught off guard hints at the fragility of its partnership with Russia," The Diplomat (March 1, 2022): https://thediplomat.com/2022/03/china-was-woefully-unprepared-for-the-russia-ukraine-war/

[22] "Parsing the meaning of the Xi-Putin meeting on the sidelines of the Beijing Olympics," NPR (Feb. 8, 2022): https://www.npr.org/2022/02/08/1079112810/parsing-the-meaning-of-the-xi-putin-meeting-on-the-sidelines-of-the-beijing-olym

[23] Edward Wong, "U.S. Officials Repeatedly Urged China to Help Avert War in Ukraine: Americans presented Chinese officials with intelligence on Russia's troop buildup in hopes that President Xi Jinping would step in, but were repeatedly rebuffed," (Feb. 25, 2022): https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/25/us/politics/us-china-russia-ukraine.html

[24] Shruti Menon, "Ukraine crisis: Who is buying Russian oil and gas?" BBC News (Dec. 6, 2022): https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-60783874

[25] Jeff Pao, "China censors criticism of Russia's Ukraine war: Chinese academic article critical of Russia's invasion is quickly taken down by censors as Beijing aims to portray as neutral in conflict," *Asia Times* (Feb. 28, 2022): https://asiatimes.com/2022/02/china-censors-criticism-of-russias-ukraine-war/

[26] Katherine Wilhelm, "February 24: A Clarifying Moment for China's Foreign Policy," *U.S.-Asia Law Institute,* Vol.2, No.26 (Aug. 4, 2022): https://usali.org/usali-perspectives-blog/february-24-a-clarifying-moment-for-chinas-foreign-policy

valuable to the country than its bond with Russia. Prior to Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine trade with Moscow has made up just 2.5% of China's global trade while despite the profession of "deepening" ties in many parts of the world, Russia and China have been geopolitical rivals and viewed each other suspiciously. In particular, this is the case in the Caucasus and Central Asia, where China is increasingly encroaching economically on Russia's traditional spheres of interest. At present, an uneasy modus vivendi seems to have been reached, however. Chinese influence has also significantly increased in the vast and resource-rich but thinly populated Siberia. In the border areas in Siberia, a population of a mere 6 million Russians face 90 million Chinese.[27] Perhaps not be that much regret in Beijing if Putin lost the war in Ukraine and was severely weakened as a consequence, provided that he managed to stay in power.

By contrast, since 2021, China has become the largest trading partner for both the EU and Ukraine. And Ukraine is also an important country within China's Belt and Road Initiative. In a phone conversation between Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi and his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba only a week after Russia's onslaught, on March 1, 2022, Wang professed that he was "deeply grieved" and "highly concerned" about the situation.[28] And despite all the difficulties and geopolitical tension and the disappointing results of former President Trump's "Phase One" trade deal with Beijing of January 2020, economic, trade, and technological relations with the U.S. remain of the utmost importance for China.[29]

Still, Russia has become one of the few important allies China has globally. Beijing and Moscow agree that U.S. and western dominance in the world needs to be curtailed. Not least, Xi and Putin share similar historical grievances of the manifold humiliations they believe they have both suffered at the hands of the West. Apparently, they also understand each other and get on well at a personal level.

Putin's defeat in Ukraine and possible ouster from power are not in China's overall interest. The destruction of Ukraine, further animosity with the U.S., and China's loss of Europe as an economic partner for supporting Russia are hardly in China's interest either, however. At present, in the aftermath of the pandemic and the opening of China's borders, we are thus witnessing a renewed Chinese "charm offensive" in Europe. After all, even Beijing may have recognized that there is also the very real danger of China becoming an international pariah for supporting Putin's cruel and ruthless war in Ukraine.

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[27] Diane Francis, "Does China have designs on Siberia?" *The Hill* (Sept. 22, 2022): https://thehill.com/opinion/international/3654427-does-china-have-designs-on-siberia/; but see also Xiaochen Su, "The Myth of a Chinese Takeover in the Russian Far East: The Chinese presence in Siberia and the Far East is actually declining, not growing," *The Diplomat* (June 19, 2019): https://thediplomat.com/2019/06/the-myth-of-a-chinese-takeover-in-the-russian-far-east/

[28] Patrizia M. Kim, "China's choices and the fate of the post-post-Cold War era," *Brookings* (March 8, 2022): https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/03/08/chinas-choices-and-the-fate-of-the-post-post-cold-war-era/

[29] "What's Inside the U.S.-China Phase One Deal?" CSIS (Jan. 15, 2020): https://www.csis.org/analysis/whats-inside-us-china-phase-one-deal; for a good overview of the Trump administration's domestic and foreign policy, see Peter Baker and Susan Glasser, *The Divider: Trump in the White House, 2017–2021* (New York: Doubleday, 2022).

3 A Simple Suggestion

Thus, would it not make sense if Beijing stopped supporting Russia's outrageous war effort and came down from its fence to prod Putin toward making peace via negotiations? China would indeed make an excellent mediator to push heads together and get Moscow and Kyiv to agree on some kind of compromise agreement to stop the war. The EU and the U.S. would not be opposed to any promising mediator, including China, who could stop the carnage. It would also demonstrate China's sense of global responsibility, which Beijing never tires of emphasizing, though so far this sense of responsibility appears to be sadly absent, certainly with regard to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

The North Korean Economy and Peninsula Security from the Perspective of Peace Studies



Yu Liu and Cheng Liu

Abstract The background factors of the Korean War are complex. The post-war security of the Korean Peninsula involves its internal situation and the multiple latitudes of the outside world. Economic issues constitute one of the main factors that need to be understood to solve the peninsula security problem. For a number of reasons, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) failed to copy the "miracle on the Han River". After the 1970s, the economic development was obviously weak, and the difference in the level of economic development between the DPRK and the Republic of Korea (ROK) increased rapidly. In the case of the Korean Peninsula, a creative way of discovering the truth is needed, and the responsibilities of the parties involved in the conflict should be seriously considered. The two Koreas should become the most important players and peacebuilders. And the international community cannot really promote a solution to the problem by unilaterally isolating either side or acting alone. Government-to-government contact between the United States and the DPRK is one of the best ways to fully understand the DPRK issue and the fundamental solution to the crisis on the Korean Peninsula.

Like the sword of Damocles, the crisis on the Korean Peninsula poses a huge hidden danger to the security of Northeast Asia and even the world. According to statistics, only between November 2015 and December 2016, there were 26 acts of mutual provocation between the US and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) (North Korea).[1] The background factors of the Korean War are extremely complex, and the post-war security issues on the Korean Peninsula involve multiple dimensions of its internal situation and external scenarios with a lot of relevant discussions. This paper holds that economic factor is a core issue in understanding and

[1] Caroline Kearney, *Strengthening Understanding Through Dislogue, A Peacebuilding Approach to the Korean Peninsula Conflict,* Siem Reap: Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, 2017, Annex 3.

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solving the security issues on the Peninsula, and all parties should strive to find a way of conflict transformation to realize the security of the Peninsula through dialogue and consultation.

On August 9, 2017, as the North Korea crisis escalates, U.S. President Donald Trump has said that North Korea will be met with fury the world has never seen.[2] Meanwhile, the North Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) has reported on Tuesday that the DPRK military is considering an operation plan to encircle Guam with mid- to long-range ballistic missiles.[3] The armistice that ended the Korean War has been signed on July 27, 1953, but the specter of war has lingered for more than 60 years. Tragedy has been a major legacy of the war, the biggest of which is the division of the Korean Peninsula, resulting in the collapse of the entire economy of the North and South.[4]

Affected by the industrial distribution of the Korean Peninsula before the war and during the war, the Republic of Korea (ROK) economy was in a predicament after the war.[5] In the context of the Cold War, the United States gave a large amount of financial support to ROK. From 1945 to 1971, the total amount of American aid to ROK reached US $4.41 billion.[6] After the 1960s, the ROK (ROK) witnessed the miracle on the Han River, gradually emerging from the ruins of the war, transforming into the world's 11th largest economy and creating a number of world-renowned multinational conglomerates. In 2006, ROK's per capita GNP rose to US $17,600 (up from US $100 in 1961), making it to be one of the developed countries. Compared with 1966 and 1975, the amount of government loans in ROK increased by 4.6 times, and economic activities became more and more active. However, the proportion of American loans in the total loans in ROK became smaller and smaller, from 50 to 17%. Internal loans occupied the main part, and ROK's economic autonomy increased.[7]

The DPRK's economy recovered quickly with a good industrial base after the war, labour force, and foreign aid. Between 1948 and 1984, DPRK received about $2.2 billion in aid,[8] of which 43.14% came from the Soviet Union and 30.75% from China.[9] But on an annual basis, DPRK received $62 million in foreign aid, while

[2] http://finance.sina.com.cn/stock/usstock/c/2017-08-09/doc-ifyitamv7530153.shtml

[3] http://news.ifeng.com/a/20170809/51593224_0.shtml

[4] William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History*, Princeton University Press, 1995, p. 360.

[5] Liu Xuming, *The Road to South Korea's Economic Development*, Oriental Publishing House, 1995, pp. 2–3.

[6] Source: Dong Xiangrong, *The External Power of South Korea's Take-off: The Impact of the United States on South Korea's Development (1945–1965)*, Social Science Academic Press, 2005, pp. 103–104.

[7] Source: Anne O. Krueger, *The Developmental Role of the Foreign Sector and Aid*, Harvard University Press, 1982, p.155.

[8] Marcus Noland, *Avoiding the Apocalypse: The Future of the Two Koreas*, Washington DC: Institute for International Economics, 2000, p.97.

[9] Carla P. Freeman (ed.), *China and North Korea: Strategic and Policy Perspectives from a Changing China*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, p.191.

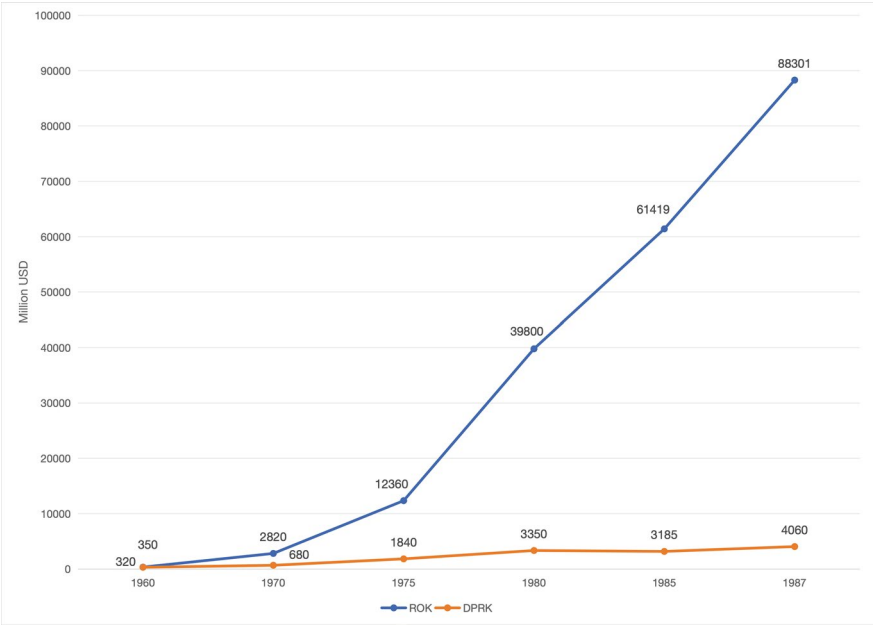


Fig. 1 ROK's foreign trade compared with DPRK's. Source: [South Korea] Song Bingluo: *The Rise of the South Korean Economy*, translated by Zhang Shengji and Wu Zhuang, Beijing: Commercial Press, 1994, p.217

ROK received $169 million. Moreover, since the mid-1980s, when DPRK has reached a repayment agreement with the Soviet Union, aid from the Soviet Union has plummeted, and since 1987, it has shown negative growth.[10]

As for one of the reasons, the "Miracle on the Han River" did not happen in the DPRK; after the 1970s, the economic development of the DPRK was obviously weak, and the difference between the two Koreas' economic development level widened rapidly. In 1960, the foreign trade volume between the two Koreas was basically the same, but by 1987, it was US $ 88.30 billion for the ROK and US $4.06 billion for the DPRK, more than 20 times that of the DPRK (See Fig. 1).

In 1953, the year of armistice, the GNP of the DPRK was less than 33% of that of the ROK. In 1960, the GNP of the DPRK rose to 78% of that of the ROK. After that, the GNP of the DPRK kept pulling away and was less than 10% of that of the ROK in 1990. Per capita GNP, DPRK was higher than ROK in 1960 and 1970. Starting in 1975, North Korea began to lag behind the South, and by 1990, it was less than 20% of the South's level.[11] In addition, the absolute GNP and per capita

[10] Marcus Noland, *Avoiding the Apocalypse: The Future of the Two Koreas*, Washington DC: Institute for International Economics, 2000, pp.96-7.

[11] Kim Yong-ki, *North Korea: The Land That Never Changes—Before and After Kim Il-sung*, Seoul: Naewoe Press, 1995, p.68.

Table 1 The economic size and per capita GNI of the DPRK and the ROK

	DPRK		ROK		ROK/DPRK	
	2014	2015	2014	2015 P	2014	2015
Gross national income (trillion won)	34.2 (1.2)	34.5 (0.8)	1490.8 (3.6)	1565.8 (5.0)	43.5	45.4
Gross national income per capita (10,000 won)	138.8	139.3	2956	3093	21.3	22.2
Population (thousands)	24,662	24,779	50,424	50,617	2.0	2.0

Source: Bank of Korea, 23 July 2016

GNP of DPRK began to decline in 1991. The GNP and per capita GNP of DPRK were only 12.6 billion dollars and 573 dollars in 1998, respectively.[12]

As shown in the Table 1, in 2014 and 2015, the GNP of the two countries was 43.5 times and 45.4 times that of the DPRK, respectively; Per capita GNI of ROK is 21.3 times and 22.2 times that of the DPRK. The population of ROK is twice that of DPRK. In 2015, the real GDP of the DPRK declined by 1.1%. In addition to the construction industry, the growth rate of agriculture, forestry and fishery, mining, manufacturing, electricity, gas, and water supply all slowed down.[13]

With massive US aid to ROK and the strengthening of the ROK-U.S. alliance, North–South relations of Korean have been further isolated and the two sides have been widening their differences. Although bilateral relations have eased for a while, the relations between the two Koreas have been strained again since 2008. On January 6, 2016, the DPRK announced that it had successfully tested a hydrogen bomb, and the crisis on the Korean Peninsula was even more imminent.

1 Economic Interactions

The most keenly felt by the two Koreas are the mainland and Taiwan in China, once impenetrable barriers across the 300 km Taiwan Strait. Like the situation on the Korean Peninsula, cross-strait relations are a product of the Cold War. Between 1946 and 1962, about $2 billion in aid flowed into Taiwan, which (like ROK) began a rapid economic development and China and Taiwan grew increasingly tense.[14] After the thaw of Sino-US relations, the mainland of China took the lead in making a constructive gesture in 1979 when the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress issued the Message to Compatriots in Taiwan, which clearly put

[12] Kongdan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig, *North Korea—Through the Looking Glass, Washington*, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, p.42.

[13] Source: Gross Domestic Product Estimates for North Korea in 2015. *The Bank of Korea*, 23 July 2016. http://www.nkeconwatch.com/nk-uploads/GDP_of_North_Korea_in_2015_ff.pdf, p. 4. Figures in parentheses are annual growth rates.

[14] Li Guoding, *Taiwan's Foreign Economic Cooperation and Processing Export Zone*, Information and Computer Magazine (Taipei), 1999, p.35.

forward the guideline of "peaceful reunification and one country, two systems". After the mid-1980s, Taiwan abandoned the policy of "no contact, no compromise and no negotiation". Since the 1992 Consensus, exchanges across the Taiwan Straits have become increasingly frequent, bilateral trade between the two sides has been growing, and channels of communication and exchange have been further broadened. There is no doubt that economic exchanges are an important foundation for the improvement of cross-Straits relations.

In the past three decades, bilateral trade has been on the rise, reaching nearly US $200 billion in 2014.[15] At the same time, since 1979, the cross-Straits trade dependence has also been on the rise. In particular, Taiwan's import and export dependence on the mainland increased from 0.25% and 0.13% in 1979 to 11% and 28.36% in 2005, respectively.[16] It can be seen that since the opening of cross-Straits relations, cross-Straits economic and trade ties have become increasingly close, and the breadth and depth of bilateral exchanges have also been continuously expanded. After that, it is difficult for either side to completely return to the situation before the 1980s.

Of course, in the early 1970s, the DPRK and the ROK also set a precedent for inter-Korean negotiations.[17] From 1984 to 1985, the DPRK and the ROK held five rounds of talks, which basically established the framework of inter-Korean economic exchanges. However, the sixth round of talks was scheduled for January 20, 1986, but was put on hold by the DPRK because of the ROK-US military drills.[18] In 1988, Roh Tae-woo's "July 7 Declaration" showed a friendly gesture toward the DPRK; Kim Dae-jung's "Sunshine Policy" warmed inter-Korean relations; In 2005, the Roh Moo-hyun administration established the Kaesong Industrial zone in DPRK, which brought a leap forward in economic and trade development between the two Koreas.

As shown in Fig. 2, bilateral trade increased as bilateral dialogue between the two Koreas showed an upward trend from the end of the twentieth century to 2007. However, following a shift in US policy in Asia, relations between the two Koreas began to cold, with US-ROK military exercises and the entry of US aircraft carriers into East Asia. DPRK has returned to its hardline approach and sees ROK's bilateral detente efforts as a cunning ploy by US imperialists seeking to destabilize the

[15] Source: Taiwan Affairs Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, *Cross-Strait Trade Statistics, 1978-2005*, http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/lajm/lajm/201101/t20110121_1718210.htm.

[16] Source: Taiwan Affairs Office of the CPC Central Committee, Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, *Statistical Analysis Table of Cross-Strait Trade Dependence from 1979 to 2005*, http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/lajm/lajm/201101/t20110121_1718211.htm

[17] Jinwung Kim, *A History of Korea: From "Land of the Morning Calm" to States in Conflict*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012, p. 514.

[18] Lee Sang-joon, *The Successes and Mistakes of South Korea's Foreign Trade*, translated by Han Zhenqian, China Encyclopedia Publishing House, 1994, p. 290.

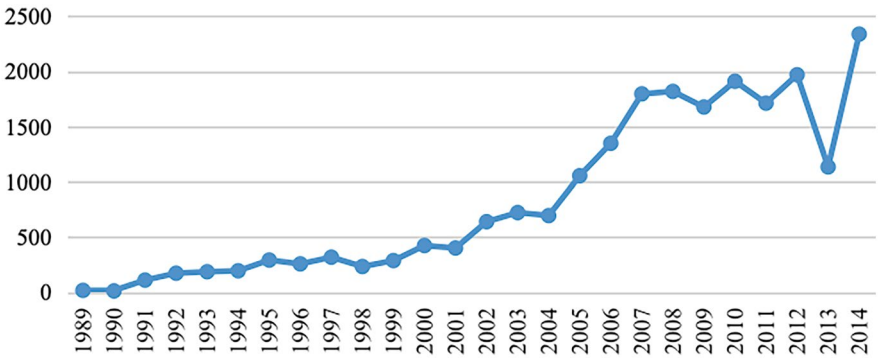


Fig. 2 Inter-Korean trade (US $million). Source: Taiwan Affairs Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China

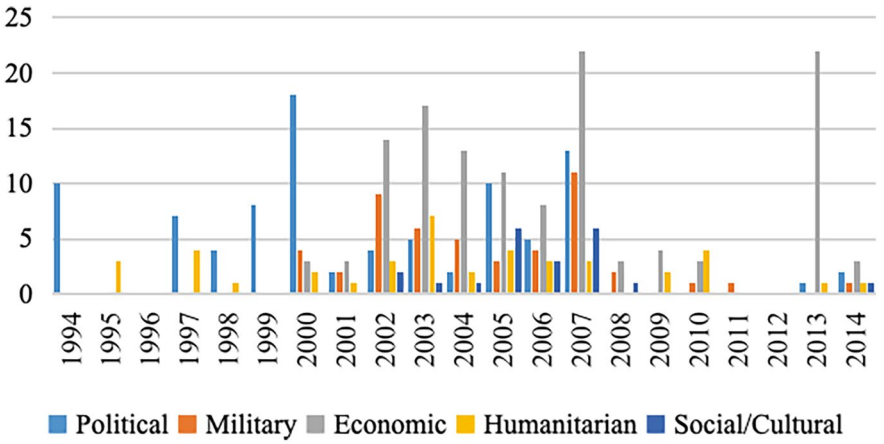


Fig. 3 Number of Inter-Korean bilateral dialogues. Source: Ministry of Unification

country.[19] As tensions rose on the Korean Peninsula after 2008, inter-Korean dialogue plummeted, and the decline in economic talks led to fluctuations in bilateral trade, which reached its lowest level in nearly 5 years in 2013.[20] At the same time, cross-border trade by water and air has declined.[21] Notably, as Fig. 3 shows, more

[19] Jae-Jung Suh ed., *Origins of North Korea's Juche—Colonialism, War and Development*, Lexington Books, p. 153.

[20] Source: Suk Hi Kim, Semoon Chang (eds.), *Economic Sanctions Against a Nuclear North Korea: An Analysis of United States and United Nations Actions since 1950*, Jefferson, North Carolina, and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, p.26; Marcus Noland, *Avoiding the Apocalypse: The Future of the Two Koreas*, Washington DC: Institute for International Economics, 2000, p.298; Ministry of Unification (한국통일부): http://eng.unikorea.go.kr/content.do?cmsid=3103.

[21] Source: Ministry of Unification (한국통일부): http://eng.unikorea.go.kr/content.do?cmsid=3103.

than 90% of inter-Korean bilateral talks in 2013 were economic ones.[22] As a result, bilateral trade volume between the two Koreas recovered in 2014, as shown in Fig. 2.

The security issue on the Korean Peninsula is a product of the Cold War, not caused by the DPRK. Simple repression and sanctions are not conducive to a fundamental solution to the problem. The "THAAD missile" adds new difficulties to the crisis on the Korean Peninsula. In contrast, on October 31, 2015, China and ROK signed the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and the Eurasian Initiative, marking the organic combination and docking of China's "One Belt and One Road" and ROK's "Eurasia Initiative", and also a major opportunity to promote the economic development of DPRK. Both the "Belt and Road" and the "Eurasia Initiative" of ROK are a kind of embodiment of the integration model. Under the model of integration, the Korean Peninsula is interconnected and bound to become one in a global social network.

The cautionary note is that we tend to overemphasize the so-called differences, especially when the point about supporting war is emphasized while the larger commonalities are ignored. The consequences of this are very serious, because someone may view a situation in this rigid way as inconsistent with the facts, and therefore be prepared to act in the interests of the difference-maker, where those differences do not exist. When it comes to DPRK security, we must look at it from a holistic perspective, not a partial one.[23] Therefore, the international community should avoid demonizing DPRK. As mentioned above, DPRK's economy has been growing steadily for a long time after the war, although it has slowed down. And its citizens' access to information and foreign media has improved, with Pyongyang residents spending more on consumer goods like televisions and mobile phones. DPRK offers universal health care, with 33 doctors per 10,000 people in 2003, according to the World Health Organization, a doctor-patient ratio no lower than that in many developed countries.[24]

2 Peace Studies Program

Whoever started the trouble should end it. The true end of any war generally has three stages: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding. To promote the resolution of the security issue on the Korean Peninsula, the DPRK and the ROK should become the most important participants and peacebuilders. Unilateral isolation of either side or actions taken by the international community cannot really promote the solution of the issue. Figure 4 shows that after a ceasefire, there are no Peace

[22]Source: Ministry of Unification (한국통일부): http://eng.unikorea.go.kr/content.do?cmsid=3103

[23]Cheng Liu and Egon Spiegel, *Peacebuilding in a Globalized World*, People's Publishing House, 2015.

[24]http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.MED.PHYS.ZS?locations=KP-AU

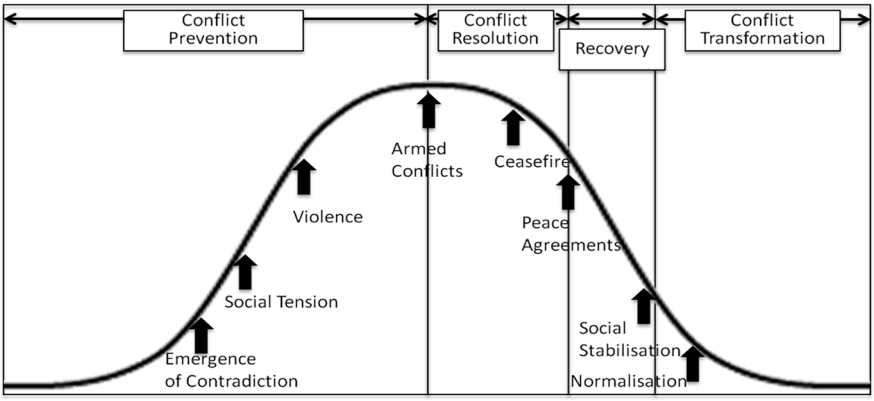


Fig. 4 The stages of the conflict and its resolution tasks. Source: Authors

Agreements in the Korean War, and there is no Normalization of relations between the South and the North. Conflict Transformation remains to be achieved.

Conflict creates crises—"dangers" and "opportunities"—where danger is akin to violence and opportunity means challenges—sources of creativity. Then, "danger" and "opportunity" are inseparable, so the real meaning of conflict resolution can only be creative conflict transformation. Moreover, any conflict can be described as an explicit–implicit conflict triangle: B as destructive behaviour; A is hidden assumptions and attitudes; C means a goal state that is incompatible with the goal pursuit system. Conflict = attitude + behaviour + contradiction (A + B + C). We cannot focus on just one of these factors.[25]

In a peninsular conflict, "B": mainly refers to the military threat or economic punitive action by the US and ROK against the DPRK; DPRK's nuclear weapons test; And the accusatory, one-sided narrative of one side of the conflict against the other. "A": DPRK and ROK see themselves as the victim and the righteous side, and DPRK or ROK (and USA) as their greatest threat, and must completely eliminate, confront, or change the other side at all costs to ensure their security and interests. "C": the division of North and ROK, USA is trying to restrain China.

The biggest concerns of the DPRK are national sovereignty and security and the stability of the regime and society. It has decided to pursue the parallel course of "economic and nuclear force", strengthen the development of self-defensive nuclear force, strengthen the national defense force, and devote greater efforts to economic construction. Judging from the current situation, this will be a long-term strategic policy. The ROK hopes to prevent another outbreak of the Korean War, the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and maintain close political and military relations with the United States while maintaining economic and political relations with China. Obviously, these four goals have become difficult to be balanced at the same

[25] Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful means*, translated by Chen Zuzhou et al., Nanjing Publishing House, 2006, pp. 104-5.

time. The ROK must act cautiously and take the security of the ROK and peace on the Korean Peninsula as its priority. The international community has the obligation and responsibility to help the DPRK dispel its misgivings, realize the role of future Northeast Asia policy development in promoting the DPRK's development, and help the DPRK gradually realize economic transformation and truly integrate the DPRK into the international community. Any simple isolation and repression will only prompt the DPRK to fight against the enemy. The international community also has the obligation and responsibility to urge the ROK to maintain communication with the DPRK and abandon the mentality of relying on "foreign aid" to solve the "internal affairs" of the peninsula.

On the Korean Peninsula issue, the United States has consistently supported the ROK's position against the DPRK, guaranteed its political, economic and military influence in Northeast Asia, and restrained the rise of China. China's interests and attitude are very clear. Maintaining peace on the Korean Peninsula is needed for the stable development of China's economy and society. China advocates maintaining peace, stability, and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and resolving differences through consultation and negotiation. In a word, the Korean Peninsula crisis is an issue left over from history, and a timetable for resolving the conflict must be drawn up in stages. It is unrealistic to assume that all issues should be resolved in a short period of time, which will lead to war. As the Russian-Ukrainian war has shown, once a war breaks out in today's globalized world, the ultimate victim will be the whole mankind.

As a party in the bipolar struggle for hegemony in the Cold War, the United States is one of the initiators of the Korean Peninsula issue, and its attitude directly determines the direction of the crisis on the Peninsula. So far, the US has maintained hostility towards the DPRK, calling the DPRK a "rogue" and "evil" state. At one point, without the reckless military threats from the United States and ROK and the brutal regime overthrow by the United States in some small countries, Pyongyang might not have been so determined to develop nuclear weapons. Historically, there has been animosity between the United States and Cuba for more than half a century. In December 2014, US President Barack Obama said in a televised address: Isolation has not worked for 50 years, adding that he has been disillusioned with continued sanctions and believed that through a policy of engagement, he can more effectively uphold their values and help the Cuban people. At the same time, Cuban President Raul Castro responded positively, saying his government was willing to engage in dialogue with countries with "deep differences" on issues concerning national sovereignty, democracy, human rights, and foreign policy.[26]

The example of Cuba shows that blockade and sanctions cannot solve problems, and ultimately, a solution to conflicts needs to be found through negotiation and

[26] Karen DeYoung, "Obama moves to normalize relations with Cuba as American is released by Havana", *Washington Post*, 17 December 2014. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/report-cuba-frees-american-alan-gross-after-5-years-detention-on-spy-charges/2014/12/17/a2840518-85f5-11e4-a702-fa31ff4ae98e_story.html?utm_term=.51ce3fdd51b2

consultation. When it comes to US-DPRK relations, there is neither political mutual trust nor communication channel. Goodwill of either side cannot form a virtuous circle, and claims of either side will be regarded as provocations by the other side and increase the crisis. It is hoped that the current US administration will also change its approach in time, and the US should take seriously the DPRK's need and establish diplomatic relations with the US, whether for national security, economic, or political reasons. The contacts between the United States and the DPRK, leading to the establishment of diplomatic relations, are one of the best ways to fully understand the DPRK problem and a key point for fundamentally resolving the crisis on the Korean Peninsula.

In the case of the Korean Peninsula, we need to find a creative new way to discover the truth. We must find our own responsibility in the conflict and understand how we ourselves are implicated in the conflict. We must point out the social structure of the conflict in our analysis, with the aim not only to stop the conflict, but also to change the structure and the context of the conflict. This is conflict transformation which aims to find a win-win or multi-win solution. If one side fights the other, the goal is for one side to win. Historically, most win-lose solutions end up with more lose-lose outcomes. That's because one side's winning often ends in violence. We should choose carefully how to achieve change on the Korean Peninsula: through dialogue rather than infiltration, integration rather than division, solidarity rather than isolation, and engagement rather than marginalization. In the concept of positive non-violence, conviction and responsibility are not opposites, but congruent. In addressing the issue of security on the Peninsula, it is possible for us to balance our responsibility to achieve peace on the Peninsula with our conviction to stay away from violence.

If we try to solve DPRK's security problems through violence, it means that those who advocate violence are convinced that violence represents the will or authority of God, and that they have the moral high ground. Of course, every nation needs the right to exist, but if any nation increases its power too much, it will encounter resistance from other nations, and it will often use violence to suppress that resistance. In this way, power without violence develops into power with violence.

From November 1950 to September 2016, there were 15 instances in which the United States threatened DPRK with nuclear weapons, either openly or secretly.[27] In 2013, the possession of nuclear weapons was explicitly written into the DPRK Constitution. On March 31, 2015, the Leader of the DPRK Kim Jong UN has said at the plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) that the DPRK has no choice but to strengthen its nuclear force in both qualitative and quantitative terms amid continued nuclear threats from the United States.[28] On September 9, 2016, the DPRK conducted its fifth nuclear test. Following

[27] Caroline Kearney, *Strengthening Understanding Through Dislogue, A Peacebuilding Approach to the Korean Peninsula Conflict,* Siem Reap: Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, 2017, Annex 2.

[28] http://news.qq.com/a/20130401/000286.htm

the nuclear test, US President Barack Obama on Tuesday condemned, in the strongest terms, the nuclear test conducted by the DPRK on the same day, calling the move a grave threat to regional security as well as world peace and stability.[29] The United States is the initiator of the DPRK's nuclear warheads, and its continuous nuclear intimidation is the driving force for the DPRK to get to where it is today. The spokesperson of the DPRK Foreign Ministry said the DPRK will continue to strengthen its nuclear force both quantitatively and qualitatively in response to the U.S. nuclear threat and to defend its sovereignty and right to existence.[30] It can be said that the US and the DPRK are the main parties responsible for the crisis of the DPRK's nuclear tests. Based on the current situation, all parties should expect to resolve the nuclear weapons issue in a long period of time, starting with an agreement to freeze the DPRK's nuclear program and gradually moving toward the goal of dismantlement of nuclear weapons in the DPRK and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. However, such a transformation can only be achieved if the parties to the Korean conflict build a relationship of mutual trust.

Human rights issues are another stumbling block in DPRK's relations with the United States and ROK. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which has offices in Geneva and Seoul, issues reports on human rights in DPRK, accusing the regime of human rights abuses. DPRK argues that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights mainly reflects Western culture and values, that they do not fully conform to Asian traditions, and that its claims of human rights are fully guaranteed on "our way" based on a socialist and political context. The international community should respect the state sovereignty of the DPRK and refrain from interfering in its internal affairs, human rights issues are the domestic jurisdiction of the DPRK, the political culture of the DPRK embodies the Asian concept of human rights, and maintaining community harmony is more valuable than guaranteeing individual freedom.[31] We believe that the state priorities and propositions of the DPRK should be fully understood and respected, and relevant parties should maintain dialogue and contact with them instead of imposing their views on others, widening temporarily irresolvable differences and hindering the peace process on the Korean Peninsula.

We can devise different solutions to the conflict on the Korean Peninsula, apart from toppling the DPRK regime or destroying its nuclear weapons by force. We need to: resolve disputes through dialogue and negotiation and listen carefully to all sides; take a long-term view and realistic expectations of how the conflict is progressing and changing and recognize the complexity of the conflict; understand DPRK's core interests and concerns and an impartial analysis of the role of all parties to the conflict in its formation; and integrate the DPRK economy into the global economy, improving the quality of life of the DPRK people and building the trust

[29] https://news.cngold.org/c/2016-09-10/c4385443.html

[30] http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2016/0912/c1002-28707526.html

[31] Grace Kim, "Questioning the Universal Declaration: North Korea's case", *Asia Times*, 4 February 2017. http://www.atimes.com/questioning-universal-document-case-north-korea/

needed for sustainable diplomatic relations. And relevant parties in the international community, especially the United States, should meet China in the same direction. We believe that on the basis of the shared will of the DPRK and the ROK and with the concerted efforts of the international community, the issue on the Korean Peninsula will surely be resolved eventually. In any case, we should join hands to create peace on the Korean Peninsula, in Northeast Asia and even in the world, which is not just a state without war, but one with social justice and an overall sense of well-being. It is a positive peace, based on the principles of the Theory of Peace with justice, which states that if one wants peace, one must prepare for peace, and the culture of peace and non-violence advocated by the United Nations. Security issues on the Korean Peninsula require a peace solution with innovative thinking. There is a long way to go.

Pope Francis as a Prophetic Disrupter of the War Madness in Europe



Thomas Nauerth

Abstract Right at the beginning of his pontificate, this Pope launched the world meetings of social movements, i.e. those movements that fight for liberation, justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. In these movements, Francis sees the future of the world, but also a future for the Church, because for the Pope, the Gospel shines in these struggles of the poor: "Then one feels a promising breeze that revives hope for a better world. May this breeze become a cyclone of hope!" The conviction to be brought into these movements from the Gospel is the insight that a transformation of the world into a more just, peaceful place, in which creation is preserved and not further destroyed, can only succeed in a nonviolent way: "With passion yet without violence", says the Pope. Then: " carry on with your struggle; you do us all good like a blessing of humanity!" (Pope Francis 2014a)

1 Introduction

When Russia invaded Ukraine militarily in February 2022, a war began that quickly militarized the social discourse not only in Germany but also Europe; arms deliveries to a warring party were suddenly considered a moral imperative and gained official church recognition not only in Germany.[1] It was only from Rome, from the Vatican, that completely different tones continued to come: "'For six months, almost every statement from Rome has disappointed by its ambivalence and inability to

[1] Cf. only the overview at https://weltkirche.katholisch.de/artikel/43597-debattenbeitraege-zu-friedenethik-und-waffenlieferungen [31.03.2025]; for a critical view, see Freise, Josef/Nauerth, Thomas/Silber, Stefan/Spiegel, Egon, Die Perspektive des Evangeliums fehlt; online at https://friedenstheolo-gie.de/aktuelles/ [31.03.2025].

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name the truth' (...) neither the aggressor nor the 'deadly ideology' are addressed in the statements," it says, for example, on www.katholisch.de, citing the "view of the Catholic theologian and Eastern Europe expert Regina Elsner".[2] However, it is not so much "Rome", as the Catholic theologian somewhat obfuscatingly puts it here, it is very specifically Pope Francis who is obviously disappointing expectations here. The following is an attempt to reconstruct the background and sources that have led to Pope Francis becoming a prophetic troublemaker of the war mania in Europe.[3]

2 A Nonviolent Liberation Theologian on a Papal Mission

It is important to point out first that, despite the peculiarity of this Latin American Pope's message, teaching, and demeanor, there is nevertheless a deep continuity with his predecessors in office. In this respect, Pope Francis' stance since February 2022 is also due to a little-noticed development in the teaching and practice of popes since Paul VI:

> You will have noted, venerable brothers and beloved sons, how often Our words have renewed consideration and exhortations about the theme of peace, this We do, not giving way to a facile habit [...] but because peace is part and parcel of the Christian religion since for a Christian to proclaim peace is the same as to announce Jesus Christ. (Pope Paul VI 1967, 86)

Pope Francis has placed himself in this line of tradition and has continued it in his own way, unmistakably inspired by Latin American liberation theology: "We are united by the new commandment that Jesus left us, by the pursuit of the civilization of love and by passion for the kingdom that the Lord calls us to build with him. We are united by the struggle for peace and justice" (Pope Francis 2020a, no. 109).

Right at the beginning of his pontificate, this Pope launched the world meetings of social movements, i.e. those movements that fight for liberation, justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. In these movements, Francis sees the future of the world, but also a future for the Church, because for the Pope, the Gospel shines in these struggles of the poor: "Then one feels a promising breeze that revives hope for a better world. May this breeze become a cyclone of hope!" (Pope Francis 2014a, *quotes below from this address*).

The conviction to be brought into these movements from the Gospel is the insight that a transformation of the world into a more just, peaceful place, in which creation is preserved and not further destroyed, can only succeed in a nonviolent way: "With passion, yet without violence", says the Pope. Then: "Carry on with your

[2] https://katholisch.de/artikel/40729-osteuropa-expertin-papst-laesst-die-ukraine-immer-wieder-im-stich [31.03.2025]. Cf. also Sander, Hans-Joachim, Die Ukraine ist im Krieg—und wo ist der Papst?; https://katholisch.de/artikel/33366-die-ukraine-ist-im-krieg-und-wo-ist-der-papst [31.03.2025].

[3] See Nauerth (2018, 2022, 2023b) for more details on Pope Francis' emphasis on peace theology and practice.

struggle; you do us all good, like a blessing of humanity!" And he recommends a special book for this:

> We Christians have something very lovely, a guide to action, a programme we could call revolutionary. I earnestly recommend that you read it: the Beatitudes in Saint Matthew chapter 5 (cf. Mt 5:3) and in Saint Luke chapter 6 (cf. Lk 6:20); and the Last Judgment passage in Saint Matthew chapter 25.

The Beatitudes as a revolutionary strategy for Christians is a somewhat different approach to the topic of peace than is usual in catholic theology. Perhaps, the Pope has learned this not only from liberation theology traditions in Argentina, but also from Martin Luther King. It is striking how often the Pope refers to King's writings in his texts. It is therefore not surprising that in his message for the 2017

World Day of Peace, Francis called us to "make active nonviolence our way of life" (Pope Francis 2017a). The Pope sees active nonviolence as a path that respects the sanctity of human life and yet allows us to fight for social justice, following in the footsteps of Martin Luther King. In doing so, he takes up and at the same time concretizes what his predecessor, Benedict XVI, has already described as the core of the Christian revolution:

> "it does not consist in succumbing to evil, as a false interpretation of "turning the other cheek" (cf. Lk 6:29) claims, but in responding to evil with good (cf. Rom 12:17–21) and thereby breaking the chain of injustice. (...) Love of one's enemy constitutes the nucleus of the "Christian revolution." (Pope Benedict XVI 2007)

In his message for the 2017 World Day of Peace, Pope Francis also refers extensively to Pope John Paul II in his reflections "on the events of 1989 in his 1991 Encyclical Centesimus Annus" and emphasizes that the Church has "been involved in nonviolent peacebuilding strategies in many countries engaging even the most violent parties in efforts to build a just and lasting peace". Pope Francis seems to feel personally committed to this program of the Church.

3 A Nonviolent Papal Activist for Peace and Fraternity

It is often overlooked that Pope Francis also attaches relevance to his words for himself; Francis certainly does not only act as a preacher and teacher, because the "world does not need empty words, but credible witnesses, 'craftsmen of peace' who are open to dialog without excluding or manipulating anyone." (Pope Francis 2020c) In this respect, too, he follows in the tradition of his predecessors, but uses the opportunities offered to him by the papal office more consistently and radically than many popes before him. This pope conducts his fight for peace and justice in three ways: as a peace pilgrim and peacemaker in the political sphere, as a bridge builder in the (inter-)religious sphere, and as a fighter for peace through prayer in the inner space of religion(s).

The journeys that have been part of a pope's official duties since Paul VI offer many opportunities for a pope like Francis who is oriented towards nonviolence.

The reconciliation between the USA and Cuba, in which Pope Francis played a key role together with Vatican diplomacy (in continuation of the approaches of John Paul II),[4] was described by the Pope himself as a "sign of the victory of the culture of encounter, of dialogue" (Pope Francis 2015a).

Actively contributing to these victories of a culture of encounter and dialogue could be described as the guiding principle of many of Pope Francis' trips. "Pope of Peace in Egypt of Peace" was the logo for the Pope's trip to Egypt in April 2017; on his trip to Palestine/Israel in 2014, the Pope not only visited the Western Wall, but also the other wall that stands between Israel and Palestine; on his trip to Sri Lanka in 2015, he traveled to Madhu in the north, a pilgrimage site "that was a place of refuge for people during the civil war" and "to this day [....] place of encounter between Tamils and Sinhalese" (Erbacher 2015). The trip to Colombia in 2017 was closely linked to the peace agreement between the guerrillas and the government and had the slogan "Demos El Primer Paso" ("Let's take the first step"), which clearly referred to reconciliation. And in 2021, the logo for the trip to Iraq once again naturally featured the dove of peace with the olive branch. The Pope had already interpreted his travels in this way during his trip to the United Arab Emirates in 2019:

> To come here as a believer thirsting for peace, as a brother seeking peace with the brethren. We are here to desire peace, to promote peace, to be instruments of peace (Pope Francis 2019)

On these trips, the Pope repeatedly acts as an ambassador for peace in a very political sense. He does not shy away from conflicts or from traveling to conflict zones that are still quite hot. During his trip to Myamar in 2017, Pope Francis managed to say everything that needed to be said diplomatically about the current dramatic conflict surrounding the expulsion of the Rohyngia in his address to the assembled politicians. The Pope emphasized that the "future of Myanmar [...] must be peace—a peace based on respect for the dignity and rights of each member of society, on respect for each ethnic group and its identity" (Pope Francis 2017b).But this pope's travels are not just about communication in the political arena.

> The apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* already states this succinctly: The "Interreligious dialog is a necessary condition for peace in the world and so it is a duty for Christians as well as other religious communities" (Pope Francis 2013a, no. 250). Here, the obligation to dialog is derived directly from the obligation to peace. For the Pope, there is no question that all religions have the potential for peace: "Those, who claim to believe in God must also be man and women of peace. (...) God is peace, God salam." (Pope Francis 2015c).

It is therefore clear to the Pope that religions are called to build a "culture of encounter and peace based on patience, understanding and humble, tangible steps. This is the way a humane society is best served" (Pope Francis 2016a). For Francis, religions are socially decisive multipliers in order to achieve a peaceful balance

[4] For background information and the role of the Vatican as a whole in the reconciliation between the USA and Cuba, see https://dw.com/de/die-geheime-vermittlerrolle-des-papstes/a-18719440 [31.03.2025].

between people and their confessions within the state. The 'compassionate and merciful' God "wishes his sons and daughters in the one human family to be ever more united among themselves and always in dialogue" (Pope Francis 2016a).

In view of the current global political conflicts, Pope Francis, like his predecessors, is focusing on the relationship with Islam: "At this time, the relationship with the members of Islam is of great importance (...) We must never forge that they 'profess to hold the faith of Abraham and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, who will judge humanity on the last day'" (Pope Francis 2013a, c, no. 252). Francis goes further than all his predecessors. Together with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar in Cairo, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb Sheikh, he signed the document "Human fraternity for world peace and living together" in Abu Dhabi on February 4, 2019:

> In the name of God [...] Al-Azhar al-Sharif— and the Muslims of the East and West, together with the Catholic Church— and the Catholics of the East and West—declare the adoption of a culture of dialogue as the path, mutual cooperation as the code of conduct and reciprocal understanding as the method and standard.

Never "before in history have two important representatives of two major world religions produced a joint programmatic document like this" (Altmann 2020). Here, "the central political concerns of Pope Francis (...) are formulated as common concerns of both religious communities" (Altmann 2020). For Pope Francis, the Abu Dhabi Declaration, "is not a simple diplomatic act, but a reflection based on dialog and shared commitment" (Pope Francis 2020b, no.5).

With this initiative, the Pope is trying to reduce tensions between Islam and Christianity worldwide "to achieve (...) a universal peace that all can enjoy in this life." With these words ends the document from Abu Dhabi, which has so far not only led to a new worldwide day of remembrance, to a "Higher Committee of Human Fraternity" with the task of operational implementation of the declaration in the United Arab Emirates, but also to a new peace prize, the "Zayed Award for Human Fraternity".[5] This astonishing impact story is a prime example of what Francis is generally aiming for in his interreligious dialog work: "a path of dialogue with others and a path of prayer for all: these are our means of 'turning spears into pruning hooks' (cf. Is 2:4)" (Pope Francis 2016a).

Talking and praying with others—here for the Pope, conversation and prayer go hand in hand as a matter of course. Even if every pope is certainly a praying man, this Argentinian prayerful pope lives this element of his spiritual life in a much more expressive form. From the very beginning, Pope Francis concluded his speeches with a request for prayer for him and his work: "Without prayer, it is impossible to do all that humanity, the Church and God ask of us at this moment." (Pope Francis 2015b). The surprising invitation of the Presidents of Israel and Palestine to pray in the Vatican was a matter of course for Pope Francis, because "all of us—especially those placed at

[5] Cf. on the *International Day of Fraternity for All People* only www.un.org/en/observan-ces/human-fraternity [31.03.2025], cf. also the website: https://forhumanfraternity.org/ [31.03.2025] and the report on the first award ceremony, https://www.katholisch.de/artikel/28621-papst-und-grossimam-wieder-an-ihrer-allianz [31.03.2025].

the service of their respective people—have the duty to become instruments and artisans of peace, especially by our prayers" (Pope Francis 2014c). Anyone who so naturally understands the art of peace as essentially a work of prayer will also react to an international crisis in the same way Pope Francis has reacted on September 1, 2013, when he has said in the Angelus "for the whole Church [...] a day of fasting and prayer for peace in Syria, in the Middle East and throughout the world" (Pope Francis 2013b).

Pope Francis' special approach to prayer as a Christian possibility for action and a spiritual necessity seems to be linked to a strong emphasis on the role and importance of the Holy Spirit. "Without prayer, communi on becomes stifling and makes no progress because we prevent the wind of the Spirit from driving us forward" (Pope Francis 2018). It is important to be attentive to the "workings of the Holy Spirit" (Pope Francis 2013a, no. 272). For the Pope, prayer to God is also a peacemaking act because "the unity brought by the Spirit can harmonize every diversitiy" (Pope Francis 2013a, no. 230). The Pope can therefore also pray for all of us that we live in harmony and peace across religious confessions, in the awareness that we are all brothers and sisters in the eyes of God (vgl. Pope Francis 2021a).

4 A Theological Teacher of God's Mercy and Tenderness

In Pope Francis' theological teachings, the classic topics of Catholic peace ethics (the problem of nuclear weapons, the arms trade, and the doctrine of just war) are certainly present, but it is unmistakable how much emphasis this Pope places on some theological concepts that are rather unusual for traditional Catholic peace ethics. They seem to be *theologically* decisive for the emphasis that Francis has placed on *nonviolent* struggle. Above all, it is the word and cause of mercy and tenderness that the Pope introduces into the theological debate in a new way. These two values also seem to be in the background when the Pope speaks again and again of brotherhood/fraternity, not only in the context of interreligious dialog:

> Today is not the time for indifference. Either we are brothers and sisters, or everything.
> Fraternity is the new goal of humanity towards which we must work; it is the task of our century. #HumanFraternity.[6]

For Francis, this fraternity arises from mercy, because mercy is "the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life." (Pope Francis 2015e, no. 2) Last but not the least, the Pope also sees the word and cause of mercy as an important interreligious bridge: "It relates us to Judaism and Islam, both of which consider mercy to be one of God's most important attributes" (Pope Francis 2015e, no. 23).

[6] https://twitter.com/Pontifex_de (on February 4, 2021). The 2014 and 2015 World Day of Peace messages were already entitled "Fraternity—the foundation and path of peace" and "No longer servants, but brothers" respectively. For more on this emphasis on fraternity, see Theobald (2016, 21–38).

God's mercy is therefore also the subject of the programmatic opening sentence of the Abu Dhabi document:

> Faith leads a believer to see in the other a brother or sister to be supported and loved. Through faith in God, who has created the universe, creatures and all human beings (equal on account of his mercy) believers are called to express this human fraternity by safeguarding creation and the entire universe and supporting all persons, especially the poorest and those most in need.

The Pope combines mercy and fraternity with an attitude of justice in his very own way. The Abu Dhabi document states: "Justice based on mercy is the path to follow in order to achieve a dignified life to which every human being has a right."

The question, whether Pope Francis is a good theologian is often critically discussed, but what distinguishes him in any case is a special talent for elementalization. In the prayer for the Year of Mercy, he manages to combine the doctrine of God, Christology, soteriology, and ecclesiology in just four lines in such a way that impulses for action become visible at the same time:

> You are the visible face of the invisible Father, of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy. Let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified (Pope Francis 2015d).

If the Church is to be the face of Him who has been Himself the face of a God whose omnipotence is shown in forgiveness and mercy, then it becomes immediately clear what must be avoided in order not to obscure this face task. Against this background, it is not surprising that the Pope who demands that the Church be the visible face of the risen Lord is also the Pope who has been the first to call for active nonviolence as a Christian lifestyle.

One word with which Pope Francis is likely to go down in the history of theology is the word tenderness. Already in the sermon at his inauguration, he promoted tenderness as a virtue. It is "not the virtue of the weak but rather a sign of strength of spirit and a capacity for concern, for compassion, for true openness to others, for love. We must not be afraid of goodness tenderness!" (Pope Francis 2013c). We can dare to relate the keywords tenderness and nonviolence to each other. After all, it is striking that nonviolent activists and thought leaders make very similar connections: "The opposite of violence is not peace, but the power of goodness and truth, as well as tenderness" (Gerber 2010).

For Pope Francis, this power of goodness, truth, and tenderness became history in the event of the Incarnation. He understands the Incarnation as the manifestation and the beginning of a revolution of tenderness, Christ (Pope Francis 2017c). With Pope Francis, the revolution of love that John Paul II has spoken of becomes a revolution of tenderness. It is the divine revolution of tenderness that leads to an attitude of active nonviolence. Jesus was "Gods tenderness incarnate, the Father' immense compassion is at work in Jesus" (Pope Francis 2016b). The Pope would agree with the Mennonite Gerber that "nonviolent action corresponds to the nature of God as revealed in Jesus of Nazareth" (Gerber 2014, 214); he would only add and specify: "Closeness, tenderness, compassion are the style of God. God draws near, and he draws near with tenderness and compassion" (Pope Francis 2021b).

It can be argued that Pope Francis, with his call for nonviolence, has merely translated the call that "life (...) must be met with goodness, with meekness " (Pope Francis 2014b) into secular language. The task of Christians is to "bring God' tenderness to a suffering humanity" and to be "witnesses to God's healing tenderness" (Pope Francis 2021b). This is only possible in ways without violence and this seems to be the actual theological reason why the Pope links the central religious values of fraternity/sisterhood, mercy, and tenderness with a concept of action for peaceful social change and conflict resolution that has been discovered, tested, and proven over the last hundred years, namely active nonviolence. For a church that has experienced something of the healing tenderness of God and that wants to be a witness to this, killing violence is no longer a conceivable means for the church as a whole and, of course, for all the individual Christians who together form the church.[7]

5 A Prophetic Troublemaker

Against the background of the outlined dimensions of Franciscan doctrine, conviction, and practice, it becomes understandable why this pope proves to be an incorrigible unbeliever: He is free of any belief in violence as any kind of suitable means: "War cannot create anything but misery, weapons bring nothing but death!" (Pope Francis 2019). This is not rhetoric; it is conviction, the fundamental conviction of this pontificate, as is the unwavering focus on the poor and suffering, the victims of every war. In this context, the Pope does not shy away from very undiplomatic harsh language, which is otherwise very foreign to official church statements. This is how he put it in August 2022:

> I think of so much cruelty, of so many innocents who are paying [the price] of madness, the madness of all sides, because war is madness, and no one at war can say: "No, I'm not mad." The madness of war. (...) The innocent pay [the price of] war, the innocent! Let us think about this reality and say to each other: war is madness. And those who profit from war and the arms trade are criminals who kill humanity (Pope Francis 2022b).

In his address at the World Prayer Meeting in Rome in October 2022, the Pope made himself the voice of all those crying out for peace:

> Yet the plea for peace cannot be suppressed: It rises from the hearts of mothers, it is deeply etched on the faces of refugees, displaced families, the wounded and the dying. And this silent plea rises up to heaven. It has no magic formulas for ending conflict, but it does have the sacred right to implore ask in the name of all those who suffer and it deserves to be heard (Pope Francis 2022d).

Where taking sides in relation to one of the warring parties is considered as a moral imperative, those who advocate unconditional partisanship for the victims on

[7] The Pope's rejection of the *just war* concept of peace ethics should also be seen against this background (cf. Pope Francis 2020b, no. 258: "we can no longer consider war as a solution, because the risks will probably always outweigh the hypothetical benefits attributed to it"). Cf. in detail Silber (2022, 169–194).

all sides of the war quickly find themselves in the (moral) twilight. The Pope was not deterred by this, but instead tirelessly appealed to both warring parties equally and called for negotiations and a ceasefire:

> How much blood must continue to flow for us to realize that war is never a solution, only destruction? In the name of God and in the name of the sense of humanity that dwells in every heart, I renew my call for an immediate ceasefire. May weapons be silenced and may conditions be sought for the start of negotiations that will lead to solutions that are not imposed by force, but consensual, just and stable. (...) My appeal is addressed first and foremost to the President of the Russian Federation, imploring him to stop this spiral of violence and death, also for the sake of his own people. On the other hand, (...) I address an equally confident appeal to the President of Ukraine to be open to serious proposals for peace. (...) War in itself is an error and a horror! (Pope Francis 2022c).

When the Pope began to reflect in an interview on the reasons Russia might have started this war, the outrage in Germany reached a climax. This is because the Pope also mentioned the role of NATO, "perhaps 'the barking of NATO at Russia's door' led Vladimir Putin to trigger the conflict. This conflict was created from outside." (Pope Francis 2022e) In a lengthy interview with the Jesuits' European cultural journals, the Pope spoke about his motivation for discussing such political analyses, saying that he was "simply opposed to reducing complexity to the distinction between good and evil, without reflecting on the roots and interests, which are very complex" (Pope Francis 2022a).

Anyone who thinks about roots and interests wants to mediate. One sees a solution in weighing the interests against one another. The criticism of Pope Francis has not understood that this pope consciously seeks the position of a mediator. Any partisanship, except for the direct victims on both sides, is out of question. The Pope is guided by the conviction that there must be personalities and institutions that remain trustworthy for both parties in such conflicts. Wars are not ended by moral condemnations; no victim would be helped by this. It is an attitude that understands that thinking in terms of guilt and punishment does not help in armed conflicts because it prolongs the war and increases the number of victims. This also explains why Pope Francis has spoken quite openly in an interview in March 2024 about having the courage to fly the white flag:

> I think that those who see the situation, who think about the people, who have the courage to fly the white flag are stronger: (the courage) to negotiate. And today you can negotiate with the help of the international powers. The word negotiate is a courageous word. Negotiation is never surrender. It is the courage not to lead the country to suicide (Pope Francis 2024).

In the heated debate about this interview, it was the journalist Friedrich Küppersbusch who defended the Pope most resolutely.[8] Küppersbusch also drew attention to something that had hardly been adequately registered, let alone appreciated: this Pope also acts in the spirit of his speeches. From the very beginning, the Pope has been active in many ways, especially with regard to the war in Ukraine. He

[8] This commentary from 11.03.2024 on *RadioEins* is currently no longer available online: Küppersbusch, Friedrich (2024), Pope's appeal for peace negotiations: A commentary.

skillfully uses the construction of the Vatican as an independent state and his role as head of state. In this role, he was invited to G7 meetings, in this role he received the Russian ambassador, and in this role he personally went to the Russian embassy right at the start of the war. “How important it is that we be seen as prophets of peace, peacemakers who invite others to live in peace, harmony and mutual respect!” (Pope Francis 2015e). This is how the Pope puts it during one of his trips to Africa. And this is how the Pope himself has consistently tried to live it since the beginning of the Ukraine war.

In March 2022, he initiated a video conference with Cyril, the Patriarch of Moscow, and in June 2022, he invited a commission to the Vatican (including Jeffrey Sachs, Romano Prodi, Michael von der Schulenburg, and others), which drew up a peace proposal with the warning that if negotiations were not pursued, a long war of attrition would ensue. Proposals from this paper have been incorporated into all further peace and negotiation proposals. In April 2023, Francis spoke of a mission that could not yet be public. The Pope had visited Hungary met with Patriarch Hilarion, former foreign minister of the Moscow Patriarchate. Perhaps that was the only reason he traveled to Hungary. The Vatican played an active role in negotiations on the exchange of prisoners and the return of abducted prisoners.

In May 2023, Francis also appointed Cardinal Matteo Zuppi as special envoy for Ukraine. He “traveled to Kiev, Washington, Moscow and Beijing (...) built the first bridges of dialogue over which the official Vatican diplomats were also to balance from then on” (Bartonitschek 2024). The significance of the cardinal’s assignment has hardly been understood in Germany. Zuppi was at “the Community of Sant’Egidio (...) for decades a kind of chief diplomat (...) mediated between guerrillas and the government in Mozambique, later in Algeria.” (Bartonitschek 2024) She quotes a maxim as the cardinal’s guiding principle that receives far too little attention in current political discourse: “You can only make peace with those who wage war. And if you believe in negotiations, you have to initiate a dialog that includes the sides involved, and that naturally includes the side of ‘evil’” (Bartonitschek 2024).

As is usual in diplomatic endeavors, much happens in secret; it will be the task of later historians to reconstruct the exact details and background. The history of papal action since the Russian attack in 2022 can only then be written (and evaluated).

However, there is one background that is likely to determine the Pope’s actions. It is the figure of Francis of Assisi. Cardinal Bergoglio was the first to dare to choose the name of this saint for his papacy. Francis of Assisi stands for a humble Christianity, turned towards the poor and always seeks peace. In his time, he campaigned for peace and reconciliation, including his famous visit to the hostile Muslim Sultan al-Malik al-Kamil in 1219, a counter-program to the crusades of the time. Francis of Assisi was also active as a mediator in Italy, as the legend of the *Wolf of Gubbio* shows. (cf. Nauerth 2023a). In this legend, it says: “you are as guilty of the gallows as the most shameful robber and murderer (...) But I, Brother Wolf, will make peace between you and them; in such a way that you do them no more harm, but they shall release you from all past misdeeds and neither men nor dogs shall persecute you any more” (Binding 1976 p. 68).

In Francis of Assisi's deliveries, we encounter a different European world, characterized primarily by the idea of balancing interests and mediation. In this world, religious personalities were primarily sought for mediation: "A bishop who did not know how to make peace was not a real bishop", as the historian Hermann Kamp put it very strikingly (Kamp 2001 p. 211). Even the peace treaty of Münster, which ended the Thirty Years' War, owed much to the work of two envoys who officially bore the title of mediator. They made a significant contribution to the Peace of Westphalia and one of them, Fabio Chigi, was an envoy of the Pope at the time.[9]. Pope Francis seems to want to build delibaterely on such traditions.

> We should not expect everything from those who govern us; that would be childish. We have the space we need for co-responsibility in creating and putting into place new processes and changes. Let us take an active part in renewing and supporting our troubled societies (Pope Francis 2020b, no. 77).

In Rome, therefore, there is no inability to recognize the *truth*, as the German theologian Regina Elsner has lamented, but in Rome there is a Pope who has been led by a completely different *truth* to intervene prophetically in a Franciscan manner. It is the terrible truth of war that drives the Pope and which he repeatedly names: "War is a failure of politics and of humanity, a shameful capitulation, a stinging defeat before the forces of evil" (Pope Francis 2020b, no. 261).

6 A Pontificate Lives on: Pope Leo XIV and the Issue of Peace

Pope Francis persevered until the Urbi et Orbi blessing on Easter morning 2025, when his strength was finally exhausted. When Francis died on Easter Monday, many who otherwise had little to do with the (Catholic) Church also mourned his passing. This Pope's voice will be missed, according to many obituaries. This referred in particular to his prophetic voice for peace. Against this background, the words chosen by Leo XIV at the beginning of his pontificate were wisely chosen: "Peace be with you! It is the peace of the risen Christ. A peace that is unarmed and disarming, humble and persevering."

At the latest with his address to the members of the popular movements for peace on May 30, Pope Leo XIV showed how closely he intends to follow in Francis' footsteps of peace:

> Dear brothers and sisters, all too much violence exists in the world and our societies. Amid wars, terrorism, human trafficking and widespread aggression, our children and young people need to be able to experience the culture of life, dialogue, and mutual respect. Above all, they need the witness of men and women who embody a different and nonviolent way of living. From local and everyday situations up to the international order, whenever those

[9] On this historically significant mediation, see Stolberg-Rilinger (2011) and the account by Bücker (1958), which includes many original sources.

> who have suffered injustice and violence resist the temptation to seek revenge, they become the most credible agents of non – violent peacebuilding processes. Non – violence, as a method and a style, must distinguish our decisions, our relationships and our actions.

The message of Pope Francis on World Peace Day 2017 is unmistakably taken up and recalled here: "Nonviolence—a style of politics for peace." He has already referred to Pope Francis in the introduction to this speech, and in the conclusion, he refers to one of his predecessor's important major texts and takes up the keyword of brotherhood, which has shaped Francis's proclamation and teaching:

> If you want peace, prepare institutions of peace. Increasingly we realize that this cannot simply involve political institutions, whether national or international, but requires all institutions—educational, economic and social. The Encyclical Fratelli Tutti frequently spoke of the need to pass from "I" to "we", in a spirit of solidarity that needs to find institutional expression. For this reason, I encourage you to remain committed and present: present within history as a leaven of unity, communion and fraternity. Fraternity needs to be recovered, loved, experienced, proclaimed and witnessed, in the confident hope that it is indeed possible, thanks to the love of God "poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Rom 5:5).

The newer papal theology of peace could, if approached systematically, be described as a theology of brotherhood and sisterhood. This became very clear recently when Leo XIV spoke at the 3rd World Meeting on Human Fraternity on September 12, 2025:

> The world is currently marked by conflicts and divisions, which makes it all the more important that you are united by a strong and courageous "no" to war and a "yes" to peace and fraternity. As Pope Francis taught us, war is not the right way to resolve a conflict. "The willingness to face conflict head on, to resolve it and to make it a link in the chain of a new process" (Evangelii Gaudium, 227) is the wisest path, the path of the strong. Your presence bears witness to this wisdom, which unites cultures and religions, and is that silent force that enables us to recognize each other as brothers and sisters, despite all our differences.

Leo's address concludes with an impressive exegesis of the ancient biblical story of fratricide:

> According to Scripture, the first fraternal relationship between Cain and Abel immediately and tragically became conflictual. However, that first murder should not lead us to conclude that "it has always been this way." No matter how ancient or widespread, Cain's violence cannot be tolerated as "normal." On the contrary, the norm is revealed in God's question to the guilty party: "Where is your brother?" (Gen 4:9). It is in this question that we find our vocation, the rule and measure of justice. God does not take revenge on Cain for Abel, but asks him a question that echoes throughout the course of history. Today more than ever, we must make this question our own as a principle of reconciliation.

When Leo says, "we must make this question our own as a principle of reconciliation," he is not only addressing the Catholic world, but appealing to the entire world to finally break out of the cycle of deadly military violence.

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From Just War to Just Peace: Peace Theology, Peace Ethics, and Peace Practice of Pope Francis



Stefan Silber

Abstract Throughout his pontificate, Pope Francis has never hidden the fact that he does not believe in war, but rather supports all people who work for peace using peaceful means [This article was written when Pope Francis was still alive. It therefore refers to him in the present tense.]. In his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* (Francis 2020, forthwith quoted as FT with number of paragraph), he dedicates an entire chapter to the discussion of peace in the world. In that chapter, Pope Francis exclaims, as he has done many times before and after *Fratelli Tutti*: "never again war!" With this call for the end of war, the Pope alludes to his predecessor Paul VI, without mentioning him, who has exclaimed, in his address to the United Nations: "Never again one against the other, never, never again! […] Never again war, never again war! It is peace, peace that has to guide the destiny of the nations of all mankind!" It aligns with other analyses, reflections, and teachings throughout his entire pontificate.

1 Introduction

The Pope's verdict against any kind of war is part of an impressive series of documents, speeches, and statements in which he has taken a position against war and military preparations for war, rejected the arms trade, and favoured non-violent politics. In addition to his 2017 World Day of Peace message and his two speeches in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in November 2019, mention should be made of his own addresses to the UN General Assembly in 2015 and 2020, alongside many other speeches, sermons, and messages (cf. Nauerth 2018). Pope Francis's commitment to non-violent means and opposition to war stems from his awareness of numerous wars and armed conflicts in many parts of the world. In his New Year's address to

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the members of the diplomatic corps in January 2023, Pope Francis spoke as often before of the dramatic interconnectedness of so many wars on the planet. He said:

> Today, the third world war is taking place in a globalized world where conflicts involve only certain areas of the planet directly, but in fact involve them all. The closest and most recent example is certainly the war in Ukraine, with its wake of death and destruction. […] The present third world war fought piecemeal also makes us consider other theatres of tension and conflict (Francis 2023).

This "piecemeal" world war threatens to leave the world torn into pieces. In the same allocution, he expressed his desire for non-violent means to achieve peace:

> The paths of peace are paths of solidarity, for no one can be saved alone. We live in a world so interconnected that, in the end, the actions of each have consequences for all (Francis 2023).

In my presentation, I will show how Pope Francis rejects war and violence completely and even goes so far as to abolish the traditional doctrine of *just war*. I will also present his plea for non-violent ways of peacemaking as an example for a hermeneutic of care, compassion, and concern towards a *just peace*. The pontifical praxis of peacemaking corroborates the Pope's interpretation of scripture and tradition and sets an example for a departure from *just war* to the construction of *just peace.*

2 The Pope's Rejection of War

In a broad analysis of the current reality of the planet, the Pope highlights in his "Letter […] addressed to all people of good will" (FT 56) numerous forms of violence, injustice, exploitation, exclusion, and even slavery that offend the rights and dignity of a large part of humanity. Francis analyses a series of causes and roots of the many wars throughout the world that he characterizes as "a world war fought piecemeal" (FT 259). Economic injustice and exploitation constitute for him central factors in the emergence of generalized violence. The neoliberal practices of the market economy cannot resolve global injustices, as they themselves claim, but instead exacerbate and perpetuate them (cf. FT 168). Economic measures deepen the growing division of society, because both wealth and poverty continue to increase. Added to this is the manipulation of the exercise of politics, which does not serve—as it should—the interests of the community and the common good, but has become a "fray of conflicting interests, where victory consists in eliminating one's opponents" (FT 16).

An important factor that induces violence is, from the Pope's point of view, racism. Although it has been assumed that this form of attack on human dignity has been overcome in the past centuries, we can now find that it "retreats underground only to keep reemerging" (FT 20). In Francis's analysis, it is one aspect of an economic and political culture that denies global fraternity and tends to oppose different social sectors. Another social phenomenon that has been considered obsolete,

"slavery in all its forms" (FT 24), is also still in force, turning human beings into mere merchandise and private property. The Pope includes in this criticism the trafficking of human organs and human trafficking for sexual exploitation as other examples of a dehumanizing economy.

Pope Francis also denounces the ravages that globalized patriarchy commits against a sisterly and brotherly society. Many women and girls must consider themselves "doubly poor" because they "endure situations of exclusion, mistreatment and violence, since they are frequently less able to defend their rights" (FT 23). However, the internal regime of the Church reflects this same violation of equality and rights of women in such an obvious way that the Pope's warning against structural inequality and violence produced by patriarchy is deeply weakened in this regard.

These inequalities, injustices, and different forms of violence deeply rooted in our culture and society are often maintained—according to the Pope—through lies and media disinformation. He writes: "War, terrorist attacks, racial or religious persecution, and many other affronts to human dignity are judged differently, depending on how convenient it proves for certain, primarily economic, interests. What is true as long as it is convenient for someone in power stops being true once it becomes inconvenient" (FT 25). This distortion of truth and the manipulation of values can be identified as very effective cultural mechanisms to maintain and legitimize structures of violence and exclusion.

In this way—Francis denounces—deep divisions are produced between people, so that some individuals seem to be of greater value than others: "Some parts of our human family, it appears, can be readily sacrificed for the sake of others considered worthy of a carefree existence. Ultimately, persons are no longer seen as a paramount value to be cared for and respected, especially when they are poor and disabled" (FT 18). Human beings can become like "dispensable objects" (FT 19).

While the Pope rejects this global situation of diversified violence, calling it a world war within postmodern parameters, he also firmly rejects any notion that these violent structures can be corrected or abolished by violent means: violence can never be a solution for situations of violence, even less will violence be able to end war. On the contrary, war is always a defeat in advance: "Every war leaves our world worse than it was before. War is a failure of politics and of humanity, a shameful capitulation, a stinging defeat before the forces of evil" (FT 261). In this context, the Pope definitively condemns all current forms of war, and instead calls for peaceful and healing solutions to the conflicts and divisions that plague the world today that lead towards the construction of a just peace.

3 Definite Abolition of War

While in Western countries, who uphold their Christian and not infrequently Catholic roots, most governments continue to cling to military defence, armament, and so-called humanitarian military interventions, the Pope calls for the abolition of

war as an instrument of security or of politics. He clearly surpasses the positions of many bishops' conferences that still maintain the principles of legitimate military defence and the so-called *just war*. In *Fratelli Tutti*, Francis draws new red lines for the theology and ethics of peace: he declares that we can no longer speak of *just wars* (1.2.1), condemns nuclear weapons, including their production and possession (1.2.2), and criticizes the arms industry and trade (1.2.3). From my point of view, Pope Francis leaves no more space for a justification of war in present times.

3.1 The Absurdity of a Just War

The doctrine of a supposedly *just war*, which had been held for many centuries in the Catholic Church, already suffered a lot of delegitimization during the horrors of the twentieth century. While in the two world wars of the first half of that century, many representatives of the local churches on the different sides praised war and extolled the participation of soldiers as if war enterprise were a Christian exercise, self-critical reflection after 1945 led many to understand that they had allowed themselves to be manipulated and were actively involved in a manipulation of the Christian doctrine in favour of war.

Under the impression of these horrific experiences and the complicity of parts of the Church, Pope John XXIII, in his encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, gave a first significant turn in the Magisterium's doctrine on war. Pope Francis echoes this first clear distancing from traditional doctrine: "In the words of Saint John XXIII, 'it no longer makes sense to maintain that war is a fit instrument with which to repair the violation of justice'" (FT 260). It is obvious that for Pope John, this is not a departure in principle, since he does not question the doctrine of the *just war* directly. However, faced with the destructive power of nuclear weapons, John XXIII readjusts the relationships between ends and means in the doctrine on war and opens the way to understand that the practice of war under these destructive conditions is, ultimately, absurd (John XXIII, 1963, #126–129).

Francis takes up this argument, deepens, and radicalizes it. Starting from the "conviction"—reinforced by John XXIII—"that the arguments for peace are stronger than […] confidence in the use of weapons" (FT 260), Francis argues that in the present—considering "the development of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and the enormous and growing possibilities offered by new technologies" (FT 258)—the use of these increasingly destructive weapons must be considered increasingly irrational. The irrationality of war comes into view, compared to the reasons for peace: the risks of war "will probably always be greater than its supposed benefits" (*ibid.*).

Faced with these situations, Pope Francis seriously calls into question the traditional doctrine of *just war*. Noting that "in recent decades, every single war has been ostensibly 'justified'" (FT 258), he denounces that these justifications should be qualified as "excuses" or even "manipulation" (ibid.). He admits that "the Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks of the possibility of legitimate defence by means of

military force, which involves demonstrating that certain 'rigorous conditions of moral legitimacy' have been met" (FT 258). These conditions, however, cannot be met under current military constellations, since the destruction caused by military means would be greater than the evil that war is supposed to solve, as it displays "an uncontrollable destructive power over great numbers of innocent civilians" (*ibid.*).

So—according to the Pope's argument—the necessary requirements demanded within the doctrine of *just war* cannot be fulfilled in order to justify war today. For this reason, "it is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a 'just war'" and "we can no longer think of war as a solution" *(ibid.)*. It is very striking that in the corresponding footnote, the Pope even openly distances himself from "Saint Augustine, who forged a concept of 'just war' that we no longer uphold in our own day" (n. 242). The "concept" of Saint Augustine is precisely the historical basis of the entire doctrine of *just war* in the Catholic Church.

What Pope Francis stated is not a definitive condemnation of the *just war* doctrine, nor does he order its eradication from the Catechism (as he has done with the death penalty). However, it leaves no room for its application under current military and political conditions. On the contrary, the pacifist attitude of resistance to wars, military threats, and (supposed) armed security is revealed to be more rational and efficient, even though this may mean "to be deemed naive for choosing peace" (FT 261).

3.2 Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

Francis uses a similar argument on the issue of nuclear weapons. The Pope reinforces the warnings of his predecessors against nuclear weapons to the extreme that he leaves no more space for any legitimate use of these destructive means, not even the mere possessions of these weapons for the aim of deterrence. "International peace and stability cannot be based […] on the threat of mutual destruction or total annihilation" (FT 262), the Pope declares. Peace can only be achieved by peaceful means.

Francis maintains that nuclear weapons simply are not rational, nor can they lead to the goals they are intended to achieve. Therefore, he emphatically demands that they should be considered immoral instruments and be abolished completely. The Pope bases his decision on several arguments: Foremost, he explains that nuclear weapons cannot provide a solution to current challenges: "If we take into consideration the principal threats to peace and security […], as, for example, terrorism, asymmetrical conflicts, cybersecurity, environmental problems, poverty, not a few doubts arise regarding the inadequacy of nuclear deterrence as an effective response to such challenges" (FT 262).

The Pope continues that—secondly—these weapons have dire consequences that would nullify any goal that a war between nations has intended to achieve: "These concerns are even greater when we consider the catastrophic humanitarian

and environmental consequences that would follow from any use of nuclear weapons, with devastating, indiscriminate and uncontainable effects, over time and space" (ibid.).

Thirdly, he also denies a pacifying effect of the use of the atomic bomb for deterrence. "We need also to ask ourselves how sustainable is a stability based on fear, when it actually increases fear" (*ibid.*). Fear cannot be a driver of security, not even among nations.

It is for these reasons that the Pope advocates the total elimination of nuclear weapons. This "ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons becomes both a challenge and a moral and humanitarian imperative" (*ibid.*).

However, and leaving the immediate context of *Fratelli Tutti*, the Pope is not satisfied with slow processes of international negotiations for nuclear disarmament. In his speech in Hiroshima in 2019, he questioned the incessant production of nuclear weapons: "How can we speak of peace even as we build terrifying new weapons of war?" (Francis 2019). The Pope even improvised within the prepared text that "the possessing of nuclear weapons is immoral" (ibid.). The Pope demands with urgency the abolition of nuclear weapons and declares their mere *possession* as something immoral. This phrase, apparently, caused a diplomatic dissonance between nuclear power France and the Holy See. The Pope, as was heard afterwards, had been warned against these dissonances, should he declare the mere *possession* of nuclear arms as immoral. In spite of these diplomatic reservations of his counsellors, however, Francis insisted in this clarification. In 2023, he repeated this verdict in his address to the diplomatic corps, now without any spontaneous interruption and in full conscience of the possible diplomatic consequences: "I can only reaffirm that the possession of atomic weapons is immoral" (Francis 2023).

Fratelli Tutti's rejection of nuclear weapons as immoral must be read in this context: not only their use, whether in war or for so-called deterrence, but also their production, handling, and possession must be eliminated to ensure peace.

3.3 Industry and Commerce of Death

Pope Francis clearly distances himself from the production and trade of arms. During his visit to Nagasaki in 2019, the Pope emphasized: "Our attempts to speak out against the arms race will never be enough. The arms race wastes precious resources that could be better used to benefit the integral development of peoples and to protect the natural environment" (Francis 2019). In view of the pressing global needs of humanity, "the money that is squandered and the fortunes made through the manufacture, upgrading, maintenance and sale of ever more destructive weapons, are an affront crying out to heaven" (ibid.). The production of weapons, therefore, in the Pope's opinion, is a crime against the poor and against nature, which he qualifies as an injustice and a serious sin "crying out to heaven".

On another occasion, when addressing the UN Assembly in 2020, he used words even more critical of the arms industry: "We need to dismantle the perverse logic

that links personal and national security to the possession of weaponry. This logic serves only to increase the profits of the arms industry, while fostering a climate of distrust and fear between persons and peoples" (Francis 2020).

Finally, in a much less formal act, when spontaneously answering questions from school children, he condemned in an even more drastic and almost offensive way those responsible for the production and marketing of weapons: "Why is it that so many powerful people don't want peace? Because they live on war! The arms industry: this is grave! […] It is the industry of death. And they profit. […] So much is sacrificed and war is made to protect the money. And because of this, many people don't want peace. There is more profit with war!" (Francis 2015).

4 Pope Francis as a Teacher of Just Peace and Non-Violence

Pope Francis has repeatedly insisted on the necessity to oppose and end wars and create a just peace by using peaceful means. As early as September 2013, he called for a vigil of prayer for peace in Syria. During his homily on that event, he said: "War always marks the failure of peace, it is always a defeat for humanity." And quoting his predecessor Paul VI, he continued: "Peace expresses itself only in peace, a peace which is not separate from the demands of justice but which is fostered by personal sacrifice, clemency, mercy and love" (Francis 2013). In the following years, the Pope has clarified what it means to him to consider war as a "defeat for humankind", and the necessity to construct a *just peace*, which he presents as only being possible if it is done in a peaceful and non-violent way. "Violence leads to more violence, hatred to more hatred, death to more death. We must break this cycle which seems inescapable" (FT 227).

To break this vicious circle, the practice of non-violence is the preferable, most efficient, and most consistent option. In his message for the World Day of Peace on 1 January 2017, the Pope had proposed non-violence as "a style of politics for peace" (Francis 2017). In this message, the Pope insists on the power of non-violent action—which is "more powerful than violence" (#4)—he presents men and women from around the world and from many religions as examples to follow on the path of non-violence, asserts the evangelical fidelity of non-violence—explicitly mentioning the Sermon on the Mount—and calls on "political and religious leaders, the heads of international institutions, and business and media executives: to apply the Beatitudes in the exercise of their respective responsibilities" (#6), that is, to apply non-violent measures to build peace.

The Pope connects this non-violent politics with the construction of *just peace*. He presents various important tasks in this project. First, the call to solve conflicts based on the truth: "Those who were fierce enemies have to speak from the stark and clear truth. […] Only by basing themselves on the historical truth of events will they be able to make a broad and persevering effort to understand one another and to strive for a new synthesis for the good of all" (FT 226). Notably, the insistence on the "stark and clear truth" resonates with the practice of *satyagraha* developed by

Mohandas K. Gandhi, which means "firmness in truth" on the non-violent path to peace (cf. Rynne 2008, 43–83).

Francis proposes a second necessary element for building just peace: memory. Because "silence can lead to complicity in grave misdeeds and sins" (FT 244), the victims demand remembrance, because "we can never move forward without remembering the past; we do not progress without an honest and unclouded memory" (FT 249). The Pope mentions some crucial examples of the need for memory: "The *Shoah* must not be forgotten" (FT 247), nor "the atomic bombs […], the persecutions, the slave trade and the ethnic killings […] as well as the many other historical events that make us ashamed of our humanity" (FT 248). At the same time, he insists that "to remember goodness is also a healthy thing" (FT 249). To achieve peace, we must also remember those who have dedicated themselves to the construction of a just peace using peaceful means, human beings the Pope calls "artisans of peace" (Francis 2022).

Memory must lead to justice. For this reason, the Pope condemns impunity, but also revenge: "Justice is properly sought solely out of love of justice itself, out of respect for the victims, as a means of preventing new crimes and protecting the common good, not as an alleged outlet for personal anger" (FT 252). Justice, for Francis, does not contradict the search for reconciliation and forgiveness. Rather, both processes must accompany each other. There can be no forgiveness through forgetting, but only with memory and justice for the victims. The Pope explains: "loving an oppressor does not mean allowing him to keep oppressing us, or letting him think that what he does is acceptable. On the contrary, true love for an oppressor means seeking ways to make him cease his oppression" (FT 241).

Recognizing one's neighbour even in the adversary or oppressor is the attitude of mercy that must characterize Christian non-violence in the search for peace. It is not a mercy of oblivion, impunity, or concealment, but that mercy that seeks justice and the conversion of those who do evil (cf. FT 254). But this attitude of mercy excludes all forms of violence that attempt against the life of other human beings, especially all kinds of warfare.

For Pope Francis, the practice of non-violence in the pursuit of *just peace* is not only the best instrument for the resolution of conflicts, but also a spiritual characteristic of those who follow Jesus Christ. For this reason, he reminded everyone that "Jesus Christ never promoted violence" (FT 238) and that the early communities of the church lived without violently defending themselves, even in persecution, and that, on the contrary, they called to respond to grievances with peaceful and non-violent means.

This did not mean they avoided conflicts when they appeared inevitable, but rather they lived them with a non-violent spirituality, based on their faith in a God who created all human beings and could be encountered and experienced through them, also through the opponents in the conflict. This faith can also guide us today, because "we should never confine others to what they may have said or done, but value them for the promise that they embody, a promise that always brings with it a spark of new hope" (FT 228). Contemplating the adversary from the perspective of promise and hope are attitudes that allow non-violent action, which allow us to live

and resolve conflicts without hurting the other or taking revenge on them, while continuing to seek relentlessly for justice and truth. Promise and hope help us open ourselves to the new potentialities that God can bring forth in the midst of conflict without resorting to violence.

Francis proposes several spiritual values to be practised and deepened in non-violent action for peace. These values are in full harmony with secular attitudes proposed for non-violent activists. The Pope invites us to cultivate "inner peace" (FT 242) as a remedy and antidote against interpersonal and social hatred. He continues with a call to goodness that awakens "profound joy, even in the midst of difficulties and misunderstandings. Even when affronted, goodness is never weak, but rather shows its strength by refusing to take revenge" (FT 243). In the same way, he continues to recommend "mercy, which heals the injuries caused by mistakes, misunderstandings and disputes" (FT 254), fraternity, as in the entire encyclical, and truth, active memory, and the search for justice as detailed above.

Pope Francis is aware that the practice of these values and the non-violent solution to conflicts are no easy matters. On the contrary, "social peace demands hard work, craftsmanship" (FT 217). It is a work that must be done by hand, personally, from the heart and with a sound spirituality. It is a work that requires the daily search for inner peace and self-conversion. It is a path of following Jesus Christ that requires similarity with him, even in persecution. It also contains, however, the promises of the fellowship of Jesus, including the hope of resurrection.

The Pope also sets an example for dialogue with other Christian churches and other religions for the sake of peace. In his words, "a journey of peace is possible between religions. […] The different religions […] contribute significantly to building fraternity and defending justice in society" (FT 271). The Pope has signed a joint document with the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb from Cairo, on human brother- and sisterhood, for world peace and common coexistence, in 2019. They say that they "resolutely declare that religions must never incite war, hateful attitudes, hostility and extremism, nor must they incite violence or the shedding of blood" (FT 285). When attempts are made to justify violence or war with religion, the Pope and the Grand Imam classify this as abuse and deviation (*ibid.*).

Another extensive quote from the Abu Dhabi document is found in the condemnation of the alleged legitimation of "deplorable" terrorism that they attribute not only to "incorrect interpretations of religious texts," but also to structural causes in the economic, political, and social spheres, like "policies linked to hunger, poverty, injustice, oppression and pride" (FT 283).

The commitment to peace that the Pope proposes must follow the example of this joint and dialogic effort between different religions and Christian denominations, to integrate the spiritual forces of all humanity in this enterprise. For this reason, the Pope explains at the end of his encyclical that he has allowed himself to be influenced by people who belong to different churches and religions. Along with the aforementioned Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, the Pope "felt inspired particularly by Saint Francis of Assisi, but also by others of our brothers and sisters who are not Catholics: Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, Mahatma Gandhi and many more" (FT 286). The reference to non-Catholic and non-Christian persons may surprise in

such a high-ranking doctrinal text, and in fact, is without precedent in the Catholic magisterium. The Pope gives a very practical example of ecumenical and interreligious openness in his peaceful struggle for peace.

5 A Perspective of Care and Compassion

Pope Francis's approach to non-violent peacemaking is characterized by a certain reading of Christian Scripture and tradition. He indicates clearly the perspective that orients him to this type of understanding:

> Let us not remain mired in theoretical discussions, but touch the wounded flesh of the victims. Let us look once more at all those civilians whose killing was considered "collateral damage". Let us ask the victims themselves. Let us think of the refugees and displaced, those who suffered the effects of atomic radiation or chemical attacks, the mothers who lost their children, and the boys and girls maimed or deprived of their childhood. Let us hear the true stories [the truth] of these victims of violence, look at reality through their eyes, and listen with an open heart to the stories they tell. In this way, we will be able to grasp the abyss of evil at the heart of war (FT 261).[1]

It is the civilian victims—refugees, women, children, among others—who tell the truth about war. It is for this reason that it is necessary to relate to them physically, "touch" their wounds, listen to them, and feel with them. People cannot be "considered collateral damage", as the Pope emphasizes. He rejects any form of violence against a fellow human being. There is no distinction here between violent acts committed under the pretext of a good cause and the violence of an aggressor. The bodies of the victims of both kinds of violence display the same kind of wounds.

The *truth* of the victims of violence serves as a criterion not only to understand the evil nature of war, but also to understand every other human project, including the interpretation of Scripture and tradition. While commenting on the biblical narration of the Good Samaritan, the Pope writes: "The decision to include or exclude those lying wounded along the roadside can serve as a criterion for judging every economic, political, social and religious project." (FT 69).

It is this perspective of care and compassion that determines the Pope's approach to reality and to Scripture. The Pope underscores this fundamental significance of compassion for the understanding of Scripture also by repeatedly referring to the story of Cain and Abel. Despite the individual differences of those sons of Adam and Eve, "their profound identity and their vocation is to be brothers" (Francis 2014), as the Pope writes. "Their story," he continues, "brings out the difficult task to which all men and women are called, to live as one, each taking care of the other." And two years later, on the occasion of that year's message for the world day of peace, Pope Francis returns to Gen 4, commenting:

[1] The Italian and Spanish versions of the encyclical express here the Pope's wish that we may hear "the truth" *(la verità/la verdad)* of the victims of violence, not only their "true stories".

> Cain said he did not know what had happened to his brother, that he was not his brother's keeper. He did not feel responsible for his life, for his fate. He did not feel involved. He was indifferent to his brother, despite their common origin. How sad! What a sorry tale of brothers, of families, of human beings! This was the first display of indifference between brothers. God, however, is not indifferent. Abel's blood had immense value in his eyes, and he asked Cain to give an account of it. At the origin of the human race, God shows himself to be involved in [hu]man's destiny. (Francis 2016)

Pope Francis's way of interpreting the Scriptures involves himself and those who listen to or read his interpretations. It is impossible for the Pope to stay indifferent, seeing that God himself is not indifferent to human suffering. We feel drawn into the story narrated by the Bible, we ourselves stand together with our brother on the field, or, as the Pope writes, in relation to the story of the Good Samaritan: "All of us have in ourselves something of the wounded man, something of the robber, something of the passers-by, and something of the Good Samaritan" (FT 69).

Pope Francis's perspective of care and compassion let us read Scripture as a key to our own reality, and at the same time, understand our own reality out of the perspective of those who suffer, from the *truth* of the victims of violence, considering and *touching* their wounds and *listening* to their stories.

The Pope's perspective of care and compassion leads us to identify personally and spiritually with the victims of violence. This is the reason why the Pope ascertains: "Every act of violence committed against a human being is a wound in humanity's flesh; every violent death diminishes us as people" (FT 227).

In contexts of violence and structural exclusions, the friendship with the poor desired by the Pope is not always an easy matter. It is striking that Francis, when insisting on the need to make contact with the wounds, also reflects on the problems that this attempt can entail: even if the victims *resist* to the attempts to approach them, this resistance needs to be accepted as an effect of the structural violence from which they suffer: "If at times the poor and the dispossessed react with attitudes that appear antisocial, we should realize that in many cases those reactions are born of a history of scorn and social exclusion" (FT 234). This resistance should not lead anyone to abandon the victims to their destiny or to leave the project of just peace confronted with the complex difficulties that arise in conflicts. On the contrary, it is necessary to accept this resistance as a call to self-reflection and to search for new paths of closeness and solidarity.

6 The Hermeneutic of Praxis

There is another important strategy that the Pope employs to express his interpretation of Scripture and tradition and to show the range of his intent to transform and convert the doctrine and the life of the Church: it is his praxis.

The Pope is a religious leader, not only a theologian. His authority does not express itself only through what he thinks, teaches, and writes, but also through his actions. In order to understand Pope Francis's stance towards just peace, it is

therefore fundamental to study his praxis of peace and the hermeneutic of Scripture and tradition this praxis reveals. Furthermore, the Pope's praxis shows the scope of his magisterium: *just peace* is, for Pope Francis, not only something to believe in and to hope for, but the result of just and non-violent actions.

In the first place, it is obvious to allude to the Pope's and to the Holy See's politics of diplomacy. In numerous conflicts around the globe, the Pope, together with his diplomatic apparatus, is working incessantly towards negotiations, ceasefires, and humanitarian assistance, trying to engage as many parties as possible. He was the first Pope in history to meet a Russian Patriarch, in 2016 in Havana, an encounter made possible—among many others—by the Socialist government of Cuba. From the first days of the war in Ukraine, Pope Francis has tried to use these connections as a basis for peace talks with Patriarch Cyril and other Russian leaders. As early as 25 February 2022, on the second day of the war, Pope Francis himself has visited the Russian ambassador to the Vatican, which is an extremely unusual procedure, because a head of state usually orders a diplomat to come to him and does not go to visit him. But the Pope has wanted to make clear—on this occasion as on many others—how important this concern is to him: politics must be non-violent; every form of violence must be ended and rejected as a matter of urgency. On various occasions, he also received the Ukrainian president Zelenskyy in the Vatican.

These and many other diplomatic processes are intensified by the second thread of Pope Francis's praxis for peace: his visits to other countries and the choice of his destinations. The Pope has visited Palestine and Israel, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, South Sudan, and many states with a Muslim majority. But he has travelled to Western states like France and the US mostly in order to visit the international institutions like the UN that are located there. This choice of destinations follows the same hermeneutic of compassion and gives it a clear expression: it is from the location of the people who suffer violence that you can gain, in the view of Pope Francis, the right perspective to understand just peace and the way to reach it.

A third element of the Pope's praxis for just peace that I would like to mention here are his prayers for peace. Throughout his pontificate, the Pope has invited repeatedly to pray for just peace in Syria, in Palestine and Israel, in many African countries he has visited, and ultimately also for the peace in Ukraine, Israel, and Palestine. Unlike other religious leaders, Pope Francis does not pray for the victory of one party or another in the war. He prays for the victims and refugees, he prays for politicians and other leaders, and he prays for his own conversion and the conversion of the Church towards just peace. His prayers for peace indicate that peace does not only depend on the exit of politics and diplomacy and the efforts of individuals in their pursuit of justice and peace. For the Pope, *just peace* is a spiritual journey that includes politics, diplomacy, personal commitment, conversion, hope, prayer, and lamentation. It cannot be gained by prayers alone; but it depends on the praxis of many people, institutions, and governments involved. The commitment to interreligious dialogue noted above, including the *spiritual dialogue* it often entails, might be indicated as another important element of the Pope's praxis for just peace. The hermeneutic of care and compassion not only motivates and orients the Pope's teaching and his dynamic understanding of tradition, but also his manifold praxis for just peace.

In conclusion, we can characterize Pope Francis as a teacher and a practitioner of just peace, who uses a hermeneutic of care and compassion to read Scripture and tradition, up to the point of changing the magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church on these subjects. His reason to do this is his solidarity with everyone who is suffering violence, because the location of the victims is the one place that permits us to understand Scripture as a communication that speaks to us today and wants to convert us towards the love of our neighbour (including all those we consider enemies). As a teacher and a practitioner of non-violence and just peace, the Pope marks the way humanity can walk from the abolition of the *just war* doctrine and war itself to the construction of a *just peace* that heals the wounds of everyone affected by violence, exclusion, and injustice.

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Rebuilding Lives and Bringing Peace: Namokaar Gym as a Holistic Approach to Global Health, Peace, and Harmony



Bharti Jain

Abstract There are numerous emotional and physical disorders that have been linked to stress, including depression, anxiety, heart attacks, stroke, hypertension, immune system disturbances that increase susceptibility to infections, and a host of viral-linked disorders ranging from the common cold to certain cancers. In fact, it is hard to think of any disease in which stress cannot play an aggravating role or any part of the body that is not affected. Yet our modern lifestyle seems to be a stress-inducing machine. The point here is that negative reactions to day-to-day problems and irritations create a frame of reference that colors one's perception—internal stress is created when you see everything in life through this frame and your actions are guided by that stress; this is where the root of violence begins.

In this chapter, I have tried to show the real picture, to help you connect with yourself and with your environment, inside and outside. When you look around from this perspective, you will come to know the root cause of violence, how it begins in oneself and then develops to the world level. It will introduce all the strategies we use to train people for non-violence, including my innovation—a holistic tool, a true panacea to help you with your life journey and goal. I also provide some case studies, a practical exercise for you and my concluding thought.

For best results and better understanding, read the article till the end. I request you to relate each word of the article to your own life, answer each question in your mind, analyse yourself, and see where you are now. At the end, do the exercise and read the article once again, see the change, and refer back to me via my email, below.

So, when we talk about life, what kind of lifestyle are we talking about?

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A peaceful harmonious life full of joy, happiness, love or a life that is full of stress, worries, tension, fear, and uncertainty?

Of course, everyone looks for a happy, healthy, and joyful life.

Then why are most of us living a life that violates the rules of nature?

Violate means break, disrespect, harm, exploit, and destroy.

The word, violence; I am sure it is very disturbing and disappointing for most of us. Today, we are met with the images of violence all over the world, affecting our youth, parents, family, and others. There is no single cause. There are several issues like poverty, poor parenting, education, physical/sexual abuse, corporate, domestic violence, political violence, etc. However, the most dangerous form is the one that remains hidden beneath our homes, religious places, communities, and this freezes our blood—violence against women and children. Moreover, many forms of systemic violence often slip past our attention because they are so much a part of the infrastructure of life (e.g. racism, sexism, ageism).

At this juncture, I would like to mention here the **golden words of Martin Luther King, Jr**: "*Violence is the antithesis of creativity and wholeness. It destroys community and makes humanity impossible."*

Question—Why do some people want to hurt one another?

Simply because of their name or skin colour?

What is the root cause? Where does it arise from?
We have different theories to understand this.

- *Psychologist's Theory: Focus on issues of nature versus nurture.*

Nature focuses on genes or what we have inherited and nurtures on how this inheritance interacts with experience.

Negative outcomes, such as psychological disorders, health crises, and early death, are associated with poor parenting and environment. The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE), as reported by the CDC (2015), lists a variety of long-term health issues occurring due to unhealthy experiences and environments.

- *Economist's Theory*: *Focus on scarce resources and costs/benefit analyses.*

Population abundance + resource scarcity = Conflict.

One of the prime triggers of between-group violence is competition for scarce resources. The husband who beats his wife is probably protecting some scarce resource (like his self-esteem, status, money, or power) that has been threatened. The drug addict who beats up an elderly woman wants the scarce resource (her money or credit cards) in her purse. The nation who declares war on its neighbour wants some scarce resource (land, gold, or even status) that the neighbour has or threatens to claim.

- *Sociologist's Theory*: *Sociologists direct their attention towards difficult life circumstances, cultural characteristics, and social conditions.*

Accordingly, high rates of criminal violence are considered the result of racial and economic inequalities.

At the heart of the explosion of crime is the loss of the capacity of fathers and mothers to be responsible in caring for the children they bring into the world. This loss of love and guidance at the intimate levels of marriage and family has broad social consequences for children and for the wider community. This leads to the breakdown of the family and community stability. The sequence has its deepest roots in the absence of stable marriage.

There Is a Variety of Violence All Around

If we talk about the root cause of sexual violence, then we look to drug or alcohol abuse, serious miscommunication, or some other situational stressor that triggers an individual. Sexual violence is used in social settings and situations where the rewards are higher than the costs. Elevated levels of testosterone make some men more violent than those who have normal or lower levels of testosterone.

In the "WHO Multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence", 3–24% of women surveyed reported that their first sexual experience was forced on them.

What if We Talk About How Common Youth Violence Is?

Then we could see it in every institution, in fact every street. Bullying is the first step towards it. There is a person being bullied and person who bullies, both are infected and affected.

So Where Does the Continuum of Violence Begin?

The continuum of violence begins from within oneself (self-loathing, anxiety, threatening, or actually enacting suicide) and moves on to assaults and on to murder and to war/crimes against humanity, as well as environmental degradation fuelled by feelings of rage and culture of fear. The continuum of violence and the progression from non-physical to physical violence is illustrated in Fig. 1.

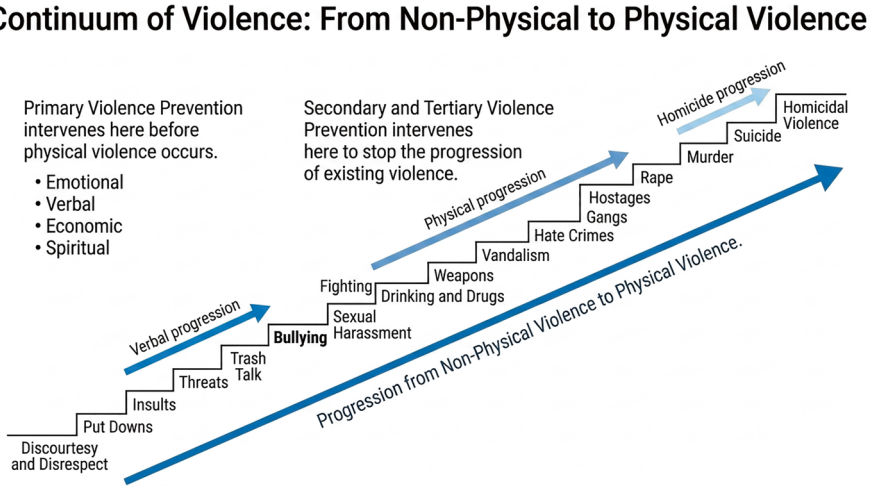


Fig. 1 Violence Continuum. Source: Developed for this paper

Question—What contributes to violence? And what can contribute to human beings staying connected which is our nature?

Actually, everyone has times when they fall out with others. What could be the main factors behind this?

The reasons why groups of people, or countries, fall out are much the same as the reasons why you fall out with your friends—only on a bigger scale. Can you think of what these reasons might be?

Under Which Heading You Would Put the Cause of the Trouble?
Greed, jealousy, lack of respect, power seeking, or ego.

See, general human behaviour is—What? Me change? But they are the problem, not me!

There is always a question—Why are we not doing what we want?

Answer is FEAR: False Evidence Appears Real. When Fear rules you, it reflects in your thoughts, then in your words, and finally in your deeds.

There are a lot of factors that affect your behaviour, like your family, culture, and many other influences. So, basically, emotions play a critical role in how we live our lives. For instance, angry feelings may spur you to stand up for someone or they may inspire you to create social change. But when left unchecked, angry feelings can lead to aggressive behaviour. And this is what is happening with our youth. This is leading to psychological disorders, abuse, aggression, depression, suicides, and homicides. Out of 2000 homicide cases all over the world, 43% is committed by youths in the 19–30 age groups.

You probably don't need me to tell you that you are dealing with some stress right now. Well, bless your stress—it means you are alive. Stress can give us energy and motivation, helping us to connect with a deeper sense of purpose. But when left to roam free without healthy boundaries and oscillations, stress can quickly turn from a friend to a *frenemy*.

Unhealthy levels of stress can deeply affect your peace of mind and take the joy out of your life. It damages relationships you care about and even causes you to make silly mistakes in your personal and professional life. Stress also poses risk to your health and can have deadly consequences. Indeed, it is estimated that over 80% of all visits to the doctor are stress-related.

There are numerous emotional and physical disorders that have been linked to stress, including depression, anxiety, heart attacks, stroke, hypertension, immune system disturbances that increase susceptibility to infections, and a host of viral-linked disorders ranging from the common cold to certain cancers. In fact, it is hard to think of any disease in which stress cannot play an aggravating role or any part of the body that is not affected. Yet our modern lifestyle seems to be a stress-inducing machine.

The point here is that negative reactions to the day-to-day problems and irritations create a frame of reference that colours your perception; internal stress is created when you see everything in life through this frame and your actions are based on that stress—and there begins the root of violence.

There are several ways for dealing with stress. Everyone's experience of stress and style of stress management is rather unique. The problem is that we often apply ineffective solutions, because we are unconscious of the after-effects of those habitual choices.

Here are some examples:

- Taking out your stress on other people
- Denying or hiding the real problem
- Procrastinating
- Overeating or under-eating
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Drinking, smoking, or gambling
- Zoning out for hours in front of TV or internet

Chances are that you have already employed some of these strategies to deal with stress. The truth is that those strategies offer a temporary relief, a band aid, without working intelligently on the real problem. Not only that, they often also have harmful side effects. The world today is facing not one but two pandemics. The latter one—Inequality and Violence—has engulfed the world throughout centuries.

It is now the need of the hour to understand the importance of peacebuilding and enlightenment. Peace for me is where there is less nepotism, more value for talent, more courage and hopes in tough times, and more faith in yourself and the universe. What I mean to say is—now it is high time that we rebuild our lives and bring peace into our life.

The Question here is: Do we really want to rebuild our lives?

I usually have one-to-one conversations with God.
Once, I interviewed Him and asked:

What surprises you most about humankind?

He smiled and replied:

That they get bored with childhood, they rush to grow up, and then long to be children again.
That they lose their health to make money and then they lose money to restore their health.
That by thinking anxiously about the future, they forget the present. So much so that they live neither in the present nor in the future.

God's hand took mine and we were silent for a while and then I gave it a thought and asked again:

As a parent what are some of life's lessons you want your children to learn?

And God replied with a smile:

To learn they cannot make others love them. What they can do is let themselves be loved.

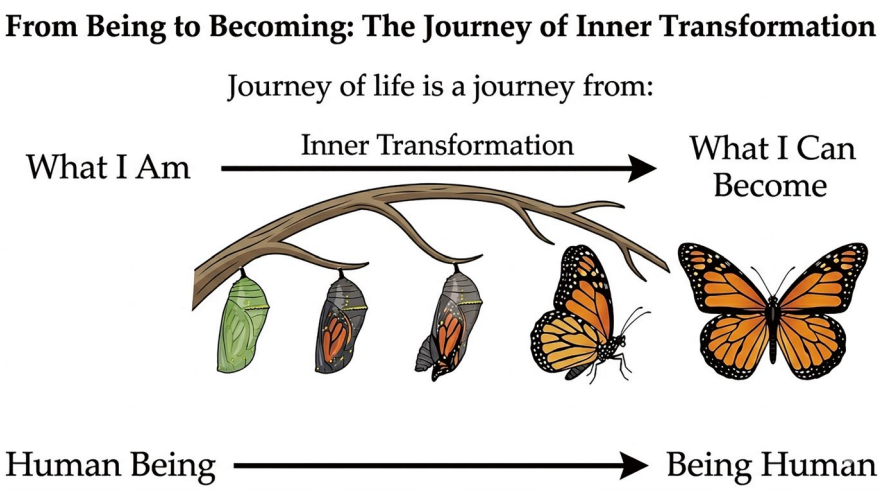


Fig. 2 On being and becoming. Source: Developed for this paper

To learn it is not good to compare themselves with others.
To learn that a rich person is not the one who has the most, but the one who needs the least.
To learn that it only takes seconds to open profound wounds in persons we love, and it takes many years to heal them.
To learn to forgive by practicing forgiveness.
To learn that there are persons who love them dearly but fail to express it.
To learn that two people can look at the same things and see things differently.
They should learn to forgive themselves and to learn that I am always here.

All my unspoken queries were answered. And then I realized:

The journey of inner transformation from what I am to what I can become is depicted in Fig. 2.

You are in charge of your life. What you have inside you will spread outside. If you have peace inside, you will spread peace all around. If you are violent, fighting with yourself, you will spread violence outside too. Unless you learn to face your own shadows, you will continue to see them in others, because the world outside you is only a reflection of the world inside you. So all you need to do is bring Peace into your own life. Stop criticism. Stop criticizing yourself and others.

'*I am'* is within you. Inner transformation is required. Giving compassionately: whatever we do, do it willingly. It should not be done out of guilt or shame or fear of punishment or for something other expect us to do. We give joy, naturally to own life and life of others.

Always remember, inside each one of us there is kindness, strength, and wisdom—the only things that we need. Our future depends on the choices we made today. Unleash this untapped potential. So, when you have conquered your fears with your love, the second part of the story will be to let go of the past and move

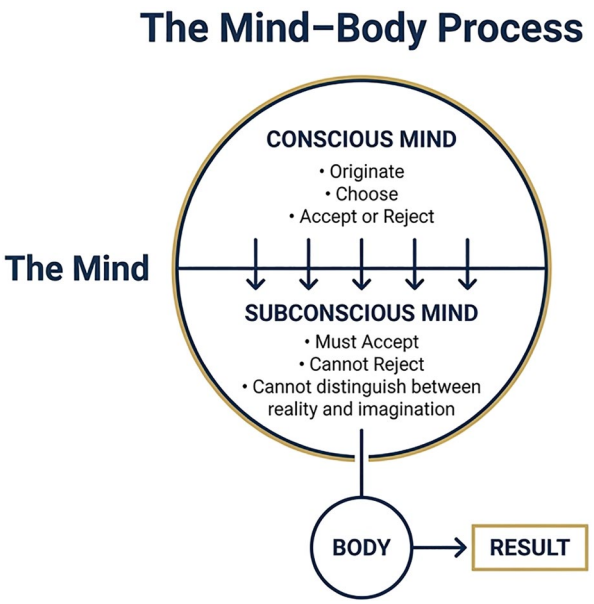


Fig. 3 The Mind: Conscious and Subconscious Mind (Source: Developed for this paper)

beyond your old comfort zones. Once you reach that stage I am 100 percent sure you can begin to transform ourselves, others, and the world around you.

At the Namokaar Gym, we train children, corporates, and clients to look at everything in an awesome manner. To learn to smile, be passionate, take life as a game to be played, don't react just respond, keep the attitude of not accepting negatives, take the initiative and use your own power, maintain your relationship, success, and teamwork. In all, we train people to move from competition to cooperation to collaboration.

But the question is: How to include these skills and attitude in our behaviour?

The answer to this question is switching from automatic to *conscious* living—To know yourself more deeply—your triggers, your mind-sets, and your habits and lifestyle. The purpose is to identify and think ahead about how to minimize the impact of situations that pose a risk to your well-being; to plan and then uproot the sources of stress. The relationship between the conscious mind, subconscious mind, and bodily outcomes is presented in Fig. 3.

The science behind our approach relates to the Conscious and Subconscious Mind.

The conscious mind is the one which takes original thoughts from the environment and which has an option to choose whether to accept these. It may accept or reject. But, whatever comes to the subconscious mind is readily accepted without understanding. It is like a permanent memory—which means that whatever is imprinted on it becomes your belief and starts affecting your body.

How to Change That Belief?

My research program—the Namokaar Gym—is a holistic health approach to life, an ancient but modern positive way, an alternate healing approach, based on science,

psychology, and spirituality to deal with stress, anxiety, and fear—a true panacea that redirects your journey of life from violence to peace and a harmonious lifestyle. Rather than focusing on illness or a specific part of the body in distress, this ancient approach to health considers the whole persona and its interaction with the surrounding environment. It emphasizes the connectivity of mind, body, and spirit as a whole and it can do wonders for enhancing our persona with the help of Mantras, Mudras, controlled breathing, meditation, colour, mind power, sound, and many more supporting activities. The integrated Namokaar Gym framework connecting mind, body, and soul is shown in Fig. 4.

There are five major sections of the Namokaar Gym—Arihant Section, Siddh Section, Acharya Section, Upadhyay Section, and Muni Section. Each section teaches you a Mudra (a physical exercise) and provides you a different perspective and helps you in your physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual growth. Overall, growth can be achieved with the structured practice of Mantra chanting with the respective Mudra, colour, sound, and other activities suggested by expert. The foundational mudras used within the Namokaar Gym system are illustrated in Fig. 5.

Mantras: Mantras act upon cells. They restore the pattern of sounds at the heart of each and every cell, pushing the cells toward harmonious health. Mantras energize specific portions of the brain and deeply influence the energy alignment within us and positively affect our energy shield, i.e. aura. **Mantras** have a profound impact upon us due to two reasons:

- The vibration effect of the sound;
- The effect of the collective emotional energy behind that word due to constant repetition over time.

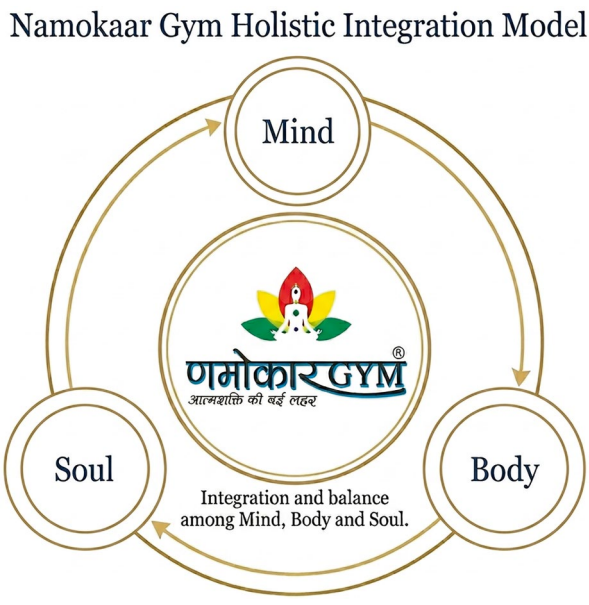


Fig. 4 Namokaar Gym Holistic Integration Model (Source: Developed for this paper)

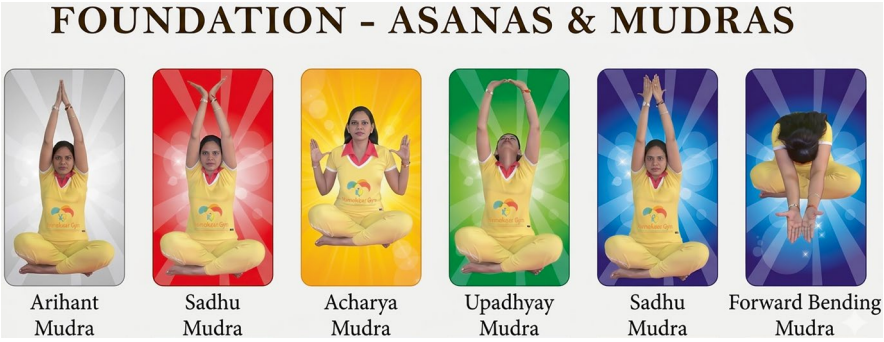


Fig. 5 Namokaar Gym Foundation: Asanas and Mudras (Source: Developed for this paper) Source: These Mudras are taken from Mudra Shastra by author. Source: Author

Benefits of Mantra Mantras act upon our bodies by reprogramming the vibrations of the cells that have somehow gone askew. They restore the pattern of sounds at the heart of each and every cell, thus pushing the cells toward harmonious health. Mantras affect not only our physical body but also our subtle body—our emotions, intellect, and soul. They positively affect our aura—the energy shields surrounding our body. *Energy of a Mantra* We hear any word and have an emotional reaction to it. This is because we are conditioned by our experiences connected to that word and the collective emotions that people have towards that word.

Repetition of a mantra is a powerful way of keeping us in the present and stilling our "monkey mind", which is forever jumping uncontrollably from one thought to another. The moment we inculcate the practice of being "intensely" present—with neither any 'baggage' of the subconscious past nor the remotest anxiety of the future—we, then, automatically experience great peace, profound silence, and supreme joy! This, in fact, is the process and goal of Namokaar Gym and using mantras is a very effective way to achieve it. Namokaar mantra is the basic mantra for healing of mind, body, and spirit in a combination of colour, breathing, sound, and inner body systems. The Mantra represents five colours: white, red, yellow or orange, green, and blue or black. The mantra repetition with colour visualization is a very healing practise.

Here, we worship the qualities of soul rather than any individual. The worship is given to all universal souls irrespective of any caste, creed, or time. As an abbreviated form, this mantra is recited as "A" "SI" "AA" "U" "SA" and still further as "A-A-AA-U-M". They are called *beej* mantra and are very effective for meditation. The mantra helps to awaken the energy stored at the base of the spine. Subtle breath or prana is constantly produced at this centre, and with the help of the mantra its quantity and force can be increased.

Namokaar Gym techniques enable your conscious mind to communicate its desire to be healthier and more relaxed, in a way that the subconscious mind will readily accept. Through these powerful approaches, stress loses its hold, Enhances your Creativity and your Confidence and Personality. Namokaar Mudra, Mantra with creative visualization, positive affirmation, colour, and specialized sound

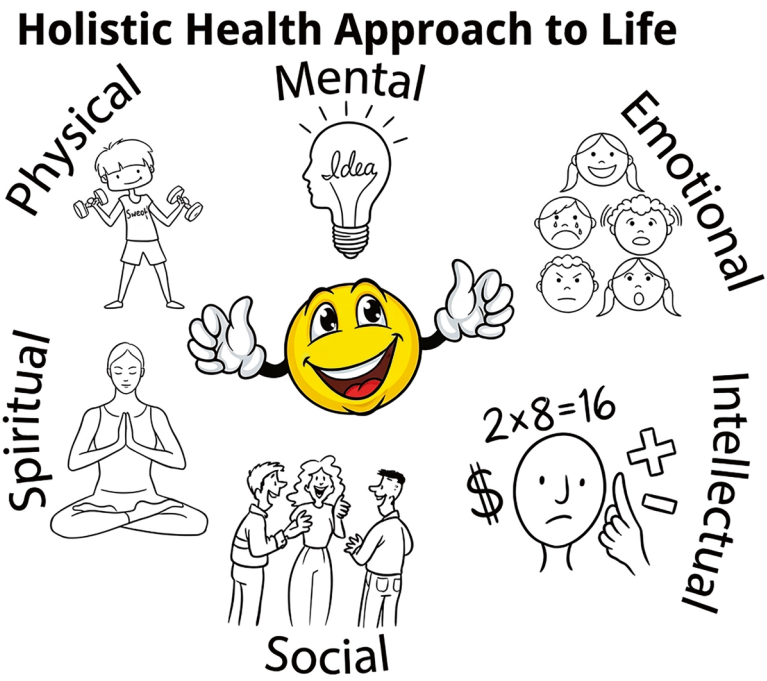


Fig. 6 Namokaar Gym -A Holistic Health Approach to Life. Source: Developed for this paper

leaves a lifelong impact in our life. It makes you Self-Reliant. It redevelopes faith in your own self. It can change behaviour in a very positive and powerful way. Regular practice of Namokaar Gym activities stabilizes your mind so that it helps you to stay focussed and confident about your work. This apart, it increases your leadership skills and your nature becomes reliable that helps you to grow in your business or service/every walk of your life. life. Holistic Health Approach to Life illustrating the integration of physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual dimensions of well-being is shown in Fig. 6.

What I mean to say is when you make a shift from violence in your own thoughts to Peace of mind, you can achieve Success in any walk of your Life.

When we shift from being worried about what others think of us, we are free to focus on what we think of ourselves. With the practice of various Namokaar Gym activities, this shift returns previously wasted energy back to ourselves, allowing us to create our own happiness, enhance confidence, improve self-image, and build trust in ourselves.

This course is full of effective yet easy to follow strategies and principles that will help you transform, day after day, your emotional and mental patterns that are no longer serving you. The best news is that the personal growth you gain by practicing "Namokaar Gym—Atmshakti ki Nayi Lehar"—will also translate to the betterment of other areas of your life.

The beneficial effects might be explained by an increased physical flexibility, by calming and focusing the mind to develop greater awareness and diminish anxiety, reduction of distress, improvement of mood, and so forth. You may therefore experience higher self-competence and self-awareness, which contributes to higher quality of life.

What Research and Studies Say?

Over the last ten years, a growing number of research studies have shown that the practice of yoga can improve strength and flexibility, and this may help control such physiological variables as blood pressure, respiration and heart rate, and metabolic rate to improve overall exercise capacity (Bussing et al. 2012).

The application of yoga as a therapeutic intervention, which has begun early in the twentieth century, takes advantage of the various psycho/physiological benefits of the component practices. The physical exercises (asanas/ mudras) may increase a patient's physical flexibility, coordination, and strength, while the breathing practices and meditation may calm and focus the mind to develop greater awareness and diminish anxiety (Innes et al. 2005), and thus result in higher quality of life. Other beneficial effects might involve a reduction of distress, blood pressure, and improvements in resilience, mood, and metabolic regulation. Many research studies have shown that practice of yoga has a tremendous effect on your physical and mental health.

Depression: We have found many publications and studies that show the effect of yoga on depression. These showed a large variety of diagnoses ranging from "major depression or some other type of diagnosed depression" to "elevated depressive symptoms" benefited. (Kirkwood et al. 2005).

Anxiety: The AHRQ report stated that "yoga was no better than Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction at reducing anxiety in patients with cardiovascular diseases" (Ospina et al. 2007).

Stress: Although not all studies have used adequate and/or consistent instruments to measure stress, they nevertheless indicate that yoga may reduce perceived stress as effective as other active control interventions such as relaxation, cognitive behavioural therapy, or dance.

Also, the AHRQ report stated that "yoga helped reduce stress" (Ospina et al. 2007).

These breathing exercises when practised regularly regulate blood pressure and sugar levels in our body. There are so many papers submitted in this regard (Raub 2002).

Yoga and Physical and Mental Fitness

Research has also shown positive effects of yoga on functional abilities and self-autonomy in older adults. With respect to physical fitness and function, the studies reported moderate effects on gait, balance, body flexibility, body strength, and weight loss (Posadzki et al. 2011). The purpose of the study is to address whether or not individuals' self-esteem and self-confidence will increase during the courses,

and whether or not regular classes may also improve social competence and involvement. Another study has shown positive signs in a special child (who generally has mood swings), who has got mixed up with regular child and started doing Mudras and exercise with them during our 15-day camp.

Posadzki et al. (Uebelacker et al. 2010) included 11 RCTs with variable methodological quality and found that 10 of 11 studies reported significantly greater effects in favour of yoga when compared to "standard care, self care, therapeutic exercises, relaxing yoga, touch and manipulation, or no intervention". A recent meta-analysis on pain intensity/frequency and pain-related disability included five RCTs with single blinding, 7 RCTs without blinding, and 4 non-RCTs (Roland et al. 2011). Reviewed studies included yoga for the treatment of back pain (six studies), rheumatoid arthritis (four studies), headache/migraine (two studies), and other indications (i.e. haemodialysis, irritable bowel syndrome, labour pain, etc.). All of these studies reported positive effects in favour of the yoga interventions.

Discussion

These reviews suggest a number of areas where Namokaar Gym yoga may be beneficial, but more research is required to establish benefits of virtually all of them more definitively. Meanwhile, it is not surprising that physical fitness can be improved by training, using either yoga or conventional exercises. The beneficial effects might be explained by an increased physical flexibility, by calming and focusing the mind to develop greater awareness and diminish anxiety, reduction of distress, improvement of mood, and so forth. Because patients may recognize that they are able to be physically active, even despite persisting pain symptoms, they may therefore experience higher self-competence and self-awareness, which contributes to a better quality of life.

Conceivably, Asanas and Mudras particularly have a positive effect on fitness and physical flexibility with a secondary effect on the mental state, while the breathing practices and relaxation/meditation techniques may result in greater awareness, less stress, and higher well-being and quality of life. When Mantras are added with these yoga techniques, it adds spirituality which gives lifelong results in behavioural skills. However, this remains to be shown in well-performed future studies.

Because patients are engaged in these yoga practices as a self-care behavioural treatment, yoga interventions may well increase self-confidence and self-efficacy. On the other hand, patients with psychological burdens and/or low motivation (i.e. depression, anxiety, fatigue, etc.) may be less willing to participate fully in intensive yoga interventions. Some of these studies found relatively low participation and high dropout rates in some of the analysed studies. Patient compliance may be higher with the social support within group interventions, while private regular practices at home may be more difficult to perform consistently. These factors need to be addressed in further studies.

Clearly, Namokaar Gym intervention programs require the active participation of the individuals (as do all behavioural interventions), and thus adherence may be a crucial point that limits its potentially beneficial effects. It is apparent in

Table 1 Level of action and observed effects of Namokaar Gym interventions

	Specific effects	Unspecific effects
Cognition	Contemplative states; Mindfulness; Self-identity; Self-efficacy; Beliefs; Expectations	Control of attention networks
Emotions	Emotional control/regulation	Quality of life
Physiology	Vagal afferent activity; Heart rate/Respiratory; Relaxation response/Stress reduction	Social contacts
Physical body	Physical flexibility, Fitness/Endurance	Healthy lifestyle

Source: Author

many lifestyle diseases that patients must change attitudes and behaviour to successfully treat these diseases. A positive feature of yoga interventions is that they may in fact be very supportive for the execution and maintenance of such lifestyle changes. Since the experience of well-being from the practices can support regular practice, the changes in mind/body awareness that occur over time with continued yoga practice will in turn support a desire to adopt and maintain healthy behaviours.

This Namokaar Gym therapy may have the potential to be implemented as a safe and beneficial supportive/adjunct treatment that is relatively cost-effective, may be practiced at least in part as a self-care behavioural treatment, provides a life-long behavioural skill, enhances self-efficacy and self-confidence, and is often associated with additional positive side effects (see Table 1). Specific and unspecific effects are often interconnected.

Some Case Studies

1. *A suicidal case*: A 23 year old boy from the United States, a college dropout, became a drug addict. He returned back to India and became suicidal and was not responding to conventional methods of treatment.

In our Namokaar Gym sessions, he discovered that he was in emotional pain that led him to thoughts of suicide. Through our sessions, he realized he is not crazy, or weak, or flawed. He could see other solutions and approached his feelings with more acceptance. He could lead to a stronger connection with his inner self and came out with pain.

2. *Sports*: An athlete seeking to achieve his target in lesser time.

This athlete has shared that, when he is running in routine conditions, external forces like jeering change his state of mind, resulting in doubts and he asks himself—can I keep going? The next moment he used to slacken his running style.

After using Namokaar Gym technique, he reported that he could see his target clearly including the time he had set in his mind to finish his run. Moreover, he found he could achieve his goal before set timings.

3. *A case of a Special Child/MR Child*: Special children always seek extra attention and are not easily accepted by the common children.

With the regular practice of Namokaar gym techniques, this child could realize her inner strength and felt herself courageous, confident, and acceptable by society in many ways. In response, they came out with "I can. U can and V can".

Such children are the result of growth of child in mother's womb. For mother and childcare, this project of ours is under consideration with ministry of health, GOI

4. *A case of unexplained infertility*: Lady experienced frustration, jealousy, guilt, and anger most of the time and her marriage seemed to be heading towards divorce. She was going through severe depression.

With Namokaar gym approaches, we could address her fertility issues. It could optimize her natural fertility. It also complemented medical procedures what she was undergoing.

Actually, when you think "fertile", you are reinforcing a positive message to your very literal subconscious. When you say "trying" to your subconscious, the word "trying" means you don't have to do it, or you are not capable. Like a little kid "trying to tie her shoes." They are not really expected to succeed. "Trying to conceive or get pregnant" can send a message to a women's subconscious that she is not able to or does not expect to get pregnant. Our objective here was to encourage her to change her language to a more positive term like "I have decided to become pregnant" or "I am embracing a pregnancy." She could become pregnant once the subconscious fears melt away.

5. *Magical improvement in haemoglobin*: His doctor has said that his body is not producing enough blood and we need to consult a haematologist and referred case for AIIMS. We have these HB cases with chronic patients too. By awakening his willpower, he took the charge of his life.

Our research on this continued as the initial effect was that, for two days, he was not on any medication and even his body, which had not been accepting water, saw changes happening in body after healing that his haemoglobin rose from 4.7 to around 6.0. Is it the case that we were witnessing stem cell development in his body with this therapy?

6. *Case of grief and depression* achieves self-reliance by acceptance.

Original words by client: "We cannot take pictures of our soul; otherwise I would have shown you before and after pictures of my soul. There are many things that changed after attending Namokaar Gym. Thinking positively and positive things started coming my way. Within one month I got to know the real cause of my problem. Knowledge and stability increased, and my anger decreased. I found I had a quality which I never knew existed in me, that is leadership." Her mother reported a different kind of shining on her face.

We have many such cases due to covid as well. In these, we could save people by helping them with small, wonderful techniques to increase oxygen level in their body, relieving body pain, fast recovery, and much more. In our mass healing sessions, we

can experience on-the-spot recovery of patients and positive stress busting results in corporates. Youth and elderly people came out free from fear and uncertainty, etc.

Social and Environmental Impact

Our programs are designed keeping in mind a healthy nation and a drive for a peaceful and non-violent world. Our programs contribute to healthcare through a drug-free complementary healing approach, socio-economic uplift, peacebuilding, valuable education, promotion of entrepreneur role models, enabling communities to become economically viable, the ability to work out possibilities for preserving our environment, keeping it pollution free and green; and to facilitate neglected members in the locality, work for drug-free treatment, promote tolerance among people of different ethnic, social and cultural backgrounds, patriotism and highlighting its benefits, research programs, sustainable development, conflict resolution and make the world a better place to live is an extremely important part of all we do.

By doing Namokaar Gym yoga (Box 1 below) therapy regularly, one retains a calm mind and soul and sees the world as a window for opportunities. Thus, Namokaar Gym inculcates values of peace, brotherhood, and a positive outlook on life.

World Peace can be achieved if the Power of love replaces the love of Power.
I believe: I can do it. U can do it and We can do it.
Life is a book and you are the author. It is up to you what you want to write on it.

Box 1 ***Experience Namokaar Gym yoga therapy***

Now, I would like you to experience an exercise:

Focus on your problem in your body/mind (including the pain, anger, or stuck with any problem towards your goal).

Get in touch with your thoughts and emotions associated with that complaint/ problem.

Now give this complaint a number, 0–10, depending upon the intensity. 0 means no pain, 10 is max.

Just align your mind body and soul. (Namokaar Mudra helps to do that.) Ask for all blessings—peace, and the courage to get out of any kind of fear.

Repeat following in your mind by tapping the meridian points:

Even though I know I am stressed, I am stuck but I want to heal that personality that emotion within me.
I am creative person, I know my potential my strength, I can create my highest realities, and I choose to be the highest version of myself.
I am ready to have that support; I am ready to receive that support.
If I have hurt anybody by any means I seek forgiveness from the bottom of my heart, I forgive everybody who have hurt me by any means.

Your higher self is waiting for you. Just Embrace your higher self. Say thanks to *panch parmesthi.* Thanks to every creature living or non-living for helping me by any ways.

Source: Author.

Lastly, I can only say that anyone can be a peacebuilder.

It could be women in a market determined to stop violence by holding meetings to resolve arguments.
It could be local businessmen raising money to buy back weapons, so that there are fewer arms in the community.
It could be a group of young people setting up a radio station to enable people to talk about how different communities could successfully live together.
It could be a former military commander using his influence to turn people away from violence, and towards peace.
It could be a teacher developing a curriculum for peace.
It could be an imam and a priest working together to help communities of different religions understand each other better.

Conclusion: "What is conditioned can be deconditioned. Men can change"

"***Violence begins with ignorance and ends with understanding.***"

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Human Rights and Democratic Practice

Human rights and democracy are usually narrated as a Western heritage—and, indeed, global political institutions post-1949 are shaped by those ideas and institutions, even though South Asian and fifth-century BCE Buddhist institutions introduced rights and governance notions that paralleled and in some ways exceeded Athenian democracy. Tanzanian founding father Julius Nyerere once remarked, "It is no use telling an Anglo-Saxon that when a village of a hundred people have sat and talked together until they agreed where a well should be dug they have practised democracy." (Julius K. Nyerere, "One-Party Government," *Transition*, no. 2 (1961): 9–11, p. 11.)

In this section, we explore how those concepts can be not only applauded but also enriched by asking what else emerges when African social thought and moral vocabularies are added to the narrative. Its chapters explore the concrete problem of press freedom as well as a reflection on political participation as a pathway to peace rather than merely an instrument of representation. Then, probing the tensions between restorative justice and postcolonial systems of justice, we look at the widespread diffusion of *Ubuntu* ethics and problems with its implementation in Rwanda's *gacaca* system. We also encounter efforts to engage education and governance as democratic instruments: education as a contested vehicle of democracy promotion, and a human-rights-based approach to nutrition-sensitive governance in the Western Indian Ocean. Together, these chapters expand human rights and democracy beyond abstract ideals and enrich our understanding of how they might address current global crises.

Promoting Peace Through Political Participation: A Focus on Nigeria



Frederick Obananya

Abstract While modern representative democracy evolved from direct participation models of classical antiquity, contemporary large-scale states struggle to maintain robust citizen engagement. Examining Nigeria's Fourth Republic (culminating in a record-low 26.72% voter turnout in the 2023 presidential election), this study links declining voter turnout to electoral fraud, structural frustration, and security anxieties, while highlighting a post-2019, youth-led paradigm shift towards democratic engagement driven by the EndSARS political awakening. This chapter concludes that sustainable stability requires state actors to operate within constitutional frameworks rather than a monstrous misconception of state supremacy, shifting power towards an awakened electorate to avert institutional self-destruction.

1 Introduction

Political participation refers to the voluntary activities through which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly take part in the formation of public policies (Longley 2021). The concept of political participation implies that the power to select rulers and to shape policies belong to the people. "In a democratic dispensation, the governance of a country is seen as the collective responsibility of all citizens" (Nomor et al. 2018). Citizens' political participation is an external manifestation of a healthy democracy. Just as the political culture of a place affects the political behaviour of individuals and groups within a political process, so also does the practice of democracy (Table 1).

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Table 1 Elections in Nigeria 1923–2019

Elections	Years	No. of elections
Presidential	1979 1983 1993 1991 2003 2007 2011 2015 2019	9
Governorship Elections	1979 1983 1993 1999 2003 2007 2011 2015 2019	9
Senate Elections	1979 1983 1992 1998 1999 2003 2007 2011 2015 2019	10
House of Representatives Elections	1964 1979 1983 1992 1998 1999 2003 2007 2011 2015 2019	11
Regional/State House of Assembly Elections	1923 1928 1933 1938 1943 1947 1951 1953 1954 1956/57 1959 1960/61 1964	13
Local Elections	1950 1953	2
Referendums	1959 1961	2
Total	1923–2019	56

Source: Olubusoye et al. (2020) "Enhancing Political Participation in Nigeria: A Report of a Study by the University of Ibadan Laboratory for Interdisciplinary Statistical Analysis [UI-LISA] in collaboration with Independent National Electoral Commission, The Electoral Institute (INEC-TEI)"

2 Nigeria as a Case Study

Democratic elections in Nigeria began with the 1923 legislative polls during the colonial protectorate era. Over the years, the country's voting history has spanned various governance levels: *house elections* continued up to 2019; *local elections* in1950 and 1953; *regional elections* took place between 1951–1961. More recently, between 1979 and 2019, the electoral focus shifted to presidential, senate, and both state and federal legislative representative elections (Olubusoye et al. 2020, pp. 29–30) (Fig. 1).

From the graphical representation above, it is clear that there has been a decline in voter turnout for the most recent Nigerian presidential elections. Except for 2003, voter turnout for most presidential elections after the emergence of the Fourth Republic has not been encouraging. For a deeper analysis, this paper shall focus on Nigerian presidential elections that have taken place after the emergence of the Fourth Republic (from 1999–2019).

After Nigeria's independence in 1960, with the subsequent interventions of the military in Nigeria's political history, Nigeria returned to democratic governance in 1999. This inaugurated the Fourth Republic.

Ordinarily, it would be expected that democratic rule would create an environment for political awareness, thereby creating a system in which the ruler and the ruled would serve as a check on one another. But an analysis of the electoral trends in the country since 1999 shows that, except for 2003 voter turnout, there has been a steady decline in political participation in Nigeria after the emergence of the fourth Republic (Adekoya 2019; Falade 2014). The decreasing trend in voter turnout, which may be viewed as apathy since the return to civil democratic rule in Nigeria, is illustrated in the bar chart below (Fig. 2).

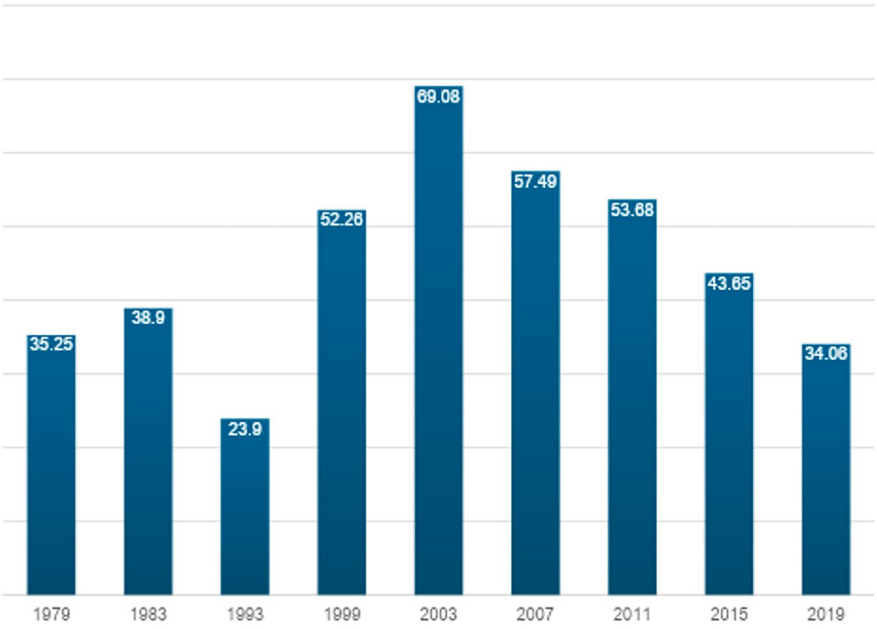


Fig. 1 Presidential Election Voter turnout in Nigeria (1979–2019). Source: IDEA (https://www.idea.int/data-tools/question-countries-view/522/231/ctr) & Olubusoye et al. (2020) "Enhancing Political Participation in Nigeria: A Report of a Study by the University of Ibadan Laboratory for Interdisciplinary Statistical Analysis [UI-LISA] in collaboration with Independent National Electoral Commission, The Electoral Institute (INEC-TEI)"

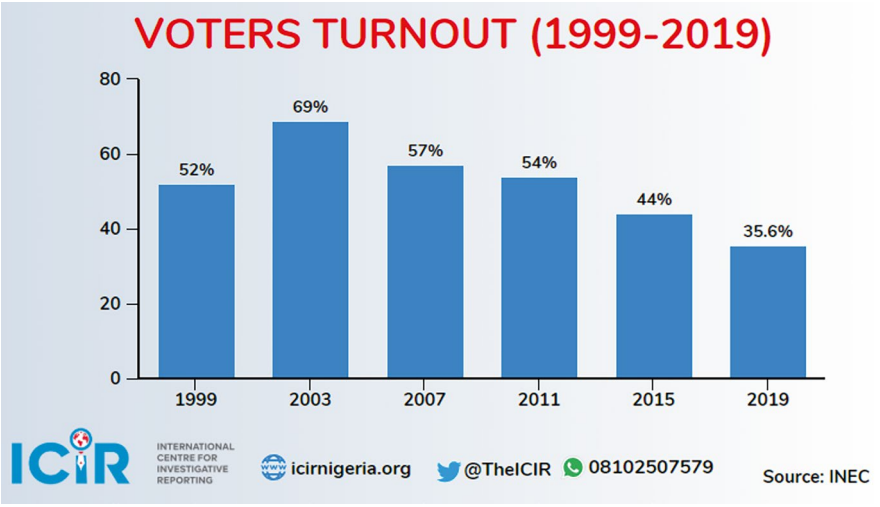


Fig. 2 Voter turnout. Source: International Center for Investigative Reporting (ICIR)

3 An Analysis of the Trend of Electoral Participation/Apathy in Nigeria (1999–2019)

In comparison to the 1999 experience, 2003 voter turnout increased by 10%. Probably, the conviction that the military has truly relinquished power and that the state has become democratic has encouraged participation in 2003. In 2007, voter turnout reduced by 12% and further by 5.1% in 2011 (Agu 2015). In 2011, it further slipped by 5.1% as a result of the fact that the electorates had lost confidence in the electoral process because they thought the trend would continue. Agu explained that the abuse of the power of incumbency, the imposition of candidates, and the "do or die affair" syndrome injected into Nigerian politics by the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) gravely contributed to the continuous decline of voter turnout (Agu 2015).

About the 2015 elections, Nwankwo and Okafor (2017) in their study titled: Voting in Nigeria: Determinants of Turnout in the 2015 Presidential Election, posited that political trust and homeownership had a significant impact on participation more than other factors. However, they did not underestimate the influence socio-economic variables could have on voter turnout, especially how they could sway the effect of political trust on individuals' decision to turnout.

The worst happened in the 2019 elections. Nigeria recorded the lowest voter turnout since the emergence of the Fourth Republic. According to a study done by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA 2022), it was noted that among 17 countries in West Africa, Nigeria had the poorest voter turnout for the most recent presidential elections. The data of voter turnout for the 17 Western African countries are thus represented (Fig. 3):

With the incidence of the 2019 poor voter turnout, in 2020, the University of Ibadan Laboratory for Interdisciplinary Statistical Analysis [UI-LISA], in collaboration with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and the Electoral Institute (INEC-TEI) embarked on a study titled "Enhancing Political Participation in Nigeria". In their analysis of Nigeria election data 1959–2019, they put forward the following conclusions:

- They have accepted the fact that there has been a general decline in voter participation in elections over the years, particularly since 2003.
- They noted 2011 and 2019 for the slight increase obtained over the respective previous years in terms of the absolute and relative size of registered voters.
- The cause for the increase in 2011 registered voters was pinned down to the electoral reform (particularly the introduction of biometric voter's) and in 2019 to voter education and mobilization by political parties, civil society groups, INEC, and other relevant stakeholders.
- They have reported that the official figures for the 2003 and 2007 elections are problematic because of the high levels of electoral fraud.

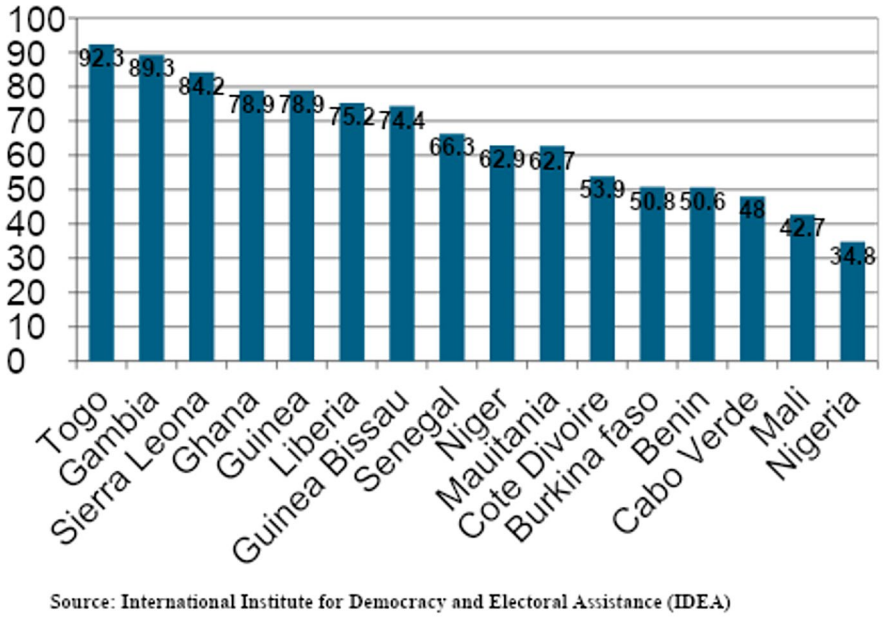


Fig. 3 Presidential voter turnout for 17 countries in Western Africa

- The low figure for 2015 seemed quite accurate and devoid of large-scale criticism, but voters simply did not come out. The problem was more of quantity rather than quality.
- Since 1999, voter registration has never reached 50% of the country's total population. This meant that less than half of the population that registered to vote in elections decided the leadership that emerged.
- The average percentage of registered voters compared to the country's population for the past twenty years is 43.7%.
- The highest number of registered voters as a percentage of the total population was recorded in 1999 and the lowest was in 2015 (Olubusoye et al. 2020, pp. 29–30).

Put simply, an empirical review of presidential elections in Nigeria shows that in recent times, there has been a decline in voter turnout, culminating in a record low of 26.72% in the 2023 election, according to INEC. This decline in voter turnout stems from a public loss of confidence in electoral process (recruitment process) given electoral rigging, electoral violence, abuse of incumbency power, imposition of candidates, among others.

4 Politicians and Their Tactics

As the Presidential elections approach, members of different political parties traditionally start declaring interest in running for the office of the presidency. Political patronage and inducements are offered, humanitarian services rendered, televised acts of kindness and charity reported, and the contentious politics of zoning alongside ethno-religious division surface strongly.

This debate over zoning manifests in deeply polarized viewpoints across the political landscape. On the one hand, some propose that the presidency should be zoned to the Southern part of the country. Within this perspective, two distinct camps emerge: those who advocate for the South regardless of whether it is the East or the West, and those who believe it is specifically the turn of the South-East. On the other hand, others argue that there should be no zoning, maintaining that every Nigerian should be free to contest. Beyond these mainstream positions, there seems to be a third group: a fraction of a separatist group in the South-East that advocates that election should not be held at all. This dynamic was heavily apparent during the 2023 elections, echoing patterns observed in previous regional cycles. A similar event took place in the gubernatorial November election in Anambra state where rumours had it that the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) had threatened voters and called for an election boycott. But the group later clarified its stance, noting in a statement signed by its Director of Media and Publicity, Emma Powerful, that "IPOB did not call for an election boycott, disassociating the group from the process" (Banjo 2021). However, this is not the first time that IPOB is being associated with an order for an election. It happened in the 2017 Anambra gubernatorial election and it affected voter turnout (African News 2017).

5 How Would Political Leadership Lead to the Promotion of Peace?

Records show that youths are often used to disrupt elections. Bratton M (2008) in his study titled "Vote buying and violence in Nigerian election campaigns" observes according to survey-based estimates that there occurs a relationship between poverty/unemployment and electoral violence in Nigeria. He observes that *"fewer than one out of five Nigerians is personally exposed to vote buying and fewer than one in ten experiences threats of electoral violence. But when, as commonly happens, campaign irregularities are targeted at the rural poor, effects are concentrated. These effects are as follows: violence reduces turnout; and vote buying enhances partisan loyalty"*. Most often the youths are used to perpetuate these crimes. Hence, if youths become politically awakened, it would be a step towards realizing peace during elections.

6 Political Awakening of the Youths

The "dawn of political participation" in Africa was reignited in 2019. Nearly sixty years after the majority of African nations gained independence, citizens were still demanding accountability of their leaders. This persistent governance gap triggered widespread protests across multiple African states. *Instances of these, in 2019 and 2020, include:*

- the anti-rape protests in Liberia, protests against the killing of school children in Cameroon, protests against police brutality in Nairobi,
- the #EndSARS protest in Nigeria against police brutality and corruption,
- #ShutItAllDown protest in Namibia against sexual gender-based violence,
- #ZimbabweanLivesMatter protest in Zimbabwe against human rights abuses and corruption,
- #CongoIsBleeding protest by Congolese women against unprosecuted sexual assault crimes, conflict and war crimes in the eastern region of Congo, etc.

These protests were indicative that something was about to happen in Africa, but our leaders remained silent—and their silence was not golden. With regard to the EndSARS protest in Nigeria, reports indicated that instead of a purposeful dialogue, the government used hard power on the protesters. On October 20, 2020, the military opened fire with live ammunitions at peaceful protesters at lekki and Alausa as they waved the Nigerian flags (Obananya 2020a). The EndSARS protest opened the eyes of many Nigerian youths to the fact that our problem was not based on ethno-religious lines but rather on a monstrous misconception of the state (Obananya 2020b). A state that allocates to itself, in the words of Anthony Akinwale (2017), "ubiquity, omniscience and omnipotence"; consequently, even when citizens submit themselves to such a rule, it amounts to self-inflicted tyranny.

Just as electoral reforms and voter education have led to surge in voter registration in 2011 and 2015, respectively, the new electoral reform and the EndSARS protest with its resultant political awakening similarly fueled an increase in voter registration for the 2023 Nigerian elections (Figs. 4 and 5).

INEC records that there are more number of youths in 2022 voter registration:

Youths (18–34 yrs) = 8,784,677.
Middle age (35–49 yrs) = 2,430,709.
Elderly (50–69 yrs) = 956,017.
Old (70 yrs. and above) = 127,541.

Hence, the youths, often used as agents for electoral violence and electoral rigging, having become politically awakened may not be available to be used (Fig. 6).



Fig. 4 Completed registration. Source: INEC

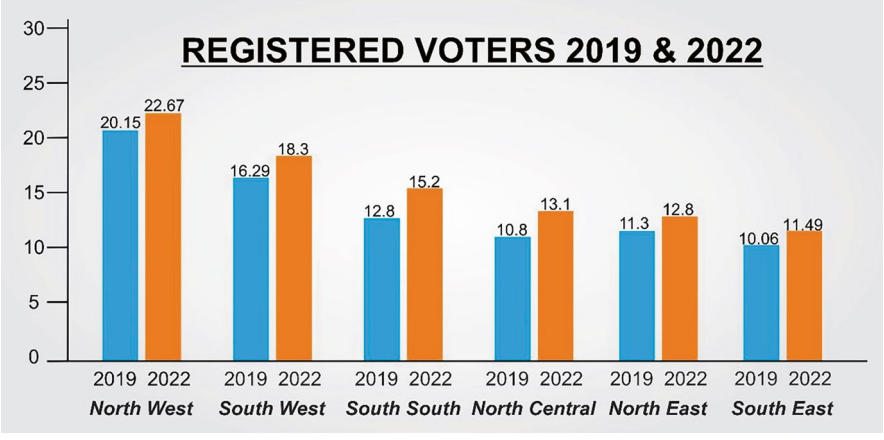


Fig. 5 Registered voters. Source: INEC

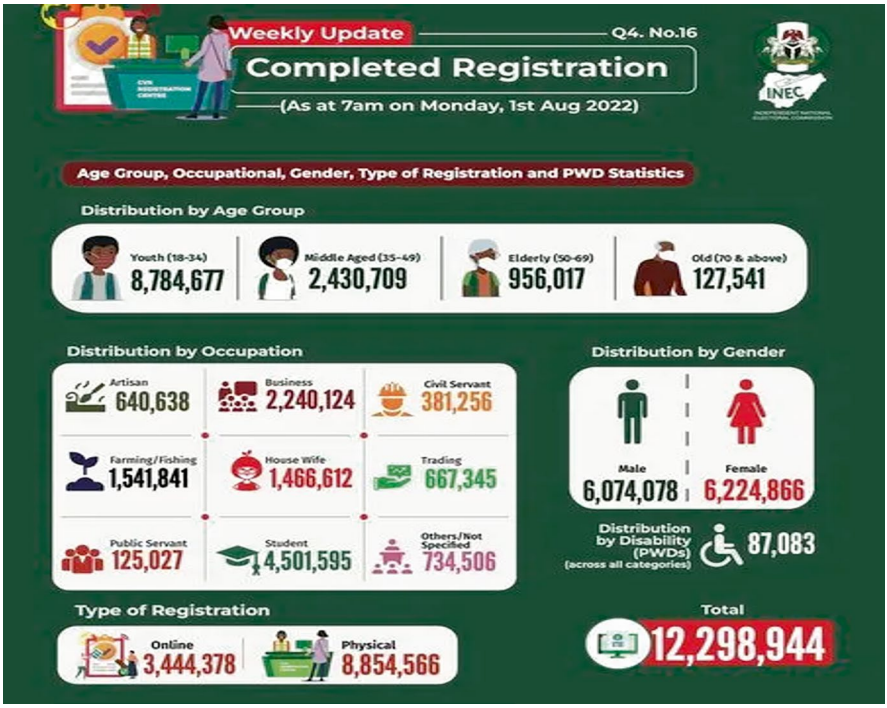


Fig. 6 Completed registration. Source: INEC

7 Conclusion

The political awakening of Nigerian citizens towards the formation of a nation undivided along ethno-religious lines represents the dawn of a healthy, resilient democracy. However, this collective awakening possesses a dual capacity that can make or mar the state. On the one hand, it will lead to the promotion of peace if the state and its functionaries become truly accountable, thereby returning sovereign power to the people. On the other hand, if the state apparatus continues to operate on a monstrous misconception of its role, arrogantly arrogating "ubiquity, omnipotence and omniscience" to itself, its actors must take a cue from the historical collapse of past tyrannical systems. In their desperate greed for absolute control and immortality, such regimes inevitably inject a virus of self-destruction into their own structures, ultimately becoming captives of the very disenfranchised masses they created for their own preservation.

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India: The (Dysfunctional) State of Human Rights



Piotr Balcerowicz

Abstract India has receded in its performance as regards the respect for human rights and has been steering towards an authocracy in recent years. The paper analysis in detail how political changes in the last few decades, especially since 2014, have affected the state of human rights in India and India's democratic institutions. The negative developments are attributable to the ideology of Hindutva ('Hinduness'), or deeply politicized Hinduism, that forms the cornerstone of policies of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and the prime minister Narendra Modi. The paper aruges that rampant violations of human rights in India are *systemic* and *systematic* in nature, embedded in the ideological-political setup of the state, which helps explain why India's political system should be regarded as a complex mix of kleptocracy, plutocracy and oligarchy, making it the largest *pseudo-democracy* in the world – or to put it straightforwardly, *soft authoritarianism* – in the world.

1 Introduction

Imagine none of the three top political posts in Hindu-majority India, where Hindus account for 79.8%, were held by a Hindu. For instance, think of Israel with its president being a Muslim, its prime minister being a Druze and the speaker of the Knesset being a Christian Arab. In India such a scenario does not have to be fiction. Or, at least, it did not. It does not have to be fiction. Once, India did concurrently have a Sikh (Sikhs constitute 14.2%) as its Prime Minister (Manmohan Singh), a Muslim (Muslims make up 14.2%) from Tamil Nadu as its President (Abdul Kalam) and an atheist-cum-communist (atheists, agnostics etc. comprise 0.25%) as the Speaker of

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the Lok Sabha, or the Upper House (Somnath Chatterjee).[1] This symbolically underscored an image of India, projected over decades, as a multi-religious, multi-ethnic, tolerant and 'secular' state, even though it has never been truly secular in spirit, rather 'religion-neutral' in terms of legal framework and approach to the system of values represented in public policies.

Within two decades, India has reached a point of radical departure from the previously declared democratic values, where such an emblematic set-up of highest posts of the state is hardly imaginable in the increasingly saffronised environment of political majoritarianism that has proved oppressive to non-Hindu minorities, turning India into an autocratic state ruled by political-military-business kleptocracy, increasingly steering towards some form of genocide, or elimination of some religious minorities, already inscribed in political slogans of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (Bhāratīya Janatā Pārṭī, BJP) and its related political organisations. This alarming development is ultimately detrimental to the interests, well-being and integrity of all, inasmuch as the fact of the matter is that citizens, with their complex and axiologically multi-layered identities, as individuals or as members of various small communities are by default minorities in very different ways, conforming to a particular system of particular values they profess, and each and every individual or group, even though formally being a member of a majority with respect to some set of values, may easily fall victim to such majoritarian policies, even being classifiable as a Hindu, to some other set of values (Balcerowicz 2011 pp. 10–15).

India boasts to be the largest democracy in the world. But is it? Holding regular elections is not a sufficient indicator of democracy. The totalitarian or autocratic regimes of the former Warsaw Pact, that is, the Soviet Union and its satellites, staged election festivities at regular intervals, which did not turn them into genuine democracies. Without proper representation and respect for the basic rights of citizens, there cannot represent any true democracy: at best they are a contorted semblance that can oxymoronically be termed 'illiberal democracy' or 'defective democracy'. But defective, that is, polluted water is for all practical reasons, not potable water any more.

India can and should no longer be recognised as a true democracy. The deteriorating condition of democracy is well reflected in India's (and Pakistan's, for comparison) performance in the *Democracy Index* (www.eiu.com) and *Freedom in the World* ranking (https://freedomhouse.org) between 2006 and 2021. India, now classified as 'flawed democracy', is seen to be gradually closing the gap with Pakistan, termed 'hybrid regime', and is now placed in the same category of 'partly free' (see Tables 1 and 2).

India's gradual backslide towards autocratic regime is well reflected, among other numerous reports, in the *Democracy Report 2022: Autocratization Changing Nature?* (V-Dem 2022: 23), which includes India among the world's top ten

[1] Other minorities according to the 2011 census comprise: Christians 2.3%, Buddhists 0.7%, followers of tribal religions 0.5% and Jains 0.4% of the population. No recent data are available: the next census was scheduled for 2021, but for the first time since 1881, census operations in Narendra Modi's India have been withheld indefinitely, perhaps in 2024.

Table 1 India's and Pakistan's performance in the *Democracy Index* between 2006 and 2021 (scale from lowest 0 to highest 10)

		2006	2007	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
India	Total score	7.68	7.68	7.80	7.28	7.30	7.52	7.69	7.92	7.74	7.81	7.23	7.23	6.90	6.61	6.91
India	DI rank	35	35	35	40	39	38	33	27	35	32	42	41	51	53	46[a]
Pakistan	Total score	3.92	3.92	4.46	4.55	4.55	4.57	4.64	4.64	4.40	4.33	4.26	4.17	4.25	4.31	4.31
Pakistan	DI rank	113	113	108	104	105	108	107	108	112	111	110	112	108	105	104

Source: www.eiu.com

[a]This raise is only apparent and should not be viewed as an improvement, see: *Democracy Index 2021*, p. 10: 'Caution is also merited for a higher ranked country, India, whose score improved by 0.30: this follows a cumulative 1.20 decline between 2016 and 2020, reflecting a serious deterioration in the quality of democracy under leader Narendra Modi, whose Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has presided over increased intolerance and sectarianism towards Muslims and other religious minorities.'

Table 2 India's and Pakistan's performance in *Freedom in the World* (scale from 0/least free to 100/most free) ranking between 2006 and 2022 (aggregate score)

	2006	2007	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
India	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	77	77	77	77	75/free	71/free	67/partly free	67/partly free
Indian Kashmir											50/partly free	49/partly free	49/partly free	28/ not free	27/ not free	27/ not free
Pakistan	Not free	Not free	Not free	Partly free	Partly free	Partly free	Partly free	Partly free	41	43	43	43	39/partly free	38/partly free	37/partly free	37/partly free
Pakistan Kashmir											28/not free	28/not free	28/not free	28/not free	28/not free	29/not free

Source: https://freedomhouse.org

'autocratizers' driven by anti-pluralist parties, and shows the dramatic regress within two decades of the BJP's grip of power. In V-Dem's Liberal Democracy Index (LDI), India oscillated between 0.53 and 0.61 after 1978, when the Black Days of the post-1975 emergency period, that is, a coup staged by Indira Gandhi, were over till 2014 when the Indian National Congress (INC) and its allies lost their power. Thereafter India plummeted to 0.32 under the autocratic rule of the BJP, the lowest since its independence in 1947 (except for Indira Gandhi's emergency). Unlike Indira Gandhi's Black Days, however, which were relatively short lived and no serious structural changes of authoritarian character that would radically transform the ideological underpinnings were introduced into the state architecture, the present BJP era has been accompanied by a wide ranging reforms that drastically permeate all crucial state institutions with Hindu-supermacist ideology, thereby securing their long-lasting effect and preventing a political reversal. What such a retrogression of basic freedoms, tolerant political culture and standards of public discourse is symptomatic of is the state of human rights which should, in any country, be considered as the litmus test for assessing the actual health of its democracy, the competence of its administration and institutions and its non-oppressive nature. And India is not an exception.

It should come as no surprise that India has increasingly been criticised for its performance with respect to human rights on different occasions and various levels by human rights activists, NGOs and the international community. The latest such opportunity was presented at during the November 2022 evaluation of India's human rights record at the Fourth Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the UN Human Rights Council session in Geneva, a procedure created in order to examine advancements achieved by all 193 UN Member States in consonance with their legal commitments under international law,[2] India's representatives had to face a extensive list of well-justified serious criticisms which included, among others: religious intolerance, violent attacks, discrimination and hate speech against minorities, primarily against Muslims and Christians; various forms of violence, discrimination against and inequality of women; caste-based abuse (including sexual abuse) and humiliation, torture, forced bribery, illegal arrests, exclusion, poverty, forced labour (slavery) and child labour; rampant, regular and wide-ranging misuse (against human rights defenders, religious minorities and journalists), the *ultra vires* nature and illegitimacy of a wide spectrum of preventive and 'counter-terrorism' laws and similar legislation (see below); prolonged and unwarranted detentions of human rights activists and ordinary citizens; curbs on freedom of expression and opinion; anti-conversion laws that infringe on the constitutionally-guaranteed freedom of religion and belief; state regulations that may lead to statelessness, deprivation or denial of nationality, arbitrary detentions or expulsions for Indian citizens; unconstitutional dismantling of the State of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) and its autonomy, etc.[3] International criticism focused on the fate of Jammu & Kashmir and its

[2] See: UPR4 India, UPR-Info India, AJ 2022-11-11, GICJ 2022.

[3] See UNHRC (2022), and a brief overview in: Mitra (2022).

population, which 'remains a blind side in the universal periodic review', where children are detained by Indian security forces and civilians, including children, are shot at and blinded with pellet guns by Indian forces. This is accompanied by a broad spectrum of violations of civil and citizen rights, including tightening restrictions on civil society and sophisticated measures that result in a stranglehold on human/civil rights organisations.

The above list of human rights abuses perpetrated by India, its administration and its apparatus of state violence can easily be extended, in particular in such regions as the 'Red Corridor' (see below) cutting across India from north to south as well as in the eastern states of Assam, Manipur and Nagaland and in the north-western Jammu & Kashmir. In the latter case, two extensive reports prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the *Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir* (OHCHR 2018a, b) and its *Update* (OHCHR 2019), as well as other numerous reports, both international and local, read like a well-researched list of accusations.[4] As noted elsewhere,[5] Jammu & Kashmir continues to be the most militarised region of the world, with the ratio of armed personnel per civilians as staggeringly high as 1:16 after August 2019, which negatively affects the lives and living conditions of all civilian population. The situation resembles that of the occupation of a foreign territory and aliens rather than administering India's own territory and Indian citizens. This can find no justification in a democratic state. Jammu & Kashmir is literally *locus classicus* where India's state apparatus of violence practises on a large scale the so-called *four-pack*[6] of enforced disappearances, illegal detentions, torture and extra-judicial killings (see below). Predictably, it is therefore the place where, as it is estimated, more than 70,000 Kashmiris have been killed since 1989, more than 6000 unmarked mass graves of victims of Indian forces have been uncovered, and more than 8000 persons have 'disappeared', i.e. have been kidnapped and killed by Indian forces.[7]

Unsurprisingly, Indian-administered Jammu & Kashmir, classified as 'not free' in *Freedom in the World* (see Table 2), with its legal status still undetermined despite Indian claims to the contrary,[8] blatantly stands out as a particularly blood-stained zone within all the territories of (controlled by) India, and with its aggregate score ranks even lower than Pakistani-administered part of the former Princely State (see Table 2). The sheer existence of such a region in which most freedoms of citizens are largely curtailed and the scale of violence renders India genuinely undemocratic.

[4] These include reports prepared by Institute of Kashmir Studies, Srinagar (1992–1999), International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Amnesty International (now proscribed in India), Asia Watch / Human Rights Watch, Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) and the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP) as well as IR 2019. For an overview see: Balcerowicz and Kuszewska (2022b: 47–55).

[5] Balcerowicz and Kuszewska (2022a: 4 and 2022b: 130).

[6] The term has been coined in Balcerowicz and Kuszewska (2022b: 135–136, 154–157).

[7] See: IPTK (2009: 10), JKCCS (2012: 10), IR (2019: 15), Balcerowicz and Kuszewska (2022b: 53).

[8] Balcerowicz and Kuszewska (2022c: 85–136).

Recommendations made during the above-mentioned 2022 UPR process highlighted a wide range of human rights issues in India and summarised extensive criticism of India for not complying with its international human rights obligations. India has consistently been urged to ratify two pending conventions (see below): the Convention Against Torture and the International Convention on Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, as well as to access (sign and ratify) a number of other important international laws in order to provide for a legal framework to protect its citizens from various forms of abuse, such as the Second Optional Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (the abolishment of the death penalty), or both the Conventions on Statelessness of 1954 and 1961. The latter two became even more urgent since Modi's government introduced the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in 2019, which enjoys massive support, and which directly legitimises discrimination on religious grounds by rendering some of its (i.e. Muslim) citizens stateless and by excluding all Muslim refugees from India's neighbouring countries who arrived to India prior to 31 December 2014 from eligibility to Indian citizenship (unlike all other religious groups), a step that is irreconcilable with the Indian Constitution, international standards and human rights laws. In 2022, for the third consecutive year, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) recommended the US State Department to blacklist India, alongside China, Russia and Iran, for its abuses of religious freedom. India has regularly been criticised from all corners for abandoning – both in legislation and actual actions – its secular principles, disregarding its multi-religious and multicultural nature, turning into a religious Hindu State step by step, for condoning or even complicity in violence perpetrated against religious minorities and other marginalised groups, for restraining the freedom of religion and belief, and for discrimination and violence based on gender. Shockingly, anti-conversion laws of India (also support on massive scale) make a change of religion or inter-religious marriage almost impossible. Such a critical list of anti-democratic and anti-human rights laws and practices observed in India is getting longer year by year, instead of improvements, as one would expect from a self-styled 'largest democracy in the world'.

It would be all to naive too naive to try to explain away the scale of human rights violations in India, their nature and causal background by attributing their source to, say, psychological factors, individual agency or mere lack of professionalism on the part of individual perpetrators, such as personal cruelty, savagery of a few individuals driven by their own emotions, or perhaps unfortunate accidents at work while pursuing one's duties, inattention, negligence, inadequate education or ignorance of the law. As in all other cases worldwide, human rights abuses are primarily attributable to structural causes within and policies of the state that deliberately encourage or sanction them, and the actual perpetrators are extensions of the system. Also in the case of India, the violations of human rights are *systemic* and *systemzatic*, embedded in the ideological-political setup of the state, which helps explain why India's political system should be regarded as a complex mix of kleptocracy, plutocracy and oligarchy, making it the largest *pseudo-democracy* in the world—or to put it straightforwardly, *soft authoritarianism*—in the world. By *systemic*, I mean that

the actual (strongly ideologised) structure of power, the non-representative architecture of legislation, a particular setup of administration and governance dependent on complex central (oligarchy-like) authority interested in preserving its powers as well as (chauvinistic) ideological ramifications of justifying force that validate particular oppressive policies towards selected minorities, all of which allows for, fosters and even encourages violations of human rights, which are essentially ingrained in the system. *Systematic* violation of human rights in India means that, first, this is not an incidental phenomenon occurring inadvertently, but rather it is driven by a centralised system of power with its long-term objectives in an organised, regular and deliberate manner; second, this is not a recent incident but such a wide range of basic rights have been targeted by the State and its apparatus of violence, either directly or indirectly, over decades.

Given the above-mentioned legal ramifications—which are deliberately ill-defined and fashioned to help the political stakeholders retain their grip on power and succeed in their objectives and which allow for systemic and systematic violations of human rights creating legal 'black holes' in which the direct (actual agents) and indirect (political principals) perpetrators may act with impunity and remain beyond accountability—it is not surprising that, out of eighteen International Human Rights Treaties, which form the backbone of international human rights law, India has ratified (or become the State party to) only eight of them, which is less than half. Even Pakistan (below for comparison) has done slightly better[9]: —see Table 3.

India's ratification has been pending indefinitely for years in the case of two vital conventions: the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (signed 1997), already accessed by Pakistan (India is among just four countries that have signed the treaty but have not ratified it yet), and the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance (signed 2007), whereas the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families has been completely ignored (i.e. not even signed) by India. Unfortunately, neither India nor Pakistan has bothered to access the Second Optional Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aimed at abolishing the death penalty.

To defer the ratification and entry into force of the first two above-mentioned conventions carries a range of direct consequences for innumerable citizens of India in all regions, in particular, in those considered 'troublesome' by the central government, such as the eastern states (Assam etc.), Jammu & Kashmir and the so-called Red Corridor—with noticeable presence of the Naxalites (Maoists), who term it 'the Compact Revolutionary Zone' and enjoy popular support there—within the heartland of India that cuts through Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, the Daṇḍakāraṇya, the region already known in the *Mahābhārata* that comprises Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, further south to Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, down to Karnataka. These are also the areas where the

[9] See: OHCHR 18, UNTC 2019.

Table 3 On conventions

International HR treaty, entry into force	Ratified/accessed on	
	India	Pakistan
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1969)	1968	1966
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976)	1979	2010
Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty	*None*	*None*
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976)	1979	2008
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1981)	1993	1996
Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1987)	*None*	2010
Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)	1992	1990
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2002)	2005	2016
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2002)	2005	2011
International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance	*None*	*None*
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008)	2007	2011

Source: OHCHR 18, UNTC 2019

four-pack of abuses is experienced on an almost daily basis: enforced disappearances, illegal detentions, torture and extra-judicial killings. These four aggregate measures, cultivated and tolerated within the legal system of India, are frequently applied jointly in a semi-industrialised manner: the disappeared person mostly confronts them all. Largely undefined, torture remains outside of the penal system and is classified as an ordinary crime, not a complex instrument to target, coerce and intimidate whole groups or communities in breach of international human rights law. The failure to ratify vital international conventions on human rights allows for pre-designed legal loopholes in the system that offer practical immunity to offenders who consist of the apparatus of state violence, such as the armed forces, the paramilitary, police and intelligence agencies.

Why does not being a party of a particular convention matter? For instance, not accessing the Convention Against Torture allows India to preserve a legal loophole in which torture remains undefined and thus almost a non-punishable offence, on par with a fistfight or scuffle, and undefined can be applied throughout the judicial system with impunity. Similarly, without the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the laws of India do not recognise the enforced abduction and other abuses of the *four-pack* that follow as a special and grievous breach of human rights law attributable directly to the state of the state organs but only a kind of a 'petty' crime, e.g. kidnapping of an individual by another private person or party. These legal-constitutional failures and the reluctance to implement appropriate protections for human and civil

rights do not simply result from a lack of adequate legislation or post-colonial legacy. The systemic nature of human rights violations in India cuts much deeper and is well embedded within the legal structure of the State.

The absence of adequate protection of human rights mentioned above is exacerbated by a range of legal acts that are incompatible with international standards of human rights regime or often with the Indian Constitution itself. A wide range of legislation, deemed conflict and terrorism related, displays a strong military mindset and geared to primarily serve the interests of the army and the police, not necessarily the citizens. This includes the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) with its regional variations in Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Jammu & Kashmir, a direct adaptation of the infamous British Armed Forces Special Powers Ordinance of 1942 introduced in order crush the Quit India Movement; the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Prevention Act (TADA); the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA); the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA); the Foreign Contributions Regulations Act (FCRA) of 2010, resembling the notorious and anti-democratic Russian 'foreign agent' law of 2012; the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act (JKPSA); the Preventive Detention Act (PDA); the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA); the Disturbed Areas Act (DAA) etc.

The obvious need for adequate legislation that should regulate how terrorism and various crimes are prevented and dealt with requires no justification. However, the actual legal acts adopted in India allow for measures in no way compatible with human rights standards and democracy. As a result, dissent is criminalised, civil liberties are curbed, freedom of speech and free media restricted, social activists or human rights defenders are selectively targeted as 'anti-State', collective punishment of civilians is administered, e.g. for the activities of the militants, etc. These deplorable measures also include arrests, or 'preventive custody', from for up to six months or even two years without trial or bail (depending on the legislation).

Anti-terrorism laws, such as the UAPA, allow the government to designate not only organisations but also individuals as terrorists under mere suspicion and to detain them almost indefinitely without any trial. Consequently, innocent civilians get jailed or sometimes also killed as alleged 'militants' by officers who in this way score points, are rewarded for eliminating dangerous 'terrorists' and expedite their careers. Under these regulations, such as the widely criticised Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), non-governmental organisations—including human rights defenders—can easily be suspended or de-legalised, as it infamously happened to Amnesty International India, forced to halt its activities in September 2020, after it had published a critical report *India: Human Rights Defenders Targeted by a Coordinated Spyware Operation* in June 2020.

Perhaps the most harrowing of all, the agents of the apparatus of state violence can operate with impunity, being protected by the law of the AFSPA, the TADA and the POTA, fearing no responsibility before courts. The case of thousands of mass graves discovered in Jammu & Kashmir has not been properly investigated so far, which would send shock waves across public opinion in any democratic country, which would demand an immediate inquiry and the resignation of the government. This is not the case in India, though. Hardly any officer implicated in fake

encounters and killings of innocent civilians has been brought to justice, as amply documented by various independent organisations, such as Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society, International People's Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian-administered Kashmir, or Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons. Such cases are beyond the juristiction of civilian courts and the police does not accept FIRs (first information report) in such cases, but even if the General Court Martial finds the perpetrator guilty, for the sentence to be final it has to confirmed by higher Army authorities, which protect their comrades-in-arms by default.[10] One may be under an impression that the particular kind of military-mindset legislation is specifically geared to the needs of the broadly understood apparatus of state violence.

What is naturally expected of any thriving democracy is a clear separation of powers that counterbalance each other. The problem of Pakistan's 'Establishment'—or the all-powerful 'Deep State', consisting of the military top brass and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Intelligence Bureau (IB), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), etc., that has been running the whole (Islamic) Republic for decades since the 1958 coup d'état and has converted its activities into the so-called *Milbus* (military business)[11]—is regularly addressed in all analyses that concern Pakistan. Pakistani State provides a classical case where no clear separation of powers and no system of checks and balances is there, and all the strings are controlled by tight military-intelligence-business elite. As it appears, India's power structure has also—increasingly over time—come to represent quite a similar toxic blend of politics, the military and religion, which undermines this separation-of-powers principle. Unlike in a healthy, established democracy, in which army or intelligence top brass are not expected to turn into active politicians after their early leave or retirement, and for a range of reasons, this is not necessarily the case in India. On the contrary, the deployment in conflict areas such as Jammu & Kashmir not only brings additional financial benefits to the service people but also functions as a launchpad for their future careers, both within the army ranks and not infrequently outside of them, enabling or accelerating their political careers. We may therefore speak of a kind of noxious nexus between the military/the intelligence and politics, something like India's light version of 'the Deep State', to apply a term well entrenched in the discourse on the power structure in Pakistan. Innumerable examples adequately illustrate an established practice of Indian Army officers making their careers as notable politicians or diplomats after early leave or retirement.[12] Just to mention a handful

[10] See, e.g.: *Leaflet* 2023-03-12.

[11] See: Ayesha Siddiqa (2007)

[12] It is not necessarily the case that democracies do not envisage any space for former army officers to make pursue their careers in politics or administration. For instance, Petr Pavel, who was elected the president of the Czech Republic in March 2023, had previously served as an army general. What makes the difference is that such cases as Petr Pavel's are rather rare exceptions and the persons are elected to their political posts through public ballot, not through political connections.

of examples of top-rank officers stationed in Jammu & Kashmir, which propelled them into political careers[13]:

- General Jayanto Nath Chaudhuri: Chief of the Army Staff: 1962–1966; before stationed in J&K during 1947–1948; after retirement active in Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian High Commissioner to Canada (1966–1969).
- General Gopal Gurunath Bewoor: Chief of the Army Staff: 1973–1975; before the commander of the 80th Infantry Brigade in J&K in the 1950s; after retirement active in Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Ambassador to Denmark (1976–1978).
- General Shankar Roy Chowdhury: Chief of the Army Staff: 1994–1997; before the commander of the 16 Corps in J&K (1991–1992); thereafter a member of the Rajya Sabha, engaged in defence-related issues.
- General Vijay Kumar Singh: Chief of the Army Staff: 2010–2012; officer of the second Battalion of the Rajput Regiment (Kali Chindi) (1970) and commander of the same battalion along the Line of Control; member of Lok Sabha since 2009, and after 2014, Minister of State of External Affairs, Minister of State for North East Region in the BJP-led Indian Government and Minister of Statistics and Programme Implementation, deeply involved in politics still while serving in the Army.
- Captain Mohammad Ayub Khan: Served in the Sialkot sector (J&K) during the 1965 Indo-Pak war; after retirement, he joined politics, was twice elected to Lok Sabha, and served as a minister in the government of India headed by Rajiv Gandhi.
- General Om Prakash Malhotra: Served in J&K in the 1960s, thereafter Ambassador to Indonesia (1981–1984) and Governor of Punjab (1990–1991).
- General Joginder Jaswant Singh: Chief of the Army Staff: 2005–2007; before stationed in J&K (1991–92). After retirement from the Army, active politician of SAD and Governor of Arunachal Pradesh (2008–2013).
- General Sunith Francis Rodrigues: Posted in J&K several times since 1949, Chief of the Army Staff (1990–1993), thereafter member of the National Security Advisory Board, Governor of Punjab (2004–2010).
- General Kotikalapudi Venkata Krishna Rao: The commander of a Battalion in Jammu & Kashmir during 1956–59; Chief of the Army Staff: 1981–1983; Governor of Jammu & Kashmir (1989–1990), the chancellor of academic institutions in J&K (the University of Kashmir, University of Jammu, Sher-i-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Research).
- Colonel Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore: Served in J&K where he had participated in counter-terrorist operations, thereafter (2013) joined the BJP and was elected on a BJP ticket to the parliament (2014); the Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting; Cabinet minister with independent charge for Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (2017).

[13] For more details, see Balcerowicz and Kuszewska (2022a: 218–222, '17.2 India and Pakistan: Toxic structures of military rule').

– Jaswant Singh: A retired officer of the Indian Army, a founding member of the BJP, a BJP parliament member (1980–2014) as well as a minister of finance, external affairs and defence, etc. in BJP governments.

Such a liaison between the military and politics, diplomacy or education, which seems unhealthy, can have a range of far-reaching consequences. Most importantly, it transfers a particular set of 'battlefield' perspectives, barracks mentality, and a particularly tilted problem-solving know-how, acquired in the military-intelligence service, into politics and policies at the union and state levels and into civilian rudiments of the state, thereby tinting civilian optics and conflict management strategies with an order-based, undemocratic style of decision-making process and introducing informal power networks into the civilian environment. Under such circumstances, solutions are sought from a military perspective, which in the end can be counter-productive. Again, the most tense region of the Indian Union provides an illustration of how former army or intelligence generals manage problems. For more than the last three decades, Kashmir has been administered exclusively by persons with a military background, which appears to be a part of the intractable conflict, rather than a solution. Those who once fought in Kashmir or were deployed there eventually became the Governors of the State are listed below[14]:

– General Kotikalapudi Venkata Krishna Rao (governor in J&K: 1989–1990 and 1993–1998): A direct participant in the first India-Pakistan war over J&K in 1947–48, and subsequently commanded a battalion in J&K between 1956 and 1959.
– Girish Chandra Saxena (governor in J&K: 1990–1993 and May 1998–2003): The director of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), India's foreign intelligence agency (1983–1986), before that 16 years of career in RAW.
– Lieutenant General Srinivas Kumar Sinha (governor in J&K: 2003–2008): Previously Director of Military Intelligence, an Army General, and Vice-Chief of the Army Staff.
– Narinder Nath Vohra (governor in J&K: since 2008): Union Defence Production Secretary (1989–1990) and Union Defence Secretary (1990–1993).

The above 'from-the-military-to-the-politics-career' practice disturbs the scheme in which the army and intelligence services are expected to remain subordinate to the control of civilian governments. It also explains why certain laws, such as the AFSPA, the TADA, the POTA, etc., which are incompatible with democratic standards and allow for the misuse of power and create fertile soil for violations of human rights, are introduced, instead of being rescinded immediately. These laws appear to simply make *comrades*-in-arms immune to future persecutions for possible violations of democratic principles, abuse of power, and violations of human rights. By no means do they protect the rights of Indian citizens. It is not a coincidence that India has performed so badly in numerous reports on human rights and has been continuously criticised for their violations. It is also not a coincidence that

[14] See: Balcerowicz and Kuszewska (2022a: 217–219).

precisely these two institutions, that is, the armed forces and intelligence, are mostly indicated—and implicated—in reports as actual violators of human rights.

The dismal situation of human rights in—but also of largely disintegrated democratic architecture of—India is aggravated by a gradual but speedy transition towards a complete saffronisation of most (if not all) public institutions in India through which the Hindutva religious–nationalistic (fascist) agenda is purposely, methodically, and dogmatically implanted in all spheres of political and public life, including the media and show business, system of education, science and research, defence, medical care, administration, etc. This process has also reached the Indian armed forces and, as a result, their secularism and religious neutrality have been gradually compromised in a range of ways over the past years.[15] These include the State-promoted glorification of armed forces, on whose valour allegedly the sheer survival of the nation hinges (just like in Pakistan). Military and intelligence cadres are seen regularly involved in various activities closely associated with Hinduism and Hindu symbolism, labelled 'national' or 'cultural'. The long-standing process of spiritual self-perfection, Yoga, has been politicised and militarised in a manner incompatible with the peaceful, humane, and tolerant message of Yoga practice itself. As its travesty, it is now propagated across the barracks through Yoga instructors or celebrated on international Yoga days to commemorate the anniversary of the death of K.B. Hedgewar, the ideologue of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS, Rāṣṭrīya Svayaṁsevak Saṅgh, or National Volunteer Organisation), a paramilitary organisation and the organisational core of the Sangh Parivar (Saṅgh Parivār, or the Family of the RSS) that embraces multiple political far-right nationalistic groupings, including the BJP. Armed forces are regularly seen to provide technical, material and logistical support to various (often politicised) Hindu festivities organised by Hindu and Hindutva organisations and by Hindu spiritual leaders known for their close links with the BJP leadership.

A negligible event that prior to 1985 attracted between 1000 and 4000 visitors annually, Amarnāth Yātrā, or Pilgrimage to the Amarnath Cave of the Lord of Immortality, or god Śiva, is a perfect exemplification of such a religion-military-politics liaison. Practically not visited a hundred years ago at all, but nowadays blown out of proportions, Amarnāth—situated within the Indian-administered Jammu & Kashmir—draws 600,000 pilgrims every summer under the protective shield extended by 30,000 armed forces personnel. The links of the military and paramilitary forces with religious extremist organisations, such as the RSS and organisational *avatār*s of the BJP, are both institutional and personal: retired veterans and serving members of the military and paramilitary forces regularly attend party meetings and official events organised by such groups and are mentors of extremist and militant factions. In any state that subscribes to the ideals of either secularism or religious neutrality, the armed forces, the paramilitary, and the police should never be involved in religious and political events, or alternatively should equally support festivities staged by other religious groups, such as Muslims, Sikhs,

[15] See: Balcerowicz and Kuszewska (2022a: 222–223).

Jains or Buddhists. Instead, the armed forces and the police demonstrate the militant face of deeply politicised Hinduism, or Hindutva, akin to political Islam, or Jihadism.

This intimate linkage with politics clearly serves the interests of the armed forces for various reasons, including the financial aspect. In the world's third-largest defence spender, military expenditure has grown almost four times from 19,851 m in 1988 to 73,001 m in 2020 in constant USD (see (Fig. 1). The defence budget increased by over 100% during Narendra Modi's era: compared to Modi's first defence budget for the fiscal year 2014–2015 amounting to 2,240,000,000,000 INR, it rose to 5,940,000,000,000 INR in the fiscal year 2023–2024, with a year-to-year jump of 13% with respect to 2022–2023. The risk of military engagement, hostilities, and stand-offs with neighbouring China and Pakistan only partially explain such a sudden rise.

What presents a paradox is a contrast between a very high approval rate (86–95%) of the armed force compared to surprisingly lower support (67%) for human rights organisations operating in India (see Table 4). These are various grassroots organisations and activists campaigning for fairness and basic rights of every single person living in India and should naturally be vested with more trust of and approval by the people.

Such a low appraisal of the value of human rights organisations in India is also manifested in the fact that only 37% of respondents in India 'believe it is very important for human rights organisations to operate freely in their country', which is one of the lowest among all surveyed countries in the world (PEW 2020a–02: 18), just little above the world lowest in Russia (31%). Placing trust and taking pride in the Indian armed forces, as the superior organisation in India, is closely linked to the

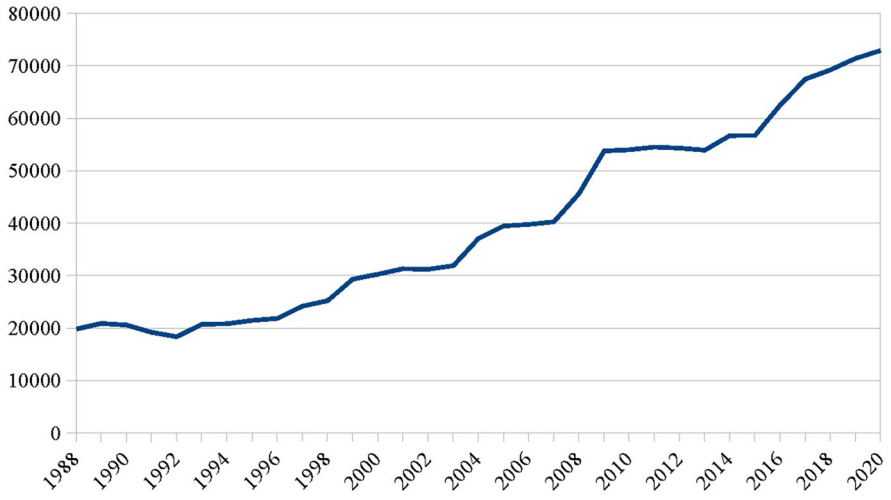


Fig. 1 Military expenditure in India 1988–2020, in constant (real, as of 2019) USD million. Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

Table 4 Approval rate of the military and human rights organisations in India

	2014	2015	2017
Very good	68	74	62
Somewhat good	18	21	24
Total	86	95	86

Source: PEW (2017–11: 41)

conviction of the majority of Indians (79%) that India's best achievement lies in the military area, with scientific achievements, medical treatments or university education (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) assessed much below (60%, 57%, and 56%, respectively), as demonstrated in the findings of the 2020 Pew Research Center report, *Science and Scientists Held in High Esteem Across Global Publics* (PEW 2020b–09). If the best India could offer to the world were its military and weapons, that would be a rather sad conclusion. Fortunately, it is not the case, and what attracts the world's attention are other realms, such as philosophy, culture, literature, music, dance, theatre, art or architecture, traditionally demolished by the military throughout India's history, with few ruins still remaining.

The emphasis on the armed forces as the backbone of the country, the embodiment of the State's values and on military-based solutions rather than on peaceful methods of conflict management and compromise-seeking strategies appears to pose a true paradox in a country that has declaratively emphasised the role of non-violence or non-injury (*ahiṁsā*) and civil resistance or non-violent action (*satyāgraha*)—so intimately associated with Mohandas Karamchand Mahātmā Gandhi—both in ethics and in conflict management, as the paramount value in which all other classical values such as non-stealing (*asteya*), truth and trustworthiness (*satya*), self-restraint and sexual chastity (*brahmacarya*), etc. are grounded. Great minds in Indian history traditionally expressed their aversion to violence, slaughter or *hiṁsā*. These humane values made India truly famous throughout the world: this peaceful method of conflict solving strategy has been amply replicated, just to mention Martin Luther King in the USA, Nelson Mandela in South Africa, the Solidarity Trade Union in Poland in the early 1980s, the peaceful revolution that 'tore down that wall' in Berlin in 1989, and numerous other civil rights movements around the globe.

The axiological change observed in India and the shift from professed value of democracy, secularism, and non-violent conflict management to supremacy of the Hindu majority, saffronised, and militaristic nationalism with centralised powers and institutionalised violence-promoting proactive programs against minorities branded as elements suspect of criminal and anti-national reputation unsurprisingly coincides with the removal of the pacifist Mahātmā Gandhi from the pedestal of the he father of the nation and spiritual leader, replaced with the 'Iron Man of India' Vallabhbhai Patel, apotheosized in the world tallest statue of 182 m thanks to Narendra Modi. The seemingly surprising contrast between the peaceful image of India's *ahiṁsā*-based polity widely proliferated around the world for decades and the actual warmongering views of the modern Indian majority finds its explanation

in India's real history, which has not been significantly more peaceful than histories of other regions in the world. The famous King Aśoka (c. 268–233 BCE), the promoter of Buddhism, boasts in his *Thirteen Rock Edict* that, in his war against Kaliṅga (present-day Odisha), that 'one hundred and fifty thousand people were deported, one hundred thousand were killed and many more died [from other causes]'. In his unique inscription of Hāthīgumphā (now in Odisha), King Khāravela (first cent. BCE), the first royal patron and follower of Jainism, takes pride in waging wars, pillaging, looting and 'terrorizing the kings', 'inflicting disaster on the capitals' of other kingdoms, 'bringing destruction' to religious sites of the Buddhists and the Ajivikas every or every second year of his reign.

Thus, the traditional emphasis on *ahiṁsā* and non-violence expressed by philosophers should be interpreted as primarily pertaining to individual ethics and ritual, not to state affairs and its policies. To regard the ideals of pacifism, non-violence, peace, tolerance, and compromise as the perennial values impregnated for centuries in Indian culture, including political culture, is as fully mistaken, both with respect to India's past and to the present. The myth of India's allegedly non-violent and pacifist mind is easily falsified—both in terms of professed values and actual actions—not only by India's past but also by various opinion polls that reflect modern Indian population's highly positive attitude to the military, acceptance of violent solutions, and communal violence.

Modern India's preference for recourse to assault and violent measures (incommensurable with democratic values and human rights) rather than peaceful ones is also attested by actual decisions the Indian government takes, such as the political and economic cooperation with and support for Russia, which invaded Ukraine on 24 February 2022: With the currency of humane values and support for Russia's war crimes, India readily buys oil, chemical fertilisers, and other goods from the occupier at much discounted rates to the effect that India-Russia bilateral trade had more than doubled within a short period of eight months since the war outbreak from $13 billion, crossing the barrier of $30 billion by the end of 2022 at the time, when all civilised world had been imposing economic sanctions on Russia; India even refused to cooperate with the G7 countries-imposed price cap on Russian oil, practically acting against the sanctions. India's increased war-time economic co-operation with Russia provides the occupying forces with indispensable funds to protract the bloody confit. In all United Nations General Assembly votes on Russia,[16] India has consistently abstained from condemning Russia for its war against Ukraine or against Russia's annexation of Ukrainian territories, which in practical terms expressed India's acceptance, albeit mitigated, of Russian military actions and human rights violations that contravene international law and civilised standards. In a symbolic gesture of endorsement, India's diplomatic missions invited representatives of Russia's and Belarus' embassies to the receptions of the 2023 celebrations

[16] With one, unimportant exception on 24 August 2022 during a 'procedural vote' related to the United Nations Security Council's invitation of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to to address a meeting through a video teleconference, when India voted against Russia's stance objecting the invitation.

of India Independence Day. Given the above, it seems that India's 'dreams of power' with a permanent seat of the reformed and enlarged UN Security Council should effectively be undermined.

An explanation of the superior status of the military in the eyes of India's public is partly to be sought in the changing self-identity of *homo politicus indianensis*, the essence of what should constitute 'being an Indian within India'. It appears that the majority is ready to sacrifice a range of essential and existential values for the sake of a common strictly *homogenous* identity, constructed for political purposes, and a range of nation-related core values, such as territorial integrity, sovereignty, and national integrity (cohesion), despite the natural and historical *heterogeneity* of Indian culture and people. A range of nation-related core values include territorial integrity, sovereignty, and national integrity (cohesion). They can easily be related to affective factors, such as fear, honour, mistrust or prejudice, and these factors can be conveniently transformed and manipulated by various elites, primarily the government, political parties, the military, etc., with the help of the subservient media operating under the circumstances of shrinking space for journalists and civil society.[17] In an environment of fear generated by alleged threats presented to Indian identity and pride purportedly, for instance by Muslims, Kashmiris, and Pakistan, much of the population is ready to sacrifice existential values, truly essential to their well-being.

The strong political leadership, which effectively translates into the authoritarian grip of the State under the personality cult of Narendra Modi (with his face posted on all bills and corners and streets of India), and the mighty arm of the Indian army and intelligence, is represented in the state propaganda and subservient media outlets as the binding force that is supposed to glue the nation together and makes it even stronger and greater in the face of dangers projected as presenting an existential threat to the nation coming from within (e.g. minorities, especially Muslims, also Christians) and without (e.g. Pakistan and China, but occasionally also the West). In Pew Research Center's 2019 study, *A Sampling of Public Opinion in India* (PEW 2019–03), most Indians responded that key issues in India had gotten worse during Narendra Modi's era, such as unemployment, job opportunities, communal relations, the gap between rich and poor, air pollution, corruption, terrorism and prices of goods and services. At the same time, most of the respondents were satisfied with the direction the country was going and the way democracy in India was working. This again presents a clear paradox of a cognitive dissonance type: it seems inconsistent to hold that the most important matters in the country are getting worse but at the same time to maintain that the general direction towards which the government is steering is nonetheless very good.

A part of an explanation of this inconsistency lies in the political centre-driven shift of public values that has been taking place in India over the past several years. Indians do not want to be perceived as unimportant inhabitants of a large but impoverished and internationally insignificant land. Instead, they would rather see

[17] For details, see: Balcerowicz and Kuszewska (2022a: 163–173).

themselves as emboldened citizens of one of the world's superpowers. What lies behind this shift, and which also provides an explanation for the paradox, is the ideology—perpetuated through the system of the media, education, administration, etc. and going back to Vinayak Damodar Savarkar—of Hindutva, or a Hindu supremacy-based political theory that presents a distorted, artificially created image of a coherent, homogenous Indian identity founded on supremacist and intolerant values, an image entirely incompatible with and hostile to the fascinatingly diverse cultural and religious richness of Indian history and heritage.

On the one hand, the Hindutva ideology draws a picture of an idealised, rewritten and invented history, heritage, and identity of India that nurtures the nationalistic pride of the imagined national majority based on the concept of 'pure pedigree', which offers to the BJP electorate the hope for a positive change in the future, albeit the future is still very distant and path is going to be hard, thorny, and long. The unifying force of the process overrides all negative side effects of the existential transformation of the State. The majority is habituated to remain satisfied in believing the persistent Donald Trump-like message they have endlessly been told over the recent years: India is becoming great again, against all odds, even though various hostile forces are doing all they can to disorganise the transformation. On the other hand, the promise of the shining future is strengthened with the spectre of nefarious forces that operate on the territory of India, chiefly the minorities (most of all, the Muslim minority), militant invaders from outside (i.e. Pakistan) or 'local pawns' trained by the enemy forces (e.g. Pakistan). The nationalistic pride endows the politicised 'Hindu nation in the making' with adequate resilience that successfully prevails over all recent unfavourable phenomena such as the 2016 Indian banknote demonetisation, which negatively impacted the employment, impoverished large segments of the population, mostly rural households, led to a large number of deaths and shortage of cash; the world's largest and harshest lockdown; the government's incapability to handle the Covid-19 pandemics, being a failure of genocidal proportions; first recession, the most severe since the late 1970s, followed by inflation, with food prices skyrocketing; the loss of 1000 sq. km of eastern Ladakh to the Chinese occupation in 2020; steady petrol price rises despite Brent crude oil price drops and fluctuations; the three controversial Farm Bills of 2020, often labelled 'anti-farmer laws', that brought masses of farmers to stage protests for more than a year and four months; India termed as 'the Internet shutdown capital of the world', with 67% of the world's Internet shutdowns in 2018 and 70% of the world's shutdowns in 2020,[18] with the world's longest ever Internet shutdown, lasting for 552 days, imposed in Jammu & Kashmir from 4 August, 2019 to 6 February, 2020, and at least 49 new shutdowns in Jammu & Kashmir in 2022 alone and at least 84 shutdowns in 2022 in general, being the world's 'biggest offender' for a fifth consecutive year;[19] India's fall in food security and *serious* hunger level,

[18] This coincides with a very low support for unrestricted access to the Internet in India: only 25% consider it important (PEW 2020a–02: 13).

[19] See: AC 2022, and AJ 2023-03-1a.

reflecting India's poor food systems transformation and local governance, measured by the Global Hunger Index (GHI: from '0 = no hunger' to '100 = the worst'): India's GHI score improved from 38.8 in 2000 to 28.2 in 2014, and, from the time of Narendra Modi's take-over, worsened to 29.1 by 2022 to the effect that India fell lowest in South Asia in the ranking from position 96 (2000) to 107 (out of 121 nations), on par with Afghanistan (109), well below government- and fiscal crises-hit Sri Lanka (64), Nepal (81), Bangladesh (84) and Pakistan (99)[20]; no improvement in mass illiteracy and large-scale forced child labour; etc. Excruciating images of COVID-19 affected India dealt a painful blow to the idealised vision of the chariot reined by a divinely inspired visionary that is firmly moving forwards on the right track.

Most agonisingly, the pandemic exposed all the weaknesses of the Indian State that had intensified but until recently remained hidden behind a curtain of chauvinistic propaganda. The traumatising events laid open the failures of the Indian State to properly pursue the thorny path to human development and economic growth based on reason, science, and, last but not least, on the critical and objective assessment of India's deficiencies in order to overcome them. Instead, the citizens were treated with aesthetic pills of politicised religious belief, disinformation, and indoctrination against the spectre of an incoming catastrophe. Hindutva nationalism brought no contribution to the medical services at all. Much better support to the overwhelmed health infrastructure was offered by many mosques that turned into COVID-19 centres. But the total collapse of the health system and life-saving logistics was merely a fragment of the whole picture. Ideologised India has failed on many other fronts: to protect its most vulnerable populations from exploitation, from chronic poverty, lack of opportunities, neglect and abuse, stagnation, and the state's coercive response to real problems. Most of all, India has failed to build the future of equal opportunities and rights to all, and instead, it has continued to provide for the few privileged ones, advantaged by influence, caste, or wealth. India has unfortunately trodden the same path of former secular democracies, such as the PiS-governed Poland, the Orban-ruled Hungary, or the Erdogan-controlled Turkey, to the authoritarian State hijacked by nationalistic-cum-religious extremists. The list of mishaps and failures would otherwise advise caution and warn that the BJP's 'New India' is crumbling before it has been erected. All the unfulfilled promises and miscarriages would tipple (almost) any government, but not Modi's.

Although nationalism and militarism do not offer a magic wand to make 'a great leap forward' to the perfect future, in which most problems are solved overnight, such a popular nationalistic pride finds its expression in the conviction of India's majority that the role of their motherland in global politics has grown during Modi's rule. This is contrasted with a sober note provided by Pew Research Center's study: 'while 56% of Indians believe their country is playing a bigger role in world affairs than a decade ago, a median of just 28% across 26 nations polled agree'.

[20] www.globalhungerindex.org/india.html, www.globalhungerindex.org/ranking.html

Table 5 Support for autocratic rule in India[a]

	1995–1998	1999–2004	2005–2009	2010–2014	2017*
Very good	17.2%	25.5%	18.3%	40.9%	33
Fairly good	27%	17.3%	27.3%	29.5%	32
Total	44.2%	42.8%	45.6%	70.4%	65

[a]Source: WVS (1981–2014), * PEW (2017–11: 17–18). No data available for the period after 2018. Surprisingly, India was not included into the latest *World Values Survey Wave 7*, or WVS-7 (2017–2022), at all. The question asked in WVS is: 'Political system: Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections'.

There is a clear correlation between the support for the military and preference for the autocratic rule in general. And once again, India is not an exception to the rule. As expected, the support for an all-powerful ruler there has significantly risen in the last two decades (see Table 5).

The pronounced electoral preference for highly centralized, executive leadership is explicitly coterminous with the political ascendancy of Narendra Modi and the emergence of an influential leader-centric paradigm, or his Soviet-style personality cult. Comprehensive public opinion polling consistently registers widespread satisfaction with the administration's governance model and its distinct exercise of constitutional authority. This domestic endorsement was subsequently consolidated during the 17th Lok Sabha elections in 2019. Notably, it is this epoch when a quantifiable appreciation in institutional public trust directed towards both the federal executive and ruling political cadres can be observed (see: Fig. 2).

The underlying public confidence in both the BJP state political cadres and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration is corroborated by data from the Pew Research Center Global Attitudes Survey. Specifically, 55% of Indian respondents concurred with the proposition that elected officials are responsive to the populace, asserting that 'most elected officials care what people like me think'. This high level of civic optimism coincides with an overwhelming domestic endorsement of the nation's governance, with 74% of Indian citizens expressing systemic satisfaction with the functioning of their democracy. Conversely, merely 31% of the population expressed dissent, representing one of the lowest proportions of political dissatisfaction recorded across all globally surveyed nations (PEW 2020a–02: 7, 19). Concurrently, the BJP leadership has effectively cultivated a widespread public perception that the Modi administration serves as an authentic custodian of the electorate's vital socio-economic and political interests. By successfully aligning state-level governance with federal populist messaging, the ruling party has managed to decouple objective macroeconomic vulnerabilities from subjective civic satisfaction. This strategic alignment has fostered an enduring sense of political efficacy among the populace, wherein the institutional performance of the executive branch is widely viewed as responsive and unreservedly representative of the collective will.

These political preferences for nationalistic, autocratic governance over an inclusive, open society—manifesting as a prioritization of the military over human rights organizations, and a preference for national prestige over civil liberties—demonstrate a stark divergence from the contemporary economic realities of India.

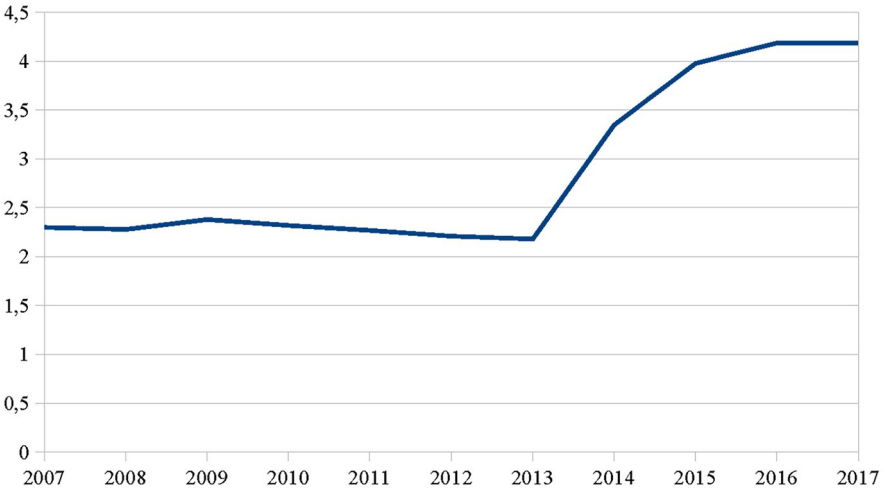


Fig. 2 Public trust in politicians (government) in India between 2007 and 2017 (1 = min, 7 = max). Source: WB360. No data for the period after 2018

Table 6 India's GDP growth (annual %) between 2010 and 2022[a]

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
8498	5241	5456	6386	7,41	7996	8256	6795	6454	3738	−6596	8681

[a]Source: World Bank (WB 2018, 2022). The sudden GDP growth in 2021 is misleading: it marks a recovery after a sharp fall in 2020

Crucially, empirical evidence indicates that the nation has experienced a sustained economic deceleration, a structural trend that was firmly established prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (see Table 6).

The juxtaposition of the preference for a strong autocratic rule and militarism and of the actual unsatisfactory, worsening economic and political conditions poses another paradox when the majority, on the one hand, uncritically follow institutions, oftentimes oppressive, that are repeatedly and justifiably criticised for human rights violations in non-partisan reports and praise the political elites responsible for the economic decline, for the gradual abandonment of democratic values and steady tightening restrictions of civil rights and free speech, and on the other hand, their personal experience and confrontation with deteriorating living conditions should rather restrain their enthusiasm for these institutions. They nonetheless decide to follow the main narrative, which is consistently streamed through the media, closely linked to politicians, the military, the government, and via other outlets, e.g. educational institutions, directly supervised by the administration. One's personal perspective is set aside by the perpetuated image, omnipresent in most media, of the allegedly improving economy and standards of living countrywide and the bright vision of the way out.

Such mass credulousness and susceptibility to the simplified populistic message of nationalistic and Hinduism-tinged populism, by no means unique to India, are certainly partly due to widespread illiteracy and an extremely inefficient system of education but can also be attributed to the lack of a genuine 'criticism culture', that is, a cultural environment in which one is encouraged to question existing beliefs and cross the boundaries set by authorities and dissent is tolerated. The unquestioning attitude has been inculcated in the Indian mind by centuries-long tradition of reverence for the authorities, *guru*s, teachers, the *rāja*s, rulers, the powerful, both real, biological, and symbolic 'parents' who deserve both respect and obedience, whereas criticism and questioning the authority and dominant opinions has been perceived as a sign of bad upbringing, lack of savoir-vivre, or crossing the boundaries imposed by the traditional framework of the social duties based on classes/castes and life stages (*varṇâśrama-dharma*).

India is a place where science and reason blend with superstition, irrationality and religious faith unashamedly exploited by politicians and introduced into the education system in recent years under the Hindu nationalists' rule. Since the election victory of Narendra Modi in 2014, fantastic references to the glorious ancient India have become commonplace at all levels: the belief in the existence of computers, radio, television and the wireless Internet, nuclear reactors and nuclear weapons, DNA research, plastic surgery, supersonic flying temples, *vimāna*s, or ancient Vedic air-crafts and space shuttles, etc., in India thousand years ago have become an integral part of the 'knowledge' system of modernity. India's Minister of State for Human Resource Development responsible for Higher Education and a prominent BJP leader Satya Pal Singh officially claimed that 'Darwin was wrong. No one saw ape turn into man. No evidence' (21 January, 2018).

Even academic institutions actively promote such a vision at all levels. In January 2015, at the annual Indian Science Congress under the aegis of Mumbai University, a principal of a pilot-training academy, Anand Bodas, and a Mumbai college professor Ameya Jadhav presented a paper on ancient Indian aviation technology, rebuking modern Western science for ignoring Indian invention of the *vimāna*s that flew to other planets 7000–9000 years ago, long before Leonardo da Vinci's ideas of flying machines and the Wright Brothers' first take-off and much more advanced than modern designs. Present at the Congress and opening it, Narendra Modi praised latest achievements by India's scientific community. In consequence, in 2019, some senior scientists officially proposed that gravitational waves be referred to as 'Narendra Modi Waves'. School curricula countrywide recommend teaching the new history of India, which includes such novel 'historical accounts' as the invention of the aeroplane, known as the *puṣpaka-vimāna*, or 'little flower chariot', which carried god Rāma from Śrī Laṅkā to Ayodhyā during the mythical era of Dvāpara-yuga.

Also 'science' has been at the service of the Hindutva extremists for decades, a process which accelerated since 2014, with for instance pseudo-science, or pseudo-archaeology, justifying the demolition of historical monuments, such as Bābarī Masjid in 1992, and proposed demolitions of the Muslim-era structures of the Tāj Mahal, the Qutb Minār, the Shahi Idgah Mosque or the Gyanvapi Mosque, etc., under the unfounded pretext that these had been built on sites of earlier Hindu worship.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, implemented by the Modi administration without parliamentary debate following the 2019 elections, established a controversial framework aimed at integrating traditional Indian knowledge systems into modern curricula, with the view 'to lay the foundation of a new India of the 21st century', to meet 'India's future aspirations' and to bring the nation back to its 'rich heritage of ancient and eternal Indian knowledge and thought' which 'ha[d] been a guiding light for this Policy'.[21] Critics argued that these reforms advanced a 'saffronisation' agenda aimed at transforming India into a Hindu nationalist state (Hindū Rāṣṭra) while simultaneously accelerating the privatization of educational institutions. Conversely, Hindu nationalist organizations, particularly the Sangh Parivar, strongly endorsed the policy for incorporating their ideological recommendations. This ideological shift has effectively monopolized both educational and media landscapes, fostering highly regulated, mythologized narratives that reinforce state rhetoric and diminish public media literacy. Such institutional vulnerabilities became evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, when unscientific health practices, such as covering people's bodies with cow dung and urine as protective measures, were publicly promoted by political figures related to BJP. Ultimately, this environment underscores the critical need for educational transparency, unbiased information, and robust institutional criticism to sustain informed public discourse and civic engagement.

There is still another component of the mass gullibility puzzle: India's media have failed, being controlled from above in a system centrally monopolised both formally and informally, broadcasting more or less homogenous and consistent message conforming with the agenda of the central powers. The press, TV, radio, internet websites, etc. have now become largely reduced to disinformation outlets of the government, the military, and various moguls behind the stage. The political clout over India's media is as biased, unrepresentative, and brainwashing and propagandistic as the media in Pakistan. In the Press Freedom Index regularly compiled worldwide by Reporters without Borders, India and Pakistan have performed quite the same over recent years: bad. However, India fell from rank 80 in 2002 to 150 in 2022, now on par with Pakistan (see Table 7).

The degradation of the Indian media landscape—encompassing television, radio, and the press—correlates with low public valuation of civil liberties. Comparative data indicates that only 32% of Indian respondents view 'free speech, uncensored media, and internet freedom' as critical priorities. This metric represents the lowest percentage among all globally surveyed nations and falls significantly below a median of 64% (PEW 2020a–02: 13).[22] Furthermore, longitudinal data reveals a

[21] NEP (2020: 16, § 4.27).

[22] The results with respect to the three values, are as follows: 'People can say what they want without censorship' 32% say it is very important; 'The media can report the news without censorship' 37% say it is very important; 'People can use the Internet without censorship' 25% say it is very important.

Table 7 India's, Pakistan's score in the Press Freedom Index (Reporters without Borders, RSF) between 2002 and 2022 (in the period 2002–2012, score from 100 the worst to 0 the best; reversely in the period 2013–2022, score from 0 the worst to 100 the best; the RSF ranking system remains the same throughout)

		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011–12	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
India	Score	26,50	39	38.5	27	26.5	39.33	30	29.33	38.75	58	58.78	59.66	59.51	56.83	57.06	56.76	54.33	54.67	53.44	41
India	Rank	80	128	120	106	105	120	118	105	122	131	140	140	136	133	136	138	140	142	142	150
Pakistan	Score	44,67	39	61.75	60,75	70.33	64.83	54.88	65.67	56.17	75	48.69	48.54	49.54	51.48	56.45	56.76	54.17	54.48	53.14	37.99
Pakistan	Rank	119	128	150	150	157	152	152	159	151	151	159	158	159	147	139	139	142	145	145	157

Source: https//rsf.org/en/index

12% decline in public support for free speech under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) administration, dropping from 44% in 2015 to 32% in 2019 (PEW 2020-02: 5). This erosion of civic values persists despite high-profile revelations regarding state surveillance, such as the use of Pegasus spyware against journalists, opposition politicians, and human rights defenders (AI 2020-06-15). Paradoxically, this growing disregard for expressive and digital freedoms coincides with high domestic satisfaction with governance. Approximately 70% of Indian citizens express contentment with the democratic system, while 71% believe the state operates for the collective benefit (PEW 2020-02: 24, 20). Additionally, a substantial majority (78%) maintains strong faith in electoral efficacy, believing that voting provides them with political agency (PEW 2020-02: 23). This misalignment suggests that the erosion of democratic norms does not diminish popular legitimacy or electoral satisfaction within the Indian electorate.

Under the BJP rule, India has effectively been turning into a kleptocracy, in which people in power, with links to the ruling party and its affiliated organisations, use their political clout to expropriate the wealth of the State. Political rent-seeking and capital accumulation by the political elite span various regimes in India, occurring under both INC and BJP coalitions. However, the trajectory toward systemic 'kleptocracisation' accelerated markedly during periods of BJP governance, specifically during the 1998–2004 administration and continuously since 2014. Notably, the foundational patterns of this state-assisted corporate consolidation were highly pronounced in the western state of Gujarat during Narendra Modi's tenure as Chief Minister, serving as a precursor to subsequent national economic policies.

Perhaps the most striking manifestation of this political-economic nexus is the rapid corporate expansion of Gautam Adani, a key ally of Narendra Modi since the 2002 Gujarat riots. Following those events, Adani was instrumental in rehabilitating Modi's political credibility and cultivating his reputation as a pro-business leader, a trajectory that culminated in the 2014 general election. Under the Modi administration, the Adani Group experienced exponential, state-facilitated growth. Furthermore, this political patronage appears to have insulated the corporate leadership from legal accountability. For instance, in December 2002—during the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led BJP administration—Gautam Adani secured an immediate release following an arrest by Delhi Police on non-bailable warrants related to cheating charges. Similarly, his younger brother and Adani Group Managing Director, Rajesh Adani, was arrested on three separate occasions for fraud (1999, 2010, and 2013) but consistently avoided protracted legal detention, a phenomenon critics attribute to the family's deep political networks.[23] Symbolizing this close institutional bond, Narendra Modi utilized Gautam Adani's private aircraft to travel from Gujarat to New Delhi for his 2014 prime ministerial inauguration. This highly publicized event underscored the blurred lines between corporate interests and state leadership, serving as a visual manifestation of the oligarchic alliance that would characterize the administration's political economy.

[23] ToI 2002–12–13, Bal (2019).

Between 2014 and 2022, Gautam Adani's net worth increased from USD 8 billion to USD 140 billion, driven by a 2,500% surge in his multinational conglomerate's market value over a five-year period ending in 2022. Although Adani became the world's third-richest individual, a January 2023 report by Hindenburg Research severely disrupted his business empire. The report alleged that the Adani Group engaged in a multi-decade scheme of stock manipulation and accounting fraud, asserting that seven core listed entities were overvalued by more than 85%.[24] As the findings indicated that several Group companies maintained elevated leverage due to aggressive, debt-funded expansion plans, which constrained their credit metrics and cash flow, concerns arose regarding potential systemic contagion within the broader Indian financial sector. This risk was compounded by Indian banks actively financing the Adani Group's rapid growth through substantial loan and bond allocations. Such capital access is typically restricted for highly leveraged entities, illustrating the phenomenon whereby politically connected conglomerates retain credit access whilst equally leveraged, unaligned peers face exclusion.[25] Consequently, Adani's meteoric rise to prominence as India's preeminent tycoon is widely viewed as contingent upon his political connections, which allegedly facilitated the acquisition of state assets through irregular means and with the tacit consent of Narendra Modi.[26] This state-assisted diversification rapidly expanded across other critical sectors where the group often lacked prior expertise, establishing its dominance in private ports, coal infrastructure (including mining, importation, and power generation), power transmission, gas distribution, renewable energy, and the manufacturing of unmanned aircraft systems.[27] Adani's defence, draped in nationalist ethos, was also symptomatic of the nexus between the private conglomerate and the interests of the State when he called the report findings 'a calculated attack on India' and on 'the independence, integrity, and quality of Indian institutions'.

Another prominent illustration of this dynamic is Mukesh Ambani, frequently characterized by opposition parties as 'a Modi crony'. Ambani held the title of India's and Asia's wealthiest individual both prior to and immediately following the multi-year period during which he was surpassed by Gautam Adani. The expansive commercial interests of Reliance Industries—ranging from its near-monopoly in the private hydrocarbon sector, which was established under the preceding Congress-led administration, to its rapidly expanding investments in telecommunications and digital infrastructure—depend significantly on his political capital and close relationship with the current Prime Minister.[28] During the first five years of the Modi

[24] HR 2023.

[25] FT 2020b–11–13.

[26] See, e.g. AJ 2023-03-1b.

[27] FT 2020b–11–13, AJ 2023b–02–10.

[28] FT 2020a–10–9.

administration, Ambani's wealth experienced exponential growth, with his net worth escalating from USD 19.3 billion in 2016 to USD 90.7 billion in 2022. Notably, all three figures—Modi, Adani, and Ambani—share a common regional origin in the state of Gujarat.

Specifically, Gautam Adani, Mukesh Ambani (the latter occasionally operating through his associate Mahendra Nahata), and Subhash Chandra—owner of the influential Zee Media Corporation and head of the Essel Group—have collectively established substantial control over the domestic media market, and illustrate the trend toward consolidation of the media by the corporate acquisition of the Indian press by politically aligned conglomerates. Such concentration of media ownership in the hands of a small number of figures closely aligned with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has significantly accelerated the monopolization of major news outlets. A key development in this trajectory occurred in 2022, when the Adani Group acquired a majority stake in New Delhi Television (NDTV), India's oldest private, independent television broadcaster. This acquisition prompted the immediate resignation of several of the network's most prominent independent journalists. This episode closely mirrored events from 2014, when Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries executed a hostile takeover of Network18, which likewise resulted in the mass resignation of its established independent editorial staff.[29]

Under such circumstances, with India's majority firmly confident—and strongly confirmed in their confidence by the media—that their fates are in good hands of the BJP government, it should no longer come as a surprise that, as confirmed by various public opinion data reflecting a low prioritization of judicial equity within the Indian electorate, only 58% of respondents consider a fair judicial system important—the lowest proportion among all surveyed nations and notably below the global median of 82% (PEW 2020a–02: 11). This minimal emphasis on institutional justice appears symptomatic of a broader public confidence in the functioning of the state apparatus and the political system under nationalist governance. This public trust persists despite external assessments characterizing the Indian judiciary as highly deficient. Specifically, India consistently recorded a weak score of 0.50 (on a scale where 1.0 represents the highest level of compliance) in the World Justice Project's *Rule of Law Index* throughout the 2015–2022 period. (WJP).[30] This institutional underperformance is defined by systemic delays and structural friction, as overburdened courts face massive case backlogs compounded by understaffed benches and pervasive corruption within both the police force and the judiciary. India's judicial system is still operated with outdated imperial laws (e.g. Indian Penal Code, Indian Evidence Act) that originated in the nineteenth century, passed by the British to run their colony and suppress local dissent. Systemic human rights violations within the Indian law enforcement and carceral systems are evidenced by widespread reports of intimidation, physical assault, and torture during police custody, and numerous cases of the so-called *four-pack* of abuses. Prolonged detention

[29] RWB 2018, 2019, *Guardian* 2022–08–24, AJ 2023c–02–6.

[30] See, e.g., IJR 2020. Cf. also Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI).

without trial frequently extends to 24 months or longer, as exemplified by the 28-month pre-trial incarceration of journalist Siddique Kappan (AJ 2023-03-2). Jails are chronically overcrowded, and the administrative process for granting bail remains highly obstructed and delayed. Consequently, India exhibits one of the world's highest proportions of pre-trial detainees, with unconvicted 'undertrial' prisoners constituting 76% of the total inmate population, compared to a global average of 34%.[31] Furthermore, approximately 98% of individuals arrested under the suspicion of terrorism via the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) are subjected to months or years of pre-trial detention, despite an eventual conviction rate of only 2%, indicating that the vast majority of those detained under this statute are legally innocent. In the deliberately polarised society, the Hindu-majority police and armed forces take active part in extra-judicial acts of punishment and public denigration, such as demolition of houses or flogging of Muslims.[32]

Another stark manifestation of institutional negligence within the Indian judiciary, often tantamount to dereliction of duty, is the systemic administration of the death penalty. Empirical data reveals that in 2022 alone, trial courts imposed capital sentences in 98.33% of cases without acquiring comprehensive sentencing materials or requiring state-led evidence to disprove the possibility of prisoner reformation.[33] This procedural failure indicates that capital sentences are routinely handed down without adhering to proper evidentiary and mitigating standards. Despite India's philosophical tradition of non-violence and non-harmfulness (*ahiṁsā*),[34] critical reflection on the structural cruelty of capital punishment remains largely absent from mainstream political and judicial discourse. Furthermore, India's refusal to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights serves as an explicit policy position against the abolition of the death penalty, contradicting both foundational democratic principles and the nation's historical intellectual heritage. This punitive approach correlates with the post-2014 political shift. Longitudinal data from the *Death Penalty in India* annual reports indicates an escalation in executions during the Modi administration: between 2007 and 2021, two executions occurred during the seven-year period preceding 2014, whereas five executions were carried out in the seven years following 2014.[35] This upward trajectory culminated in 2022, which recorded 165 capital sentences—the highest annual total since 2000. Consequently, the death row population reached a historic peak of 539 prisoners, representing the largest volume of condemned inmates since the initiation of systematic annual statistical tracking in 2016.

Following very similar developments in other erstwhile democracies, now metamorphosing into autocracies, such as the PiS-governed Poland, the Orban-controlled

[31] See, e.g., Balcerowicz and Kuszewska (2022b: 37–43), *Scroll* 2022–12–28.

[32] See: NDTV 2022-10-4, AI 2022-10-6.

[33] DPI (2023: 6).

[34] See: Balcerowicz (2022).

[35] DPI (2023: 124–126).

Hungary, Israel, and the government of India, in particular Law Minister Kiren Rijiju, put pressure on the Chief Justice of India to finalise a relevant Memorandum of Procedure (MoP), calling the judiciary election system 'opaque', and made other attempts to exercise more direct control over India's courts. The demand that the government and central politicians should play a bigger role in judicial appointments, such as a significant role in the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court and the 25 high courts, obviously threatens the independence of the judiciary.[36] The impetus to exercise complete control over all institutions within the state, including organisations that should by default remain independent from governments, the Modi administration exerts significant control over appointments to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), employing non-transparent selection processes to install politically aligned figures. Notable appointments include controversial members of the judiciary and Rajiv Jain, a former director of the Intelligence Bureau. This practice severely compromises the statutory independence of the human rights body. Consequently, this centralized executive interference disregards the Paris Principles, which establish the international minimum standards for the autonomy and pluralism of all National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) (*Leaflet* 2021–06–5). In an environment suffused with autocratic propaganda and dominated by saviour-styled politicians like Modi, the need for a proper judicial system and justice delivery may continue to be barely understood among common people, unless one is confronted with the State's injustice directly. However, the rights to free speech, information, or fair justice should never be obscured by nationalism and flag-waving and cannot be replaced with the monopoly of political rule.

The above-mentioned biased system of education and the control of most of India's media in the hands of very few closely linked to the BJP government is emblematic of the nature of how tendentious news, images, particular values, particular the pro-government mindset, nationalistic ideology, and the Hindutva code of behaviour are publicised and inculcated in popular imagination and mass system of values through different channels. India's film industry and show business closely follow the suit, with producers, directors, actresses, and actors styling themselves as passionately hyper-patriotic, such as Vivek Oberoi, Kangana Ranaut, Anupam Kher or Akshay Kumar, just to name a few such enthusiasts of the BJP government and its policies. Close links to the ruling structure, suffused with Hindutva ideology, obviously promote Bollywood productions and business, whereas those who once raised concerns over growing saffronisation, Hindu supremacism, and intolerance, such as actors Aamir Khan, Salman Khan or Shah Rukh Khan (all Muslims), have been regularly confronted with calls for boycott. Also linguistic shifts within the Hindi cinema industry further reflect this cultural transformation. Historically, the Hindi language employed in Bollywood films was substantially enriched by Persian vocabulary, an element central to its linguistic identity and poetic expression. However, due to contemporary socio-political associations linking Persianized vocabulary of Urdu with the state of Pakistan (of which it is the official language)

[36] See, e.g., AJ 2023a–01–19, TH 2023–02–3.

and Islam, the cinematic lexicon has undergone a systematic process of 'purification'. This development has replaced traditional vocabulary with Sanskritized Hindi equivalents, a linguistic realignment that would have been unprecedented two decades ago. Most of the industry has been switched to shoot films in consonance with the dominant ideology of the 'New Brave India'.

This cultural realignment is starkly illustrated by a shift in cinematic narratives surrounding the Kashmir conflict. Vishal Bhardwaj's *Haider* (2014), widely regarded as a profound politically engaged film depicting the structural complexities and human rights issues in Kashmir, has been superseded in public discourse by *The Kashmir Files* (2022). Critics argue that the latter film relies on historical distortions and anti-Muslim rhetoric to inflame nationalist sentiments. When screened at the 2022 International Film Festival of India (IFFI), the international jury head, Israeli filmmaker Nadav Lapid, publicly condemned the film as 'a propaganda, vulgar movie, inappropriate for an artistic competitive section of such a prestigious film festival'. This critique provoked a severe backlash from nationalist factions, which included antisemitic harassment targeted at Israel's then-ambassador, Naor Gilon. Conversely, Hindutva organizations and BJP legislators strongly endorsed the film, actively promoting its exhibition through state-level tax exemptions. *The Kashmir Files* belongs to a broader trajectory of politically charged, state-aligned cinema addressing Kashmir and Pakistan. This lineage includes earlier nationalist productions such as *LOC: Kargil* (2003), *Raazi* (2018), *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl* (2020), and *Shershaah* (2021), all of which have historically functioned to consolidate popular nationalistic sentiment.

The pervasive nature of majoritarian sentiment is further demonstrated by the intensifying censorship and hostility directed at cultural productions that deviate from nationalist narratives. A prominent case study illustrating this environment of intolerance is the controversy surrounding Sanjay Leela Bhansali's historical drama *Padmavati* (2017). Following violent protests orchestrated by ultra-nationalist Hindu organizations, including the Rajput Karni Sena and various factions affiliated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the film was forced to be withdrawn from its scheduled release. It was subsequently altered and re-released the following year under the modified title *Padmaavat*. During the height of the controversy, the film's director and its lead actress, Deepika Padukone, were subjected to systemic death threats and public bounties. Notably, Kunwar Surajpal Singh Ammu, a prominent official within the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), publicly announced a bounty of INR 100 million (approximately EUR 1.2 million) for the decapitation of Padukone. This incitement to violence drew no official condemnation from the BJP leadership or from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a silence that critics interpret as a tacit endorsement of extremist vigilantism and a broadening of extra-constitutional film censorship in India.

History knows various forms of totalitarian ideologies. Some of them are founded on an extreme or fanatical interpretation of a particular religion perceived as an all-embracing political model in which the public/the legal and private/the moral merge under a unifying umbrella that purportedly defines the true character of a nation. It excludes, often violently, everyone who does not fit into this

imagined community. Numerous chauvinistic and anti-democratic political emanations of Christianity exist, to name for instance the political ideology represented by Ordo Iuris, sometimes labelled 'fundamentalists paid by the Kremlin', a Polish extension of Brazilian group Tradição, Família e Propriedade (TFP). The so-called political Islam, which should better be known as extreme majoritarian Muslim nationalism, has had various emanations that are regularly confused or conflated with Islam *per se*. It has materialised, besides its various other versions, in the form of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, etc.

South Asia follows the suit with various right-wing nationalist movements exploiting the teachings of the three main religions of the region. Buddhism serves as the background for fascist ideologies represented by various ultra-conservative groupings in Myanmar (Burma) and Sri Lanka such as, respectively, the 969 Movement and its spiritual leader, infamous monk Ashin U Wirathu, known as 'the Face of Buddhist Terror' and self-named 'Hitler', in 2022 awarded the 'Thiri Pyanchi' title (one of the country's highest honours) for his 'outstanding work for the good of the Union of Myanmar' by the military junta, and the ultra-nationalist Bodu Bala Sena (Buddhist Power Force) founded by monks on the island. The triad comprising politicised ideologies based on Christianity, Islam and Buddhism is complete with the extreme majoritarian Hindu nationalism, or Hindutva, i.e. 'political Hinduism'.

All these represent majoritarian fundamentalist ideologies of apartheid-like character that split the societies into the pure and the impure, right believers and damned *kāfir*s, the privileged and unprivileged, the empowered, and the disempowered, and consider this segregation fully justified by the appeal to the nation and the religion combined. From the history of genocide, we know all too well the cases when such segregation—brought to its 'logical' conclusion—ended with almost a complete extermination of the native populations of the Americas by the Europeans, with the ethnic cleansing of the Armenians by the Turks or with Nazi gas chambers for the Jews, Roma, and other 'impure' minorities. History should always be treated as a warning and teach us all that ideologies that segregate society into incompatible groups usually lead to tragic consequences of various dimensions. Politics, the military, and the politicised form religion together produce a concoction that is not simply toxic but also explosive. In recent years, India has trodden this path with vigour.

Numerous communalist conflicts in India—often incited by various Hindutva groupings and politicians, esp. The activists of the quasi-militant RSS and of the BJP and its predecessors in recent decades—attest to that, as do the establishment-tolerated or stimulated regular assaults against ethnic or religious minorities, low castes, and Dalits, killings, communal violence (largely Hindu mob attacks against Muslim minorities), intimidation, mass graves, pellet-firing shotguns, fake encounters, media crackdown, etc. Communal antagonisms serve as an instrument to advance polarisation within the society and as an official justification for the policy of deepening saffronisation, propagated by hard-line Hindu nationalists, which sets apart the 'pure', that is, the Hindus, and the minorities of mostly Muslims and

political opponents. Polarisation serves the interests of the ruling elite and nationalistic ideologists, because the national Hindu sentiments and national pride based on extreme traditional values, filtered through the prism of Hindutva ideology, appeal primarily to the religious majority, thus garnering massive support for the ruling class and setting the 'other' groups apart. Such polarisation, based on fear of the menacing other, also justifies the State's policies of oppression of and repressions against the minorities, political dissenters, and civil/human rights activists. The polarization driven by majoritarian Hindu nationalism has expanded beyond domestic borders, increasingly affecting the Indian diaspora, particularly within the United States. This trajectory effectively exports the communal conflicts of India into transnational spaces, creating ideological fractures within expatriate communities.

Elite mobilization of majoritarian sentiment and communal hostility is frequently directed by senior leadership within the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and affiliated Hindutva organizations. Prominent figures implicated in this dynamic include Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, aptly labelled by Jha (2021) as 'Priest of Violence', whose governance in India's most populous state, called 'Adityanath's reign of terror', has been heavily criticized by human rights observers for its punitive approach to minority populations. The foundational precedent for this administrative environment remains the 2002 Gujarat riots, which resulted in an estimated 1,000 to 2,000 deaths. An internal report by the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office characterized the violence as an ethnic cleansing, concluding that Modi, as then-Chief Minister, was directly responsible for fostering a climate of impunity and that his administration was complicit in the pogrom. Analysts often draw parallels between this executive complicity and other state-sanctioned human rights violations, such as the 2018 assassination of Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi Arabia Embassy in Istanbul sanctioned by Mohammed bin Salman, the crown prince of Saudi Arabia, distinguishing the Gujarat event primarily by its mass scale. Consequently, diplomatic travel restrictions were imposed on Modi by the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union, which were only rescinded following his electoral victory in 2014. The structural violence of the Gujarat crisis has been extensively documented in investigative media, including Rakesh Sharma's *Final Solution* (2002), Ramesh Pimple's *Aakrosh* ('Outburst', 2003), and the BBC documentary series India: *The Modi Question* (2023). The Indian government systematically banned these productions, utilizing emergency blocking provisions under Rule 16 of the Information Technology Rules, 2021, on the grounds that they threatened national sovereignty and security. However, the censorship of the BBC series triggered the Streisand effect, inadvertently accelerating its distribution and viewing across independent domestic networks.

Public mobilizations orchestrated by right-wing coalitions, including the RSS and its umbrella federation, the Sangh Parivar, frequently serve as platforms for majoritarian rhetoric. These networks coordinate closely with the ruling BJP and affiliated organizations such as the Hindu Parishad (VHP, Viśva Hindū Pariṣad; World Hindu Council), Bajrang Dal (Bajraṅ Dal, or The Army of the Strong One, i.e. of Hanumān), etc. Human rights monitors have documented numerous instances

where religious leaders and political figures at these rallies have explicitly called for sectarian violence and the weaponization of the majority population against the Muslim minority. A prominent manifestation of this radicalization occurred during a three-day religious assembly in Haridwar in December 2021. The event was attended by BJP officials and members of extremist factions, including the Hindu Mahasabha (Akhil Bhārat Hindū Mahāsabhā, or All-India Hindu Grand Assembly), an organization historically linked to Nathuram Godse, the assassin of Mahātmā Gandhi. Over the course of the meeting, multiple speakers openly advocated for mass violence and systemic cleansing. Notably, right-wing religious figure Sadhvī Annapūrṇā Mā publicly urged the audience to take up arms, stating that if a small contingent of soldiers executed millions of Muslims, the majoritarian movement would achieve victory: 'Even if just 100 of us become soldiers and kill two million of them, we will be victorious'.[37] Consequently, international conflict monitoring organizations and genocide prevention experts have categorized these coordinated, state-tolerated declarations as a severe escalation in public incitement to mass atrocity within the subcontinent and to genocide.

Gregory H. Stanton, founder of Genocide Watch[38], has issued formal warnings regarding a 'Genocide Emergency' in India, analyzing the state's trajectory through the framework of the ten stages of genocide. Stanton categorizes the administrative and legislative actions of the Modi-led BJP government as an active, state-sponsored campaign against the Muslim minority. According to Genocide Watch's assessment, the current socio-political environment has advanced through Stage 6 (Polarization), Stage 7 (Preparation), and Stage 8 (Persecution). Furthermore, Stanton identifies institutional rhetoric—such as Prime Minister Modi's public assertions at Aligarh Muslim University that new legislative frameworks are designed to uplift the minority population—as an operationalization of Stage 10 (Denial). Within this theoretical model, the structural progression indicates that the only phase currently absent from this continuum is Stage 9 (Extermination).[39] I do not want to claim that the genocide – or radical communal conflict against the minorities, primarily the Muslims, with the aim to eliminate them (along the pattern employed by the Burma/Myanma junta to eliminate the Rohinja population in recent years), or to force them to flee India or to exterminate them – is imminent. As it seems, the missing link of the actual extermination may never materialise. Whether it will or not, it will be a political decision of the ruling Hindutva elites, just as the 1994 Rwandan Genocide of the Tutsi was not a spontaneous movement among the Hutu masses but was triggered, inspired, effectuated and coordinated by the Hutu elites with a clear agenda; or just the Armenian Genocide was not carried out by the ordinary Turks out of their instinctive desire but was prapared, staged and perpetrated by the Ottoman authorities: Ordinary citizens do not waste their private time to build gas chambers in their leisure time – these are constructed by the state

[37] Naik (2022).

[38] Genocide Watch (2022).

[39] Stanton (2013) recognises altogether ten stages of genocide.

once the ruling elite comes to a conclusion that they and the state may benefit from the situation and such a step is ideologically justified. India's political leaders, including the prime minister, have a strong track record of being involved in public incitement to religious and communal violence or even outright genocide. Activists and journalists who criticise the BJP policies, denounce majoritarian Hindutva ideology and 'Brahman hegemony' are persecuted, beaten or gunned down, for instance Gauri Lankesh assassinated in September 2017. Not infrequently, we can observe a relatively widespread practice of illegal demolition of houses used to intimidate or punish Muslim communities and civil rights activists, a practice very much akin to the methods of 'collective punishment' implemented by Israel against Palestinians. Conspicuously, there is much structural overlap of how the Indian government treats Muslim minorities and political dissenters with Israel's model of tackling the 'Palestinian problem'. And India's political leaders, including the prime minister, have a strong track record of being involved in public incitement to religious and communal violence or even outright genocide.

Such as a vision of India's essence defined along the lines of the politically motivated myth of 'One Hindu Nation, One Hindu Realm, One Hindu Leader' (cf. 'Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer'), which has stimulated the nationalistic pride, drastically affects also social and familial aspects, in particular the role of women, their role prioritised as 'children, kitchen, church (or, rather, *mandir*)' ('Kinder, Küche, Kirche'). This approach allows for the justification of violence against women and children, who are treated as commodities subordinate to men's power that can be traded and exchanged with dowry, left uneducated, systematically raped, abused, burned alive with kerosene, and at best kept at home, only slightly more spacious than the Afghan/Taliban *burqa*, a vision consistent with the medieval form of *purdah*. India has always been extremely heterogeneous and rich in various cultures, languages, religions, and lifestyles. And fortunately, it remains so, albeit step by step, to a rapidly diminishing degree. To seek national homogeneity based on one particular model, such as Hindutva, is tantamount to call to eliminate, nay, to exterminate 'the other' the minority groups that do not fit the unified and monopolised standard. And this contravenes the humane message of numerous Indian thinkers who have made India world famous. Indians have plenty of reasons to be proud of, and India's fascinating rich cultural past and present have so much to offer.

Since its independence, India has painted its presence with colours of diversity, tolerance and secularism against the dim backdrop of the 'Establishment'-run Islamic Pakistan. In contrast, from the outset, Pakistan, as a concept and as a state, based its identity on the politicised religious myth of 'the Muslim nation' that unites all Muslims of South Asia, antithetical to 'the Indian nation', in which religious denomination did not matter at all. This two-nation theory, viewing Muslims and Hindus as separate nations, provided an ideological framework for the inception of Pakistan and injected a major component of Islam as the unifying force into 'the nation of Pakistan', which embraced the West and East wing of Pakistan and justified religiously motivated territorial claims vis-à-vis Kashmir. The theory called for the unification of all Muslims within the borders of Pakistan along two complementary scenarios: the Muslim state should comprise the territories inhabited by all

South Asian Muslims, and tiny Muslim minorities living in 'exclaves' within India should migrate to Pakistan as *muhājir*s, a category that includes Muslim immigrants from India and their descendants. Noticeably, the myth of a homogenous Muslim nation has proved insufficient to safeguard the ideological borders and territorial integrity of Pakistan. After the violent 1971 civil war for Bangladesh independence, the country was split apart within less than three decades of its inception. Pakistan remains on the verge of a collapse as a state, being confronted with the spectre of Talibanisation and district fragmentation in the future, uninterruptedly torn by local insurgencies in Balochistan since 1947, and split between Sunnis and Shias or Ismailis.

A slow process of the disintegration of Pakistan should serve as a warning to avoid at all costs a similar myth of the 'Hindu nation'. An earlier definition of 'Indian nation', in the colonial times, defined what the future India would be and characterised the Indian national identity during the first decades of India's existence. It was advocated by the Indian National Congress and the intellectual elites as a dominant concept of the political narrative in India's post-independence formative decades. 'Indian nation' was to embrace divergent ethnicities, religious groups, castes, etc. coexisting in a secular, democratic state, despite their communal diversities. Contrary to it, the far-right Hindutva ideologists' counterpart of Pakistan's two-nation theory asserts the 'one-nation theory' of India, viz. it adheres to the idea of one, united 'Hindu Nation' within the borders of India that include all who fully conform to the norms and customs of Hinduism, that is, 'the Hindu race; that is, that People who live as children of a common motherland, adoring a common holy land'.[40] 'These three elements of Hindu nation (Hindū Rāṣṭra), Hindu race (Hindū jāti), and Hindu culture (Hindū Saṁskr̥ti) are the core ideas of Hindutva, and 'the definition provided a broad basic foundation on a bed-rock on which a consolidated and mighty Hindu Nation could take a secure stand'[41] and also excludes all those who cannot fit the pattern and, thereby, are denied the right to live in India. In fact, Pakistan's two-nation theory and Indian/Hindu nationalists' theory of the Hindu nations are complementary sides of the same coin, namely that purportedly South Asia is split into two exclusive nations that should correspond to political borders and live within their own states. The way India has been defined along the Hindutva lines in recent decades seems to be a path of no return, just as a U-turn in the case of Pakistan conceived as a democratic secular state for all ethnicities and religions appears unthinkable. Neither imagined nation, be it 'Muslim nation' or 'Hindū Rāṣṭra', tolerates minorities, an approach which indeed leads to ethnic (or rather religious) cleansing and even genocide.

To slide down a slope is easy, and it is much harder to climb back to its initial position: India's downfall slide, it seems, is progressively reaching a point of no return in foreseeable future. As I noted elsewhere, 'The post-2014 period should be seen as a turning point in defining India's identity as momentous as the 1971 civil

[40] Savarkar (1923: 197).

[41] Savarkar (1969: vii, 'Preface by the Publisher of second Edition).

war in Pakistan, which resulted in its break-up, subsequent redefinition of its Muslim identity and the process of gradual Islamisation and Talibanisation of Pakistan. India has entered a comparable phase of Hindutvaisation and Saffronisation, albeit without any post-war traumatic experience, unlike Pakistan'.[42]

Contrary to the assumption that India's structural realignment began in 2014, the historical trajectory toward state-led majoritarianism was established during the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition government between 1998 and 2004. During this initial tenure, the BJP effectively initiated the 'saffronisation' of state institutions, systematically challenging the secular normative framework of domestic politics. This period of governance set the domestic political trajectory toward an altered set of core norms, effectively laying the groundwork to redefine Indian democracy along majoritarian and communal lines prior to the party's subsequent electoral victories.[43] During the intermittent decade of Indian National Congress governance from 2004 to 2014, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) administration refrained from systematically reversing these institutional modifications. This policy inertia was primarily driven by electoral anxieties, specifically the apprehension of a majoritarian backlash and accusations from political adversaries of being anti-patriotic or anti-Hindu (ergo, pro-Muslim). Consequently, the core institutional and normative shifts introduced during the preceding NDA tenure remained largely intact, facilitating a path-dependent transition that preserved the groundwork for subsequent majoritarian consolidation.

The structural trajectory toward systematic mass exterminationin South Asia carries greater structural plausibility than initial assessments might suggest and is underscored by the institutional rehabilitation of radical historical figures. One year following the inauguration of the Modi administration, the Hindu Mahasabha (HM) closely aligned with RSS in Gwalior (central state of Madhya Pradesh), established a temple complex dedicated to Nathuram Godse, the assassin of Mahatma Gandhi, and his principal accomplice, Narayan Apte.[44] The establishment of this memorial, occurring with the tacit support of the government, signalled a profound shift in the official validation of historical political violence and majoritarian extremism. Since 2014, this symbolic rehabilitation has extended to public infrastructure, evidenced by the naming of at least two municipal roundabouts after Nathuram Godse to honor his legacy, specifically in the villages of Chhotpur, Bihar, and Chakradharpur, Jharkhand. Concurrently, historical figures associated with totalitarianism, notably Adolf Hitler, have sustained a legacy of popular support within Indian far-right networks. This ideological affinity has been nurtured for decades among various factions affiliated with the Sangh Parivar umbrella organization, which encompasses the ruling BJP.[45]

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[42] Balcerowicz and Kuszewska (2022a: 208).

[43] Balcerowicz and Kuszewska (2022a: 208).

[44] IT 2017–11–16, RFI 2023–01–30.

[45] See, e.g., Sarkar (1993).

An overt manifestation of this phenomenon is exemplified by a Mumbai restaurant originally named *Hitler's Cross Restaurant*. Following international condemnation, the establishment modified its name to *Cross Restaurant*, though it deliberately retained design motifs referencing the Nazi swastika. This popularized interest in totalitarian figures has escalated markedly in the post-2014 era. For instance, Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* remains widely available in commercial bookshops across India, experiencing year-over-year sales growth. Furthermore, certain state-level school curricula present Hitler primarily through the lens of strong executive leadership, largely minimizing or omitting his responsibility for global conflict and mass atrocities. This domestic reception of Nazi symbolism is generally decoupled from traditional antisemitism, given the low public awareness of Jewish history within the region. Instead, within far-right Hindu narratives, Hitler is selectively appropriated as an emblem of a prosperous and militarily dominant Ārya / 'Aryan' identity. This framing emphasizes state efficiency and military strategist tropes—factors rendered salient by regional security dynamics with Pakistan and China—while holding up the rapid economic transition of post-1933 Germany as a model for overcoming systemic poverty and political fragmentation. Consequently, the catastrophic outcomes of the Nazi state, including the Holocaust and World War II, are systematically downplayed or ignored within these ideological discourses. Notably, while these revisionist narratives are highly visible in India, parallel trends regarding the commercialization of totalitarian imagery are observable across the broader subcontinent, including in Pakistan, albeiton a much lesser scale.[46] The ideological narrative advanced by Hindutva theorists, which asserts that the Hindus are 'superior to others', 'have the god-given duty to rescue the world' and theirs 'is the god-ordained duty'[47], closely mirrors both the rhetoric and structural intent of the National Socialist concept of the 'master race' (Herrenrasse) and its accompanying geopolitical mission. Consequently, this domestic admiration of Adolf Hitler and fascist doctrine is intrinsically linked to explicit racialized connotations.[48]

Historically, the conceptual framework of the Ārya—on which the ideas of the 'New Brave India' Hindu nation, Hindu race and Hindu culture rest—was underpinned by pronounced racialised dichotomies from its very inception, dating to the migration into the Indian subcontinent around the commencement of the second millennium BCE, when the Āryas defined their identity in juxtaposition to the dark-skinned indigenous populations, categorised as *dāsas* and *dasyus*, or 'slaves and servants', to whom the lowest echelons in the social hierarchy were assigned, external to the core Āryan social structure organised around the four *varṇas*, or 'colours' (a clear reference to skin complexion). Furthermore, the modernised construction of the Hindu nation, or Hindū Rāṣṭra, is similarly conceived in racialised terms, wherein a 'pure Āryan' or an 'Indo-Germanic' identity is deemed superior, a

[46] *Spiegel* 2010–03–17.

[47] *Scroll* 2023–01–14

[48] There is a vast literature on the links between fascism and Hindutva, a recent paper being: van Zwanenberg (2022).

conviction exemplified by popular revisionist efforts to attribute the origins of global sciences to Vedic roots, or by adherence to the scientifically unsupported 'Out of India' theory, which posits that Western civilisation and Indo-European languages originated within the subcontinent before radiating outwards to other parts of the world, or by the ideological claim that the Indus Valley Civilisation—encompassing historical sites such as Harappa and Mohenjo-daro—constitutes an indigenous Vedic (ergo, Hindu) settlement that cannot be associated with contemporary Muslim Pakistan.

A significant portion of Indian literature, dramaturgy, and poetry has sustained a preferential valuation of fair skin over several centuries, a cultural bias that remains highly visible in the modern fashion and cosmetics industries through their emphasis on light complexions, a perfect example being the widespread commercialisation of skin-lightening products. This systemic colourism frequently translates into overt hostility, as dark-complexioned foreign visitors, such as African students enrolled at Indian universities, regularly become the victims of racially motivated assaults. Finally, a certain domestic admiration for historical Nazi model of state efficiency, institutional solutions, and economic prosperity, which are perceived to be continued by the modern, wealthy, and influential German state, only contributes to the widespread public acceptance of the political methods and strategies deployed by Narendra Modi, representing an Indian manifestation of a personality cult surrounding an incarnated, divinely inspired leader; simply put, this consolidation and monopoly of political authority is precisely what Narendra Modi, in the eyes of his majoritarian electorate, deserves.

Whether any State is healthy in its governmental structure, democratic institutions, education, etc., can be tested with the degree to which human rights are respected and protected: these are the fundamental rights of every individual and group in the state. Criticism of human rights and their defenders or reluctance to embrace the international human rights regime smacks of authoritarian inclinations, double standards, and unstoppable desire for a monopoly on power. The debate on human rights and the demand for their protection is therefore not only natural but imperative in any country that aspires to be a democracy and claims to care for its citizens. If the state of human rights is not right, the whole State cannot be right: accordingly, the State of India is no longer right or democratic.

In the context of the US–China rivarly and gradual preparation for a future global-scale military confrontation, for which both parties have gradually been gearing up since the mid-1990s and which may materialiase by 2050, India is indisputably a most valuable asset for the US and its allies, including the NATO, the EU, Australia, Japan, South Korea, Argentina, Saudi Arabia, Israel, etc. On its part, India is existentially interested in becoming an essential element of the block aimed to confront the insecurity and spectre of military hostilities coming from India's two arch-enemies, China and its 'all-weather friend' Pakistan, and their potential allies of Russia, Belorus, North Korea, a number of African states, Iran, probably Afghanistan, etc. Sadly, it is to be expected that the US/EU ties will be cemented in the near future in steps, one of them being the crucial India–United States Civil Nuclear Agreement of 2005, and another one – EU-India Free Trade Agreement,

Investment Protection Agreement and Geographical Indications Agreement – being currently negotiated. The strategic role envisaged for India in the global game makes its highly unlikely that any potential partner – be it US or EU – could have any leverage over India on how it approaches the issues of human rights and democracy. What counts is the *real politik* and the strategic position of India, not its performance with respect to respecting human and civil rights and democratic values or its status as an emerging autocracy.

[chapter submitted in early 2023]

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Whose Ubuntu? Rethinking Rwanda's Gacaca Transitional Justice System



Mechthild Nagel

Abstract Gacaca, a transitional justice judicial practice in Rwanda, has been hotly contested over the last decade. A minority view calls it legal terrorism or even genocide, while much of the international peace studies community considers it a shining example of Ubuntu ethics, i.e., a successful tool of reconciliation initiated by Tutsi survivors who offered reintegration to former perpetrators (Hutu). Never has a legal instrument been described in such stark and contrasting ways. Where most scholars see a positive contribution to peacemaking in a postwar society and use the Southern African term, Ubuntu, I consider such a view misguided and label Gacaca a practice that employs Ubuntu in the negative. Its excesses showcase negative ethnicity, a persecution of innocent bystanders, Hutu, such that Gacaca proceedings often had the character of a show trial. What occurred under the watchful eye and praise of international observers, such as UN observers, NGOs, and scholars, was a "trial run" of ethnic supremacy writ large—across all sectors of Rwandan society: a legitimation of an *ethnocratic* nation-state, where former Tutsi refugees control the seat of power, including ambassadorial appointments. Some 80 percent of Rwanda's ruling elites are Tutsi (Reyntjens 2021). I will take stock of the competing narratives by first offering a historical review of Gacaca.

1 Gacaca: Historical Origins and Today's Use

In precolonial Rwanda, nonviolent, minor disputes were handled by reputable elders, and since Gacaca means grass in Kinyarwanda, the elders arranged meetings in open areas, in other words, the commons. The goal of punishment was restitution and working toward reintegrating responsible parties into the community, thus attempting to reestablish social harmony. By reintroducing this precolonial legal

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practice, the Rwandan government was able to extoll the virtues of indigenous justice. Rather than utilizing the western rule of law, which would have delayed the process of determining the fate of tens of thousands of remand prisoners, it was agreed to expedite verdicts by using informal Gacaca village courts across the country with untrained lawyers as judges, especially given that the Rwandan prisons were dangerously overcrowded with accused genocidaires. As a concession to western pressure, they also abolished the death penalty, as did South Africa during its own transitional justice period a decade earlier. However, the facts on the ground did not present a bucolic return to past practices of reconciliation, even though this was the expressed language of the government and repeated naively by outsiders. Lars Waldorf (2009) considers the present-day version of Gacaca as bearing "no resemblance to precolonial dispute resolution—other than the name" (p. 290). How could outside observers continue to be fooled and conflate the two practices?

2 Misconceptions of the Goals of Gacaca

Outsiders were easily misled when the government of the New Rwanda announced that Gacaca represents a kind of "restorative justice," echoing what was at play in the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) proceedings in the new South Africa a decade earlier. After all, Desmond Tutu, who chaired the TRC, invoked Ubuntu as a moral fabric of South Africans who investigated the crimes of state actors and rebels during apartheid. A commitment to truth-seeking should be married to a pursuit of social harmony, and amnesty was promised to those political actors who shared the truth about the atrocities they and others committed. Similarly, this could have been a laudable pursuit in Rwanda, but it was not to be. Some 30 percent of accused Hutu genocidaires were acquitted, which alleviated the alarming overcrowding of prisons. Yet, 1 in 10 people were sentenced to life, and the majority of Hutu received 5–25 years (Gakuba 2012).

However, the long decade of formal indictments, verdicts, and appeals showcased the victor's justice, because none of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) soldiers were indicted. For a moment, the 1994 genocide named the Tutsi and moderate Hutu as the main victims. During the Gacaca proceedings, which began in 2001, the "moderate Hutu" disappeared, and no Hutu family could bring forward claims and grievances. In fact, after 1994, the world witnessed another genocidal practice: the targeted killing of 25–45,000 Hutu civilians, and thousands more in Hutu refugee camps in Northwest Rwanda (1997–1998), and in the neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo. President Kagame's government and the RPF deny responsibility for any atrocities, while they continue to provide logistical support to the Tutsi-led M23 Congolese rebel group through the involvement of the Rwanda Defense Force.

The victor's justice was easily, rhetorically, circumvented by the production of false narratives including slogans such as "justice for the people, by the people" and religious leaders within Rwanda and beyond opined that Gacaca "gave the offenders

the opportunity to repent, and the victims the opportunity to forgive them" (Bishop Rucyahana, chair of Rwandan Commission for National Unity and Reconciliation, cited in Gakuba 2012). Equally, Archbishop Desmond Tutu announced his support, repeatedly, lauding Rwanda for using peaceful legal means to reconcile with each other (Tutu 2015). The international legal community celebrated Gacaca as "a truly hybrid postcolonial cultural form" using colonial penal codes along with restorative justice "of its indigenous roots" in a modern nation-state (Meyerstein 2007). And philosophers who are experts in Critical Race Theory hold up Rwanda's path as an impressive achievement of putting the past behind and establishing a "colorblind society" (Alcoff 2015). Indeed, international observers and those studying the official record today are beholden to a seductive rhetoric that insinuates the following achievement: traditional justice becomes transitional justice. However, several critics have noted that there is in fact nothing "traditional" or "hybrid" about the Gacaca proceedings. For those who defend the hybrid narrative, the court of informal judges was partial toward the prosecution, allowed witness intimidation, and if there were Tutsi protests of "lenient" judgments, the appellate hearings showcased victor's justice in many cases. How could a miscarriage of justice occur under the watchful eye of international human rights observers and nation-states providing material support for Gacaca?

2.1 Negative Ubuntu Ideology

The RPF's victory and liberation of the country led to scores of Hutu, fearing reprisals, and escaped to a neighboring country. Kagame's soldiers' atrocities were minimized and, while establishing the government, these were ignored. Even the merciless killings of Hutu families in the DRC were never labeled genocidal. There was only one legitimate victim group: Tutsi survivors. Within a decade and with the establishment of the Gacaca court, the other victim, the "moderate Hutu," disappeared completely, and Hutu family survivors could not pursue legal claims against other Hutu who murdered their loved ones. Thus, the 1994 genocide of Tutsi and moderate Hutu was rewritten by the victors, specifically, by Tutsi expatriates who returned to the country.

In the words of Desmond Tutu, Ubuntu ethics is part of a pan-African worldview that emphasizes the virtue of interrelatedness. It does not disparage the stranger, the Other, the oppressor who harms the self. Ubuntu ethics were important to Tutu insofar as he asked fellow South Africans to forgive whites who used apartheid to divide and rule the country for two generations. Thus, Ubuntu signifies the demand for shared humanity and asks perpetrators to confess, and victimized people to forgive them (Tutu 1999). It leads Tutu (2015) to claim:

> Indeed, the Gacaca traditional community courts established in Rwanda are an extraordinary example of the ability of a nation that was once convulsed in genocidal violence to heal itself through reconciliation and forgiveness. More than 12,000 community-based courts

> tried more than 1.2 million cases throughout the country. The justice they sought was often restorative rather than punitive.

Yet, Tutu underestimates the power of *ressentiment* or seething hatred against all who conspired to drive out an elite for several decades. Will such emotion suddenly be quelled through a harmonious Gacaca process? Far from it. The trials procured the legitimation of ethnic hatred by other (legal) means and established, by force, negative Ubuntu ideology, disguised as a "genocide ideology" (discussed below). It follows a Manichean logic: All Hutu are marked as potential *genocidaires* and thus unworthy of personhood and full citizenship, whereas all Tutsi are described as fully humans, attaining "genocide citizenship" through victimhood, including those who were *not* living in the country during the 1994 genocide.

The seeds of ethnic division (and negative Ubuntu ideology) were sown in the European conquest. The German and Belgian colonial powers used the common strategy of "divide and rule" by intensifying and exploiting the existing hierarchical relationship between the ruling elite, the Tutsi, and the peasant majority, the Hutu. By the mid-twentieth century, the Belgian regime and the Catholic church had realigned with the Hutu, which emboldened the latter to wage a revolution in 1959, successfully driving out Tutsi elites. President Paul Kagame grew up in a refugee camp in Uganda, and his family endured in exile for decades. Kagame's military prowess finally succeeded in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide. His forces did not come to the rescue of any Tutsi, even though he portrays himself as the savior of his ethnic group (cf. BBC 2014).

The legal prescription of the Gacaca law seemingly has universal reach. Its courts aimed at fact-finding to ascertain the truth; ferret out ill intent, i.e., a culture of impunity, of those promulgating genocide; offering unity through reconciliation; and that citizens can bring about penal solutions based on their "Rwandan custom" (Preamble 2001). I argue that the language of the Preamble is already ominous in qualifying who could possibly be charged with crimes. The prosecutorial reach would not extend to the "liberators" even if they had committed atrocities against members of an ethnic group. Furthermore, Hutu killing other "moderate" Hutu, as was certainly the case in 1994, was no longer recognized after 2001, as only Tutsi were acknowledged as a victimized group. Even peace organizations such as Never Again Rwanda and Interpeace, whose study on postgenocide civil society participation was sponsored by the Swedish government, excised the death of moderate Hutu in their report (2016). The Preamble also leads to an instrumentalization of Gacaca proceedings as having their genesis in precolonial Rwanda. Yet, far from establishing values of authenticity and sincerity about reconciliation and unity, the longue durée of the wholesale persecution of Hutu bystanders showcased widespread fear and prompted "voluntary" departure of Hutu citizens from Rwanda. Each defendant had to follow a scripted apology to plead for leniency, such as conscripted work. Notably, this remand prisoner made the following confession to save him from a prison sentence:

> One day I decided to tell them that I realized that I took part in what happened. They asked me "do you admit your crimes?" and I said "yes." They said "OK, tell us more." I told them

> that I did not help them and "you were brothers and I did not sensitize Hutus not to kill you." So, their hearts were relieved. And then, when we walked out, some thanked me for doing that, and they said they wished I would have done that before. They said "*we knew you didn't eat our cows or destroy our houses or kill any of our family members, but you were watching when it happened and you knew about the plans and this is what we were looking for.*" (Horovitz 2016, p. 542, emphasis mine)

Might it be that such bystander actions of omission incriminate an entire populace? Otherwise, it would have been inconceivable that lay judges tried close to 2 million cases. Some scholars admit that witnesses were killed or intimidated and that judges took bribes, yet they still defend Gacaca as an instance of Ubuntu ethics and restorative justice (Teleki and Serges 2020).

What the Kagame regime perfected is a perceptual shift from punishing actual violent crimes to a concentrated pursuit of those who were critical of him, the army, or the Gacaca process. During the height of the repressive trials in 2008, Kagame's autocratic regime passed a new law that would punish those guilty of genocide denial, in other words, "genocide ideology." Such a law led to more witch hunts against those daring to speak truth to power. Notably, it sought out those who made it their righteous cause to save Tutsi neighbors and friends from certain death. Mark Geraghty shares his observations of one such maligned hero, François Mitterrand. He eschewed anonymity and witnesses were brave enough to testify in his favor. Mitterand saved almost one hundred Tutsi from certain death and still was retried six times till a Gacaca judge produced a guilty verdict: life imprisonment in solitary confinement (the clear marking of a political prisoner). A "genocide" accusation became a tool for the redistribution of scarce resources, and the Hutu neighbors' economic well-being drew wrath and jealousy. With a new law proscribing "genocide ideology," it was easy enough to accuse a Hutu adult of committing such a grave offense to be adjudicated by his peers of Tutsi neighbors.

Mark Geraghty (2016) argues that the Gacaca process was a state-engineered witch hunt, not exacting blame and revenge for the genocide of 1994, but for the 1959 Hutu revolution that drove elite Tutsi such as Kagame's family into exile. It is obvious that not only did Gacaca ensnare over 1 million Rwandan people as defendants, but it ended up being seen as benefiting a Tutsi elite that now controls all aspects of government (Kuradusenge 2016). To cast Gacaca as restorative justice continues a useful ruse, but, in reality, it did not benefit the survivors of genocide, nor did it contribute to truth-telling and reconciliation. On the contrary, Gacaca proceedings sowed suspicion and distrust among current neighbors and within families, so that appeals to positive Ubuntu and restorative justice are completely farfetched. Mitterand did not escape abroad for political asylum, but another Rwandan who rescued over 1200 Tutsi did leave with this family for the United States, and his family endured years of intimidation by Kagame's charges.

Paul Rusesabagina, the one-time hero of *Hotel Rwanda* fame, was kidnapped abroad, tortured, held criminally responsible for his political activities, and convicted in a kangaroo court proceeding for terrorism charges: "Judges did not address the allegations of ill-treatment and fair trial rights violations raised by Rusesabagina and his lawyers throughout the trial" (Human Rights Watch 2021). He holds Belgian

citizenship and was sentenced to 25 years. Gacaca and its aftermath leaves a trail of unanswered questions as well as a lack of accountability for atrocities committed by Kagame's insurgent military and paramilitary forces. International scholars have been intimidated and refused reentry visas if they were all too critical, and it should give us pause that Rwandan informers who speak their truth usually do not disclose their names for fear of reprisals. After all, political prisoners and even Tutsi defectors, a spy chief, bodyguards of Kagame, have faced severe torture inside Rwanda's notorious prisons and police stations and mortal danger while living abroad (HRW 2016, Smith 2014).

3 Lessons from Rwanda

A decade after the end of the Gacaca courts, we can take stock and notice the following: Gacaca is still promoted as one of the great transitional justice accomplishments across Africa and the world. It is heralded as an indigenous peace practice amplifying the goals of shared humanity—Ubuntu ethics. I suggest that nothing can be further from the truth, but it is easy to succumb to confirmation bias: a president, scholars, and NGOs praising Gacaca as restorative, as the way forward for the new Rwanda, in a similar way that the TRC served the new South Africa well. Peace studies advocates hope for warring parties to overcome their differences and be peaceful neighbors again and intermarry. Rwanda's laws proscribe the naming of Hutu and Tutsi today, yet everyone knows who belongs to which group, which means who gets access to citizenship rights and who is utterly marginalized. Genocide ideology charges carry life-long imprisonment, and the police-state environment keeps the entire population in shock and awe. It is futile to run polls, taking the pulse of the people, unless complete anonymity is assured. And even then, there is little trust to speak out, because the consequences are so dire. If Gacaca worked to promote Ubuntu, why then are the Rwandan prisons full beyond capacity? In fact, Rwanda's prison rate is the highest across the continent, and even in absolute terms, its prison population is higher than that of Nigeria (Prison Studies 2021).

Kagame has also been called the most impressive and the most repressive president by the paper of record, *The New York Times* (Gettleman 2013), and since then he has been president of the African Union. Gacaca could not have worked without bringing many Hutu before the courts to answer charges of genocide or denial that genocide ever existed. It is then suspected that ethnicity is "erased" altogether, while Tutsi occupy all sectors' leadership roles. What it speaks to is a continuation of negative ethnicity, where loyalty toward one's ethnic group is rewarded, and disloyalty gets punished (wa Wamwere 2003). As former political prisoner Koigi wa Wamwere notes, the corrupt politician's campaign promise to his ethnic group, "it's our turn to eat!" gets turned into something more sinister: "it's our turn to rule" with an iron fist. Such a rule, which quells dissent, will surely unleash unrest and all-out

violence. The Gacaca courts were used to subdue discontent momentarily, but it is quite certain that they brought no reconciliation in the long run.

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Education as a Legitimate and Effective Instrument of External Democracy Promotion



Louise Passow

Abstract One of the main arguments of international democracy promotion is that democracy can contribute to peace. However, in the face of global trends of autocratization, as well as the consequences of the invasion of both Afghanistan in 2001 and the Iraq war in 2003, efforts of democracy promotion by external actors are increasingly questioned. Apart from the more evident failures, however, from a normative perspective, external democracy promotion can also be criticized for culturally imperialistic and paternalistic practices. This chapter therefore addresses the question of how external democracy promotion (EDP) can be both legitimate and effective. At the heart of this discussion is the hypothesis that education, if based on democratic principles of teaching and learning, holds great potential for promoting peaceful democratic transitions. The chapter is organized as follows: The introduction addresses the relationship between peace, democracy and democracy promotion. In the second section, in the absence of a comprehensive theory, I examine various conceptualizations of external democracy promotion with respect to how they contemplate the role of education. Thirdly, I discuss how education can address the need for context specificity in external democracy promotion. The chapter ends with a summary and discussion of the limitations of the hypothesis, from which I derive ideas for further research.

1 Peace, Democracy and External Democracy Promotion

Peace and democracy are closely linked. This link, however, is twofold. On the one hand, as democratic peace theory argues, democracies are less likely to go to war with each other. On the other hand, democratization processes often imply the redistribution of political power and institutional change, which in turn can cause political fragility and insecurity and entail the risk of violent conflicts. However, once a

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regime is democratized, the political institutions are then established, including the rule of law, the protection of human rights, and the promise to reduce internal injustices. Thus, democratic political institutions contribute to what Galtung (1964) called 'positive peace', which is also built on sustainable investments in economic development as well as societal attitudes and consequently makes the (re)emergence of violent conflict less likely.

Czempiel (1998 p. 65) supported this thesis by pointing out that peace needs to be understood not only as an ideal state but also as societies' continuous effort for peaceful interaction based on democratic orders. Based on his research on different European countries' pathways of democratization, Senghaas (1982) identified six basic conditions for making peace through civilizing conflicts meaning the establishment of a '"social order" […] whose effect is to allow conflicts in general to be managed in a non-violent reliable manner' (Senghaas 2004 p. 26). In addition to the state's monopoly on the use of force, the rule of law, interdependencies and control of emotions, social justice and a constructive culture of conflict, he emphasizes the importance of democratic participation in securing state stability. Although Senghaas' 'Civilizational Hexagon' can be criticized for being inherently Eurocentric (cf. Jaberg 2011 p. 94), it points to the idea that democratic institutions, practices and competencies have a considerable positive effect on sustainable peace—an observation that has been supported by a number of authors from the Global North and Global South alike (Freire 1971, Nhema 2004, Scheunpflug et al. 2019).

Against this background, the global trends of 'democratic regression', 'authoritarian resurgence' or even 'democratic backsliding' (cf. Lust 2015; Haggard and Kaufman 2021; Carothers and Press 2022) seem to destroy hopes for worldwide peace that had risen after the so-called third wave of democratization at the end of the last century (cf. Huntington 1991a). Freedom House data show that between 2006 and 2022, more countries experienced democratic regression than progress. The contrast between the number of countries on the democratization track and those who are sliding in the opposite direction only peaked in 2020 (Repucci and Slipowitz 2021 p. 2). Since then, the report identified more countries in the world as 'partly free' or 'not free'. In 2021, only 25 countries were democratizing, whilst the democracy index for 60 countries decreased (Repucci and Slipowitz 2022). This implies that a growing number of governments around the world began to restrict the space they had previously granted to civil society, both through formal legal and extralegal measures (Brechenmacher and Thomas 2019 p. 1). These 'shrinking civic spaces' are accompanied by severe cuts in the rights of association and organization (Repucci and Slipowitz 2021 p. 16). The CIVICUS Monitor for 2021 shows that civil society continues to operate in increasingly hostile environments. A total of 117 out of 197 countries are rated as countries that significantly restrict civil society spaces, often in the form of new laws on NGOs, administrative regulations, and measures ostensibly aimed at combating terrorism (cf. CIVICUS 2021).

However, not only domestic actors have an interest in countering the trend of shrinking spaces to promote peace. Various foreign and development policy initiatives have been initiated at an international level to advance the global spread of

democracy and the implementation of good governance in other countries under the umbrella of the liberal world order, especially since the end of the Cold War. Indeed, external democracy promotion[1] has become an integral part of the foreign policy agendas of most OECD countries (Leininger 2015, p. 509), although countries continue to differ in their understanding of what democracy promotion means (Bush 2015, 55f.; cf. Wolff 2012, 2013; Poppe et al. 2014; Wolff and Spanger 2014; Holthaus 2019). From an academic point of view, however, external democracy promotion can be defined as '[…] aid specifically defined to foster opening in a non-democratic country or to further a democratic transition in a country that has experienced a democratic opening' (Carothers 1999 p. 6).

In light of the above-mentioned stagnating and declining democratization processes, the persistence of authoritarian regimes in the Arab and (Central) Asian regions, the failure of the peace missions in Iraq and Afghanistan and the economic successes of autocracies such as China, the success, legitimacy and credibility of international democracy promotion have been increasingly questioned by researchers as well as various civil society actors, mostly coming from the critical (left) spectrum (Carothers 2006, p. 56, Bush 2015 p. 3; Leininger 2019 p. 448). In addition, as the '*war on terror*' made clear, the conflicting goals of state interests, democratic norms and peace and stability have not disappeared (Spanger et al. 2008 p. 2ff.). Moreover, democratic regression poses not only an argumentative but also a practical challenge to democracy promotion as, for instance, many foreign NGOs, in common with their domestic counterparts, are affected by restrictive NGO laws associated with *shrinking civic spaces* (Brechenmacher and Thomas 2019 p. 1). Even though development actors, in particular, have agreed on and are increasingly committed to the central principles of international cooperation such as (local) ownership and cooperation at eye level, this resistance to external democracy promoters continues to be justified on the grounds of national sovereignty and ongoing decolonization struggles (Unmüßig 2016). So, while the goals of democracy promotion may be valuable from a Western perspective, they may still be perceived by recipient countries as a type of cultural imperialism (Spitzenpfeil 1996 p. 47). Some scholars even argue that democracy promotion is always contradicting the principle of nation-state sovereignty under international law and appears as an oxymoron when citizens are supposed to achieve more freedom and self-determination through paternalistic actions (Schreck 2020 p. 72).

The criticism unfolds along two lines: effectiveness (in view of current developments and autocratic regressions) and legitimacy (in light of the selfish motivation

[1] In general, democracy promotion is understood as a national and international field of action of state and non-state actors to support and implement political and social democratization processes. It is thus primarily aimed at political and social transformation processes. External democracy promotion encompasses those policies and measures that actors outside their territory attempt to implement in another state. In contrast to state- and peace-building, democracy promotion (like autocracy promotion) aims to establish and perpetuate a certain type of regime. However, democracy promotion can also be a national activity, for example, when it comes to the domestic promotion of the democratic culture. (cf. Leininger 2019, p. 447) In the following, "democracy promotion" always refers to its international/external dimension.

of donors, illegitimate claims to rule by the West and questioned from a neocolonialist perspective) (ibid. p. 71).

Counterarguments given by advocates of democracy promotion, in turn, are both instrumental (democracy promotion as a means to an end) and normative (democracy promotion as an end in itself). Frequently referenced is the above-mentioned theory of democratic peace, in which the worldwide establishment of democracy is a decisive precondition for maintaining security and peace between and within countries (Gleditsch et al. 2007 p. 1). In addition, based on modernization theory, there is the hope that democracy promotion will also serve to achieve other transformation goals such as socioeconomic development (Kuenzi 2011 p. 5; Chzhen 2013 p. 2). Normative justifications are mainly based on the idea that only democracy promises to guarantee the most comprehensive form of self-determination and the protection of human dignity (Gebauer 2011 p. 15). Finally, the advocates of EDP argue that all related efforts do not necessarily undermine the principles of sovereignty and national self-determination (Grävingholt et al. 2009b). Instead, there is a broad consensus that the success of EDP would depend to a large extent on the context-specificity, credibility and continuity of the measures applied, consistent planning, and the consideration of the do-no-harm principle. Meanwhile, military and other coercive means, as well as democracy promotion efforts, which are solely targeted at the transfer of resources and profits to donor countries, do not seem sustainable from a research perspective (Grävingholt et al. 2009a, 2009b p 1f., Adam 2012 p. 421f., Merkel et al. 2003 p. 199).

Hence, the question arises how democracy promotion—if it is not to be completely abandoned—can be designed and implemented in a manner that does justice to both international norms such as sovereignty and self-determination of people and normative implementation principles of development cooperation including sustainability. The German Institute of Development and Sustainability published a paper raising the question '*What the EU should do for democracy support in Africa*', in which ten concrete strategy reform proposals are made. Among them, one proposal calls for the intensification of '*[S]upport for civic education and [the] launch [of] new initiatives to strengthen transnational relations between African and European societies*' (Hackenesch et al. 2020 p. 33). Likewise, many Western countries' development cooperation agencies claim the 'radiant power' of education for democratic transformation and peace. The USAID education strategy of 2018, for example, states that '[q]uality education leads to greater economic growth, improved health outcomes, sustained democratic governance, and more peaceful and resilient societies' (USAID 2018 p. 4). The G7 particularly invests in girls' education within the framework of the multilateral fund Global Partnership for Education in order to '[…] harness the power of democracy, freedom, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights' (Global Partnership for Education 2021). Their investments are based on the broad academic discussion that has yielded a number of empirical studies which suggest a close relationship between education and democratization (Barro 1999, Glaeser et al. 2004, Dee 2004, Stromquist 2005, Glaeser et al. 2007, Alvarez et al. 2009, Mattes and Mughogho 2009, Dee 2010, Harber and Mncube 2012, Chzhen 2013, Alemán and Yeaji 2015, Bougharriou et al. 2019).

Thus, in the following, I will explore whether, and to what extent, educational measures fulfil the promise of establishing legitimate and efficient EDP. To do so, first the role of education in the theoretical discourse on EDP is outlined. This is followed by a discussion of education in context-specific EDP.

2 The Role of Education in EDP Theory

Following the increase in EDP efforts, since the 1990s, a growing number of academic studies have addressed this topic. Hence, democracy promotion can no longer be considered a chronically under-researched field (Spanger et al. 2008 p. 2). By now, various attempts to differentiate between the form, instruments and purpose of EDP policies are circulating in research on democracy promotion whilst a general '*theory of democracy promotion*' does not exist since comparative studies on strategies, courses and effects of EDP do not yet appear to be based on sufficient empirical evidence and therefore cannot be theoretically generalized (Merkel 2010a p. 151). Nevertheless, there have been various approaches to scientifically conceptualize EDP that today lead the discussion. However, as most contributions to the academic discourse stem from political science, the International Relations (IR) literature lacks a clear understanding of the different forms of education in EDP as well as of its effect mechanisms. In the following, I will therefore discuss the various concepts of EDP as articulated in the political science literature and discuss each in terms of the underlying concept of education.

1. Several scholars, though not uniformly, differentiate between direct and indirect democracy promotion. In a broad understanding of direct democracy promotion, the concept implies (1) the support for elections, (2) the promotion of institutional reforms ('*good governance*'), (3) the strengthening of civil society by promoting its political activities, including support for health and education issues, and (4) protection and the guarantee of human rights (cf. Leininger 2015 p. 511). Measures of indirect democracy promotion then primarily pursue other goals (e.g. economic growth) and intend to promote democracy only as a secondary step (Burnell 2004: 105; Burnell 2007 p. 4; Weiffen 2009 p. 174, Leininger 2015 p. 511). On this basis, civic education for both political and civil society actors and also the broader public can be understood as a component of direct democracy promotion since it is inherently political. Development cooperation in the education sector (e.g. the support of a country's formal education system), in turn, corresponds with indirect democracy promotion. According to Carothers (cf. 2009 p. 8), civic education could then also be described as political democracy promotion, while projects related to education in general can be assigned to the development approach of democracy promotion. Moreover, as Freyburg (2012) suggests, education in the form of capacity building measures also occurs outside the narrow political and the education sector (e.g. training for staff in the health sector, in the infrastructure sector, in energy, etc.). These

programs can also contribute to democracy promotion by promoting democratic legal and administrative governance standards through trainings or capacity building measures. Theoretically they appear apolitical but are not yet fully conceptualized.

2. The literature offers a distinction between EDP concepts in terms of their intended effect mechanisms. If programs of civic education are moreover targeting civil society (e.g. training and further education in strategy or management for NGOs, scholarship programs and voter education), civic education can be described as a bottom-up instrument. However, civic education in the form of awareness-raising workshops on good governance, advice and technical support on electoral legislation and constitutional coaching can explicitly address political elites and thus be designed as top-down instruments of democracy promotion (cf. Nielinger 1998 p. 129, Gawrich 2014 p. 66).
3. Measures of EDP are also categorized into negative and positive democracy promotion instruments, as in Burnell (2000). Hazelet (2001) also metaphorically paraphrases this differentiation as 'carrots' and 'sticks'. This links, in particular, to the question of local ownership and the idea of partnerships on an equal footing, which are the central principle of development cooperation, in the context of which external democracy promotion is usually located. Positive instruments are those that give the target country an incentive to take democratization steps on its own, while negative instruments involve the threat and implementation of penalties in the event of undesirable development. Therefore, respective measures are considered ineffective and counterproductive (Karakas 2013, p. 35) as they rather tend to result in superficial-formal institutionalization. Sustainable promotion of democratization, in turn, requires partners who are themselves interested in change and convinced of the democratic reforms (Adam 2012: 420). The population and its organizations are 'on the one hand the engine for regime change, and on the other hand the basis for the consolidation of democracy and development of social trust' (Dauderstädt and Lerch 2005 p. 10; author's translation). This explains why local ownership is of particular relevance to a sustainable EDP. Indeed, transitions are always multicausal, and internal processes cannot be imposed. They cannot be promoted from the outside and are therefore only secondary (Merkel et al. 2003 p. 235). Positive measures of democracy promotion reflect internal aspirations for democracy and are therefore able to truly satisfy the above-mentioned principles of international cooperation. Compared to negative or coercive measures, which aim at a '"power over [the target country]", be it material or ideational, compulsory or institutional' (Wolff 2015 p. 233), positive EDP is oriented towards self-initiative, cooperation, assistance and (political) dialogue as well as the willingness of the recipients to learn (cf. Burnell 2000 p. 10, Merz 2008 p. 4). In this case, donors exercise a 'power to' (Wolff 2015 p. 233). Understanding 'education' in the German sense of *Bildung* [education] as 'the reciprocal exploration of the ego and the world' (Zirfas 2011 p. 13, author's translation) shows that education cannot be forced or imposed. To unfold its effect it requires not only acceptance but also cooperation and the active participation of the target group (Finkel 2014

p. 176). Indeed, *Bildung* encompasses 'the process of personal development and the result of this development process' (Fischler 2011 p. 33) or in the words of Sjöström and Eilks (2020, 56), '*Bildung* consists of autonomous self formation and reflective and responsible action, and in interaction with, society'. Consequently, educational means of EDP can be characterized as positive measures of EDP.

4. Leininger (2010 p. 61) then dissolves the dichotomous distinction between positive and negative instruments of external democracy promotion, placing them on a continuum between coercion, conditionality, socialization and diffusion. Likewise, Richter (2009 p. 71ff.) distinguishes between incentive-based instruments (including conditionality and sanctions), persuasion, knowledge and technology transfer, control and monitoring and mediation. Reiber (2009 p. 65), on the other hand, proposes a differentiation between conditionality, social influence, material support, knowledge transfer and dialogue. Drawing on an understanding of education as individual capacities and endowments (Lenzen 1999 p. 177), the concepts of knowledge and technology transfer clearly suggest reference to educational activities in the framework of EDP but suggest a unidirectional relationship between donor and recipient. Socialization theory, in turn, provides another widely accepted theory linking education and democracy with each other (Wells 2008 106ff.). According to Hurrelmann and Bauer (2015 p. 156), socialization is the lifelong and active process of the formation and development of the human personality in *mutual* dependence on and in confrontation with the historically imparted social and material conditions of life. Education and the education system thereby play a mediating role. Scholars from the field of international relations (IR) have now shown that socialization processes can play out in the international arena (Schimmelfennig 2006; Flockhart 2005). Educational means, such as capacity building measures in EDP and the development of curricula and teacher training in international development cooperation programs might therefore unfold democracy-promoting effects, which can be subsumed under the umbrella terms of socialization or social influence.
5. Finally, some scholars specifically mention civic education programs in EDP. Like Carothers (2009 p. 8), who states that large-scale civic education programs do not necessarily have to be pro-opposition or otherwise pose a direct challenge to an established regime. Bush (2015 p. 57) refers to civic education as a regime-compatible and not measurable program of democracy promotion. Measurability in this sense implies the existence of '*quantitative, country-level indicators, which can document a country's progress (or failure) on a specific dimension and thus at least hold out the possibility of demonstrating short-term effectiveness*' (ibid. p. 58). This is in line with the finding that educational success and its effects are generally difficult to measure apart from enrolment or dropout rates and attempts to measure competencies since education only unfolds its effects in the long term, thus creating sustainable changes (Eschborn et al. 2011 p. 8). Furthermore, in the sense of Bush (2015 p. 54), a regime compatible as long as it does not seek to foster political competition or mobilize civil

society groups. Instead, regime-compatible programs have a low profile and are perceived by target-country leaders '*as unlikely to threaten their imminent survival by causing regime collapse or overthrow*' (Bush 2015 p. 54ff.) and are often part of direct cooperation between a donor and the incumbent (ibid. p. 67). However, Bush (2015 p. 61) does not specify precisely what is meant by '*civic education*' and places youth programs in the category of regime-incompatible democracy promotion, thereby referring to Huntington according to whom young people represent a '*universal opposition*' (1991b, p. 144). Since civic education programs do not necessarily have to target young people, it does not seem reasonable to classify civic education either as regime-compatible or—incompatible, based on the argument of a specific target group. In fact, this example demonstrates the diverse and multifaceted nature of civic education programs, which also determines how actors in the recipient country perceive them and whether they reject, accept, or even welcome respective projects.

Against this background, educational measures cover a broad spectrum of practical approaches to EDP in terms of target groups, sectors and intended effects. At the same time, it becomes clear that education in EDP is neither understood uniformly nor the specific logic of educational effects comprehensively considered. Thereby, the potential of education to shape EDP as legitimately and efficiently as possible remains unrecognized—possibly, this potential is even completely missed out on, if a humanistic understanding of education is overlaid by an understanding of education that is limited to the activity of educational institutions or the acquisition of knowledge and competencies (cf. Lenzen 1999 p. 177ff.).

3 The Challenge of Context-Specific EDP

In addition to cooperation on an equal footing and local ownership, context specificity is a central criterion for both sustainable development cooperation and EDP (Grävingholt et al. 2009b, Leininger 2019 p. 456, cf. Burnell 2004 p. 101). Above, I discussed that, at least theoretically, education holds great potential to be in line with the principles of cooperation at eye level and local ownership, depending on the underlying understanding of education. In the following, the focus lies on the principle of context specificity.

> The lack of blueprints for successful democratisation [sic!] must not lead to arbitrariness or the mere copying of preconceived models. Political systems evolve in context, and political transitions, too, depend on context. A high degree of context sensitivity and knowledge of context during policy planning and, on that basis, the development of strategies that are case-specific, appropriate and flexible enough to react quickly to political changes are the sine qua non of success. (Grävingholt et al. 2009b p. 2)

The context, and therefore the corridor of action for democracy promotion actors, is determined by very different factors such as political, social, cultural and economic conditions of a country (Merkel et al. 2003 p. 17).

In the same way, education experts call for educational programs to always be tailored to the participants/learners and their everyday lives (Eschborn et al. 2011 p. 6). In this respect, a first intersection of the discussed EDP principles and general didactical principles arises. Unlike in domestic education, however, special challenges arise in the context of international education in the North-South divide. *In addition to fundamentally different cultural and historical contexts that bring about ontological problems regarding the terms of democracy and education, educators often face* multiple practical challenges, amongst other deficits in the education system resulting in low literacy and a lack of knowledge about possible variants of social orders (Eschborn et al. 2011 p. 5). Moreover, the idea of learning group orientation is sometimes in great contradiction to the pedagogical and didactical practices in developing countries, even in adult education, which is often characterized by conservative educational traditions and top-down teaching styles (Eschborn et al. 2011 p. 7, Harber and Mncube 2012 p. 103ff., Lange et al. 2013 p. 130) and thus run contrary to the idea of a cooperation at eye level.

In the context of political education, what is discussed in the German-language discourse under the *Kontroversitätsgebot* [Precept of controversy] and *Überwältigungsverbot* [Interdiction of overpowering/indoctrination] gains particular relevance. Whilst the former demands an orientation towards science and requires teachers to discuss controversial subjects, the latter prohibits any kind of indoctrination. Political indoctrination, according to Harber (2016 p. 41), means the intentional attempt to inculcate values and beliefs as facts or truths and may involve deliberately falsifying or ignoring evidence. Adherence to these principles in educational EDP, given the inherent need to break with authoritarian concepts and deep-seated non-democratic values, is therefore no less challenging than context-specific adaptions of other non-educational EDP interventions. For education, however, the principle of context sensitivity demands a lot from the involved individuals themselves. They have to recognize the need for intercultural learning and dialogue and be willing to accept other ways of living, thinking and organizing politics and society (Holländer et al. 2008 p. 3).

In addition to recognizing cultural or social factors in the planning and implementation of context-specific (civic) education programs in democracy promotion, several scholars point to the transitional phase in which the partner country finds itself. In general, a theoretical distinction is drawn between three phases: de-institutionalization or de-differentiation (liberalization), reinstitutionalization (democratization) and consolidation (cf. Merkel 2010a, 2010b: 93ff., Rueb 1996 p. 111f.). In the phase of incipient liberalization, transformation takes place primarily through civil society in opposition to and confrontation with the state. For this reason, other forms of support seem appropriate here, compared to more advanced phases of democratization and consolidation. In this last phase, the establishment of democratic political institutions becomes more important (Bartsch 2007 p. 284f., Adam 2012, p. 430). Weiffen (2009, p. 185) therefore assumes that external influences can have the strongest and most lasting impact on democratic consolidation. Like any democracy promotion project, civic education activities must be

coordinated with regard to the phase-specific role of the target group, the partners and state actors. Moreover, especially when the incumbent authoritarian governments still hold a great deal of power, they will tend to reject any democratically connoted interference (Mair and Dierks 2008, p. 170). For educational activities in the framework of EDP, this might imply narrow thematic or content related as well as methodological limits that need to be recognized in this phase (Eschborn et al. 2011 p. 5, Loewe 2009 p. 3).

4 Conclusion and Outlook

This chapter provided a comprehensive overview of the potential of education in the context of EDP. The discussion highlights that education and EDP can mutually benefit each other to a great extent. However, it should still be noted: Education can harm (Bush and Saltarelli 2001, p. 35; Scheunpflug and Wenz 2018 p. 317), e.g. if it is exacerbating existing social inequality. Therefore, in order to unleash the potential of educational measures in EDP, education itself must satisfy democratic principles. Not only civic education measures but also development cooperation in the education sector, as well as capacity building measures in the EDP, must be based on the understanding of the citizens as political subjects and should not be derived from a model of an ideal political system (Kenner and Lange 2020 p. 48). Only then democracy, understood not only as a form of rule and society but also especially as a way of life (cf. Dewey 1916/2016), can be promoted sustainably (Lange et al. 2013 p. 128).

However, it should be noted that not all education is capable of resolving the intrinsic contradiction of, on the one hand, democracy as the elimination of oppression and, on the other hand, the involvement of external actors mainly coming from the West. Like EDP, education can also be hierarchically organized and reproduce oppression. Furthermore, the demand to strengthen EDP measures of education in Humboldt's sense—i.e. 'education understood as the holistic promotion of personal development in a reciprocal relationship between self and world—must not be understood as teaching the target countries' society how to learn 'properly'. In fact, this perspective shows that people are constantly learning and that *Bildung* already takes place always and everywhere. Incorporating this understanding of education into the EDP therefore opens up the possibility of linking the EDP to these existing educational processes, thus enabling genuine ownership of democratization.

Although education is not a new tool of EDP, and despite all commitments to harmonize development policies (see OECD 2005), we still find a fragmented picture of (civic) education efforts in democracy promotion (Eschborn et al. 2011 p. 8). This might be due to a general lack of cross-disciplinary cooperation in both practice and research. Democracy promotion, which is frequently focused on elections, still seems to tend to neglect capacity building measures and the promotion of education between elections (Resnick and van de Walle 2014 p. 42), whilst development cooperation projects in the education sector often hesitate to dive too deep into

the political struggles. Experts in international organizations responsible for democracy promotion are thus increasingly calling for the integration of findings and approaches from democracy promotion into the core areas of socioeconomic development cooperation, including the education sector (Carothers 2010 p. 19). Therefore, and against the background of criticism of democracy promotion, the potential of education for democracy promotion needs to be further explored. This also requires further research, especially taking a closer look at the understanding of education underlying current EDP practices, as this seems to be crucial for leveraging the potential of education for sustainable and peaceful democratization.

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Building Peace in Troubled Waters: Human Rights for Nutrition-Sensitive Governance (NSG) in the Western Indian Ocean



Antonio Allegretti and Bryan P. Galligan

Abstract In this chapter we spotlight the urgency of a nutrition-sensitive approach to the governance of coastal resources, particularly fisheries in the Western Indian Ocean region (WIO). We argue that a nutrition-sensitive approach to governance of fisheries necessitates breaking out of the medical field, to which nutrition is often relegated, and expanding the breadth of analysis to compelling questions that are on the current agenda for governance of oceans in the WIO region. These are broad questions that have to do with peace, security, and terrorism in the region, and they often go hand in hand with questions around economic development. Here we argue that peace studies and a peace-based approach to fisheries governance are useful if supportive of a shift from maritime security and economic development to a focus on human rights and human-centred development rooted in a fair access to good and nourishing food (i.e. fish) for all. We propose a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to fisheries governance grounded in three fundamental fisheries-related rights: (1) the right to food, (2) the right to fish, and (3) the right to a clean and healthy environment.

1 Introduction

The Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region includes mainland African countries (Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa) and island states (Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles); the region has a critical importance in terms of environmental resources (e.g. coral reefs), biodiversity, an annual 'gross marine product' of

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over US$20 billion, and an overall 'ocean asset base' of over US$300 billion (Obura et al. 2017). Of an overall population of 135 million people all countries combined, most of which are in the lower middle income range, an estimated 60 million are dependent on fisheries and other coastal marine resources for their livelihoods; these populations are having to face the effects of global challenges, including a progressive warming of temperatures that lead to environmental degradation (e.g. coral bleaching), and the consequent food-related challenges that impinge on the nutritional status of vulnerable people (Taylor et al. 2019).

Malnutrition, which is caused by the insufficient intake of micro-nutrients such as vitamin A, B12, iron, and zinc, causes around 12 million avoidable deaths each year (GNP 2021), limits childhood development (Victora et al. 2008), and decreases Africa's GDP by approximately 11% each year (IFPRI 2016). Fish and aquatic food in general have the potential to address different forms of malnutrition, particularly in regions with a history of food-related stress or crisis, including the WIO region (Golden et al. 2021, Hicks et al. 2019, Stevens et al. 2022). However, key governance transformations must take place for the potential of fish and aquatic food to be realized. In this chapter we spotlight the urgency of a nutrition-sensitive approach to the management of coastal resources, particularly fisheries. A nutrition-sensitive approach to fisheries governance requires an interdisciplinary approach that includes traditional questions about public health alongside insights from economics, ethics, and law. These are broad questions that are directly related to peace and conflict, especially where conflict is created by efforts to 'improve' and 'strengthen' fisheries governance through enforcement.

A nutrition-based approach to fisheries governance so conceived sits on a long and important history of intellectual development on the African continent. Humanist traditions in Africa such as Ubuntu (Liu 2022), non-violent civil resistance (Kurtz 2022), and post-colonial liberationist ideologies (Kouassi 2022) provide very solid foundations for a paradigm shift in ocean governance like what we propose here. That paradigm shift is based on fundamental human rights for collective development in the face of unjust resource exploitation and allocation. In what follows, we argue that a key ingredient for peace in the maritime domain is a human-centred and human rights-based approach to nutrition-sensitive governance that is rooted in providing fair access to good and nourishing food (i.e. fish) for all.

The chapter starts with a discussion of how maritime security has come to occupy a crucial place on the ocean governance agenda in the African continent in general, the WIO region in particular, and the connections with the current economic development agendas of the Blue Economy. These agendas often clash with fundamental rights of small-scale actors, who are often marginalized by them. As a result, the 'blue fear' these actors experience and the 'blue justice' they demand have become keywords in the debate around peacebuilding at sea. The second part of the chapter moves on to the relevance of international human rights obligations for ocean governance and proposes a human rights-based approach (HRBA) that can make governance of oceans more nutrition-sensitive, departing from three fundamental

human rights: (1) the right to food, (2) the right to fish, and (3) the right to a clean and healthy environment.

2 Discovering the Ocean: Maritime Security and the Blue Economy

2.1 Creating a New Order Through Maritime Security

Once a neglected issue on the security agenda in Africa (Bueger 2013), maritime security has become increasingly central and interwoven with a number of other concepts, practices, agendas, and relations around development on the continent (Bueger 2014). Increasingly, maritime security priorities and the governance structures that implement them are determining the strategic position of the African continent on the global political stage (Okafor-Yarwood and Onuoha 2023). These recent developments are the result of a conjunction of factors such as piracy, IUU fishing by distant water fleets, wars, and migration (Belhabib et al. 2019). These factors have led to insecurity and negative impacts on the management and sustainability of coastal resources, to which governments have responded by stepping up surveillance and enforcement measures (Belhabib et al. 2019). However, governments' stock militarized response to these problems has not proven effective.

Increased efforts in maritime security in Africa have led to the emergence of 'communities of practices' (Bueger 2013), national and transnational, to respond to the 'piracy momentum' (Bueger 2013). Not only the maritime security agenda has resulted in the emergence of these communities but, through a web of physical activities like patrolling and abstract images and imaginaries linked to maritime security, the ocean has also been 'rediscovered', that is, new epistemologies behind what oceans are and how they are known and experienced have emerged; Bueger and Edmunds (2021) have described these epistemologies as an attempt to create a 'new order' to 'replace' the 'dis-order' that spreading piracy has brought to African waters.

This new order occurs through processes of what Bueger and Edmund call *pragmatic ordering* (2021), that is, the enactment and application of practices of maritime security such as those for strengthened marine stewardship and the creation of borders and territorial waters, which are accepted and formalized as 'best practices' based or 'lessons learned' (p. 172). One specific instance of practice around maritime security, particularly in the WIO region, is (the expansion of) capacity-building activities and innovation for improved maritime security, that is, the development of human resources involved in maritime security and skills needed for these (Bueger et al. 2020). These concrete practices become 'normative endeavours' (Bueger 2017: 1308) that set the parameters for knowledge production to allow, sustain, and set off processes of 'discovery' of the ocean from the lens of security at sea,

effectively putting the ocean on the map of international relations (Bueger 2017, Bueger et al. 2020).

2.2 *The Ocean as a Gateway to Development: The Blue Economy Agenda*

Maritime security, particularly in piracy hotspot regions such as the WIO region, is closely interwoven with the other critical question around ocean governance, that is, the oceans as reservoirs of economic development, which in recent times has been framed around the so-called Blue Economy (Hamad 2016). Somali piracy, for instance, has had a dramatic impact on the Kenyan economy in relatively recent times (2008–2012), especially in the shipping industry (with a loss of US$300–400 million annually) and tourism (Benkenstein 2018).

Maritime security and the Blue Economy fulfil complementary roles towards the current vision for ocean governance (Hamad 2016). In the first place, maritime security becomes an 'enabler' of the blue economy, providing the necessary preconditions for the accumulation of capital, for instance by protecting shipping lanes and oil platforms. Maritime security activities are also themselves an opportunity for economic growth, and investments in the sector are growing (Voyer et al. 2018). In this context, maritime security becomes a subsector of the Blue Economy (Voyer et al. 2018). Current initiatives for ocean-related growth such as the EU-funded Go Blue and the Blue Economy Programme for Climate Change Adaptation in Kenya and Tanzania, respectively, or the World Bank-led Financing Mechanisms for Sustainable Blue Economy Development in Mozambique (World Bank 2021), to name but a few, include maritime security as one of their pillars, with capacity-building initiatives to sustain efforts in this direction.

Epistemologies of 'order at sea' are strengthened by the nexus between maritime security and economic development through blue growth. Here, security turns the ocean from an 'empty' space, or sea as 'placeless' (Germond-Duret 2022), into a venue for capital accumulation, as the sea becomes newly known through the processes of ordering and enclosure (maritime security), which prepare the way for subsequent economic exploitation (Germond-Duret 2022). These reconstructed and reinforced epistemologies restrict other kinds of spaces that are occupied by actors not accounted for in the spatialization of oceans so conceived. In reinforcing each other, maritime security and the blue economy shrink spaces for small-scale actors with a number of instances of marginalization, vulnerabilities, and invisibilities when it comes to the interests and the very existence of small-scale actors and stakeholders with a stake in ocean governance, including small-scale fishers as well as the whole host of actors on the margins of fish-based economies. It is not accidental that space-based concepts are often utilized to refer to the marginalization of these actors, such as 'frontiers' (Cohen et al. 2019) and 'boundaries' (Shutter et al. 2021),

as well as more general references to geographies, or spatio-temporalities (Childs and Hicks 2019) that refer more tellingly to the 'securization', in this case, of 'just spaces' for these actors (Cohen et al. 2019).

As imagined spaces shrink for these actors, so do actual spaces for livelihood opportunities, food and nutritional security, and sovereignty (Ayilu et al. 2022; Shutter et al. 2021) that are ensured by availability and access to nutritious fish for the most marginal communities (Childs and Hicks 2019; Cohen et al. 2019). These are undermined by counterarguments, which become hegemonic in blue economy discourses, on the food-related benefits derived from growth-based approaches to food production, particularly the strong focus on aquaculture, which is deemed to provide the 'protein fix' and fill the protein deficiencies in food-constrained countries (Brent et al. 2020).

These considerations have prompted proposals for Blue Justice and degrowth (Brent et al. 2020, Ertör 2021) that seek to respond to and criticize growth-based policies and agendas. These new proposals are intended to recentre interests and voices that so far have been left out of the realm of what is and can be known, talked about, and acted on about the ocean (Ayilu et al. 2022). When voices, peoples, and narratives are left outside or behind, we face epistemic injustice, which includes both hermeneutic injustice, in which conceptual resources are designed and deployed to facilitate oppression, and testimonial injustice, in which the credibility of certain voices and identities is prejudicially discounted (Fricker 2007, Schreiber et al. 2022). Recentring these voices, and recentring people in general, would require a dramatic turn away from the profit- and power-centred dispensation that currently structures ocean governance. It would also mean prioritizing basic unmet needs such as the provision of good and nourishing food for all. This change would represent a paradigm shift in ocean governance that seeks to replace the current focus on maritime security and capital accumulation with an alternative approach centring the universal demands of social justice and human rights.

3 Human Rights for Nutrition-Sensitive Fisheries Governance

International human rights obligations provide a strong legal and ethical basis to centre food security and nutrition in ocean governance. If the marginalization of small-scale fisheries and coastal communities in the WIO has created conflict, consolidated elite interests, and undermined food security and nutrition, a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to fisheries governance could reverse these trends. An HRBA puts the focus back where it belongs: on providing the necessary conditions for living a basically dignified human life (Ratner et al. 2014). In the context of coastal communities in developing countries, including the WIO region, an HRBA highlights two related issues: first, that small-scale fisheries (SSF) play a

central role in providing for a wide range of human rights (Willmann et al. 2017) and second, that the right to food should be the first priority for governance in these contexts (De Schutter 2012, Galligan 2021).

Human rights are derived from the philosophical concept of human dignity, which is the belief that all people are inherently valuable and thus deserve a certain minimum condition of well-being (Donnelly 2013). Human rights thus provide individuals with a rational basis to make justified demands of the societies in which they live, for example, that they be able to obtain sufficient food for themselves and their families or that they not be forced to live in fear of physical violence (Shue 2020). Some have argued that universal human rights are not universal at all and that they are instead a construction of Western ideology that plays into racist tropes (Mutua 2001 2008, Pollis and Schwab 2006). However, while originally articulated as a Western philosophical concept, they are not incompatible with non-Western philosophies (Donnelly 2013). In Africa, for example, the Ubuntu tradition puts forward a normative view of the human person as bearing rights that are inseparable from solidarity (Chasi 2014). African traditions of non-violent and liberationist philosophy, such as Pan-Africanism, are also consistent with human rights (Kouassi 2022, Kurtz 2022).

Although it is not immediately clear exactly who should be responsible for protecting human rights, almost every national government in the world has taken on rights obligations through national constitutions as well as binding and non-binding international agreements (Kuper 2005). Governments and individuals can even be held legally accountable for rights violations in judicial settings like the International Court of Justice for claims against states and the International Criminal Court for claims against individuals, although these systems are far from perfect.

What would it look like for ocean governance to be truly rooted in human rights? First, the nutrition and income needs of poor people would take priority over competing claims to resources (Galligan 2021). Second, the crucial role of other rights in meeting these needs, including the right to fish and the right to a healthy environment, would also be prioritized and protected against standard threats (De Schutter 2012, Skonhoft et al. 2009). In what follows, we discuss these three foundational human rights—food, fish, and the environment—in the context of fisheries and coastal communities and demonstrate how they provide a legal and ethical basis for nutrition-sensitive governance (NSG) (Allegretti and Hicks 2022).

3.1 The Right to Food

Although the contemporary definition of the right to food is relatively new, having adequate food is one of the most basic human rights required for a life of dignity (Shue 2020). In the international system, the right to food first appeared in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which included it under a broader right to subsistence, proclaiming that ‘everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself [*sic*] and of his [*sic*] family,

including food…' (UNGA 1948, art. 25). When UN member states negotiated the binding agreements that would implement the UDHR, they included the right to adequate food and described the freedom from hunger as 'fundamental' (UNGA 1966, art. 11). However, despite the status of food as an absolute precondition for human life and its presence in these foundational legal documents, the right to food was not emphasized as a guiding principle in global governance until the beginning of the present century.

The right to food gained increased prominence on the global stage along two parallel tracks, one within the area of food governance through the auspices of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and another through formal legal avenues within the UN system (Ziegler et al. 2011). At the FAO, the 1996 World Food Summit was seen by many as a watershed moment for the right to food. The summit's final document, a political declaration agreed to by 180 countries, affirmed 'the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger' (World Food Summit 1996). A second World Food Summit, held in 2002, included a similar recognition of the right to food and directed the FAO to compose voluntary guidelines that would clarify the right to food and how countries could implement it (FAO 2005; Ziegler et al. 2011).

While these developments were taking place at FAO, the UN human rights bodies were simultaneously strengthening the legal basis for the right to food, beginning with the Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC) General Comment 12 in May 1999. General Comment 12 was notable for two reasons. First, it provided an authoritative legal definition of the right to food, describing it as a condition that 'is realized when every man, woman, and child, alone or in community with others, have physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement' (ECOSOC 1999, para. 6). Second, General Comment 12 also affirmed that states had already taken on binding obligations to protect, respect, and fulfil the right to food under article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Just 2 years later, on December 19, 2001, the right to food was formally recognized by the General Assembly (UNGA 2002).

In the context of fisheries and ocean governance, the right to food grants priority status to those most in need of nutritional and income benefits from fisheries, who are often marginalized small-scale actors (Galligan 2021). Small-scale fisheries (SSF) make crucial contributions to realizing peoples' right to food by providing food and income to coastal communities (De Schutter 2012). SSF employ more people per ton of fish caught (Jacquet and Pauly 2008), distribute economic benefits more equitably (Béné et al. 2010), and can provide food more directly to undernourished communities (Arthur et al. 2022) than their industrial counterparts. They also provide key micronutrients in regions where nutrient deficiencies are common (Short et al. 2021). Disturbingly, however, new epistemologies, policies, and agendas at the maritime security-blue economy nexus are increasing the pressures of environmental degradation and competition for resources on SSF (Cánovas-Molina and García-Frapolli 2022), and both of these pressures are undermining the right to food in the WIO (March and Failler 2022).

3.2 The Right to Fish

One way of strengthening the right to food in fisheries governance is to strengthen the tenure rights of small-scale fisheries against the competing claims driven by processes of enclosure and 'blue grabbing' (Barbesgaard 2018, De Schutter 2012, FAO 2015, 2021). Tenure rights, such as access to fish or land, are not normally considered to be human rights (Song and Soliman 2019), but they are so central to providing for people's basic dignity that this is beginning to change (Appleby et al. 2018, De Schutter 2010). For example, the Small-Scale Fishery Guidelines and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure, both of which were approved by all FAO member states, both highlight the human rights implications of tenure governance (FAO 2015, 2022).

The right to tenure, or in our case the right to fish, is violated when SSF are denied access to their traditional resources. For example, Kenya has begun constructing a large cargo port in the north coastal town of Lamu (Galligan and Kinney 2021). The port's physical infrastructure, its security exclusion zone, and the newly dredged shipping channel leading to it are all located on traditional fishing grounds used by the local community (Okafor-Yarwood et al. 2020). Those fishing grounds are now either destroyed or inaccessible (Galligan and Kinney 2021, Okafor-Yarwood et al. 2020). A second example can be found in South Africa, where legal and policy reforms of that country's fishery access regime have consistently excluded SSF and even allocated some of their traditional target species to the commercial sector (Sowman et al. 2014, Sowman and Sunde 2021). These violations of people's right to fish also concretely undermine their right to food (Galligan 2021).

3.3 The Right to a Healthy Environment

A healthy environment is a key ingredient for food security in any context, but this is particularly true when it comes to capture fisheries, which represent the world's last major source of wild food. The right to fish, for example, is meaningless if the fish have been poisoned by an oil spill, removed by foreign trawlers, or displaced by climate change. Recognizing environmental health as a human right has been a decades-long project (Knox 2020). An early mention of this right can be found in the 1972 Stockholm Declaration, but its first appearance in an international legal instrument was in the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which declared that 'all peoples shall have the right to a general satisfactory environment favourable to their development' (OAU 1981, art. 24).

By 2012, 177 of the UN's 193 member nations had recognized the right to a healthy environment through constitutional, legislative, judicial, or treaty law (Boyd 2012). Finally, on July 28, 2022, building on previous work by the Human Rights Council (2021) and the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment

(Knox 2018), the UN General Assembly approved a resolution affirming the universal human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment (UNGA 2022). While the resolution did not define the content of this human right, it is generally understood to include both substantive elements, such as healthy ecosystems and a safe climate, and procedural elements, such as access to information and justice (OHCHR et al. 2022).

The right to a healthy environment is essential for protecting natural resource-based livelihoods like fisheries. In the WIO, overfishing presents a very serious environmental threat to SSF and to coastal communities' right to food (Taylor et al. 2019). A recent study found that around 80% of surveyed coral reefs in the region were overfished, resulting in several tons of lost food production each year (McClanahan 2022). Overfishing of coral reefs not only reduces the amount of fish available as food, but also reduces the reefs' resilience to climate change, which also presents a serious threat to tropical fisheries (Mellin et al. 2022). In some WIO countries, foreign fleets also contribute to overfishing through legal or illegal means (Belhabib et al. 2020).

4 Conclusion

In addition to being widely accepted legal and ethical norms, human rights provide an alternative discourse to the hegemonic approach to ocean governance characterized by the maritime security-blue economy nexus. Given the food-related challenges in the region and the potential of small-scale fisheries to address them, human rights also support the role of nutrition-sensitive governance. This chapter has argued that existing attempts to strengthen ocean governance have failed by any human measure because they are designed to facilitate the accumulation of capital according to logics of dispossession and exploitation. While clothed in the language of social progress, blue economy initiatives have reconstructed the ocean as (1) an empty space waiting to be exploited and (2) in need of ordering and enclosure to facilitate that exploitation, which has led to ongoing processes of dispossession for the many small-scale actors along the coasts of WIO countries.

The trio of human rights presented in this chapter—food, fish, and the environment—provide crucial protections for these actors and reveal the starkly damaging effects of the blue economy agenda by moving from the language of (not universally) desirable social benefits (e.g. macroeconomic growth) to the much stronger language of legal and ethical obligations. Perpetuating the current trend of securitization, enclosure, and marginalization cannot be considered a viable alternative when held up against the requirements of universal human rights. Naming these obligations underlines the gravity of coastal communities' claims, the legal and reputational liabilities facing governments who do not prioritize them, and the importance of centring people and their nutritional needs in ocean governance in the Western Indian Ocean.

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Densification and Production of Gaps: Political Re-reading of Government Interventions by Former LRA Returnees



Daniel Komakech

Abstract The paper establishes and elaborates on the mundane everyday experience of anxieties and uncertainties among former Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) returnees in Northern Uganda. Drawing on the narrative of 'neglect' and prompting a political re-reading into their precarious situations, the paper deploys new sets of conceptual tools and analytical categories of: *production of gaps*, *presencing*, *'always-already'*, *double-motives* and *political re-reading* to re-root certain modes of thoughts, knowings and practices as registers in the State-returnees complex relation. On its part, as the paper will show, the State, through its multiple interventionist programmes, argues that it is responding appropriately to the plight of the returnees. Building on the narratives and political re-readings from the LRA returnees and techniques of interventions from the State, the paper shows how this gets routinely intensified and complex.

1 Introduction

This paper seeks to invoke an unsettling reflection on the response of the State to the resettlement, reintegration programmes and activities in Northern Uganda. Picking up from the re-politicisation of the interventions and the notion of State *presencing*, the study takes time to understand what it means in the view of the returnees, to re-read State programmes as an appearance that has its own logic and politics (Purdekova 2016:6), and so, similarly, doubling as neglect. It tries to reach the State's underlying strategy of perpetuating itself and how 'production of gaps' fits the underlying strategies or instrumentalisation of its programmes and interventions. Consequently, to calibrate this delicate balance, it shifts from discussions on the 'effectiveness' of State programmes to discussions on 'productiveness' of its

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enforced articulations and narratives about its programmes. Accordingly, the study argues that the State's interventions function more within the logic of the State's survival or perpetuation (especially when it is clear that the State must not be seen failing or under any reprimand). From this point, it does not take reintegration and resettlement as a given but rather, as a problematic engagement.

On their part, by politicising or re-politicising resettlement and reintegration programmes through the proposition or articulation of 'broken' or 'empty' promises as forms of deception, the former LRA returnees unsettle the underlying political forces and make it less opaque and more visible. By producing negative trust capital against the State using the social contract proposition as a rebuttal, the returnees elevate their experience and uncertainties into the political scene. The paper deploys a rhetorical metaphor of *'returnees'* as a way of capturing the imaginations and subjective feelings among the returnees, while deploying *'State presencing'* as a way to enhance a mundane sight to reconfigure the State's capacity to replicate and redeploy responses in a layered mode of being opaque and visible.

2 Methodology

This research work is the result of a one-year fieldwork carried out in the Acholi Sub-region in Northern Uganda between March and November 2019. Drawing upon primary data of in-depth ethnographic field case stories, interviews and case studies of four (4) interlocutors and their family members (spouses, kin and kith), this study is located in the broader transitional justice and the intersection between transitional justice, reconstruction and development. The paper argues that by re-politicising resettlement and reintegration programmes through the proposition or articulation of 'broken' promises as forms of state *presencing*, the former LRA returnees unsettle the underlying political forces and make it less opaque and more visible. By producing negative trust capital against the State using the social contract proposition as a rebuttal, the returnees elevate their experience and uncertainties into the political scene. The geographical area of Acholi Sub-region in Northern Uganda, as a case study, was chosen to provide an empirical base to appreciate the complex nature of return, State intervention and reintegration.

The research draws from a range of formal and informal engagements. The following were widely utilised: observation, listening to stories and narratives, interviews and discussions. The study solicited about 22 returnees in total, and a diverse set of people, including eight opinion leaders, eight members of the security and eight local leaders. There was also an informal discussion with eight community members, two boda-boda riders, two coffee mates and two casual friends. The informal engagement on issues of return, interventions and reintegration with a few colleagues who came over for coffee and talking with boda-boda riders as they took me to my destination, was insightful. The jokes, remarks and the less structured and therefore, casual interaction, were very fruitful. Similarly, the opportunity offered

by informal engagement allowed for asking and clarifying many more questions, making the perspectives clearer or deeply reflected upon.

To be able to appreciate and understand the field data, the study sought interpretation and translation from the local area setting. In the same vein, the listening, observations and understandings were reinterpreted in the context in which the behaviour, actions, words and voices were performed. The Acholi Sub-region was not simply a geographical place of being located, but a space to read and learn. To protect informants, their identities were anonymised, or the use of pseudonyms was preferred. Lastly, the study makes no claim to total insights. Rather, it tries to capture some amount of insights as much as possible. The limitations of the study are as follows: It did not cover the whole of northern Uganda but was specific to the Acholi sub-region. In the section that follows, the paper very briefly traces the genealogy of the complexity, linking up the Juba Peace Process with the practices of return and reintegration. The objective is to provide context to the narrative, debate and entanglements.

3 The State and Returnees

In the mainstream, transitional justice (TJ) has been abstracted from its material and historical context and therefore, understood simply as a process to some finality. This transitional justice 'theory' has since become mainstream and preoccupied interventions. This mainstream assumes certain finality, namely, the interventions create a complete circle of restoration of post-conflict communities. This is enhanced by the traditional tendency that dismisses the complexity and potential for reversals from the idea of transitional justice in the 1990s, which puts emphasis on 'transition' as a linear progression to certain finality. However, in most transitional justice practices and interventions, we have seen co-existence of reversals almost after a transition, making transitional justice less predictable and therefore, an unregulated field. Consequently, treating it as a complex, the paper case studies the Northern Uganda scenario to understand the 'intervention and transition complex'. The study builds on this complexity to establish how the multiple spatial scales (rural, urban and Acholi sub-region) together with the multi-scalar political history of the local community of Acholi and the National Resistance Movement engagements have enhanced the politicisation of the interventions on the part of the government and feelings and attitudes on the part of the local community. This has reproduced this 'intervention and transition complex' instrumentalised in the political processes of election and voting in the Acholi sub-region. That means, a radical thinking to re-contextualise and re-politicise the transitional processes within the continuum of 'intervention and transition complex'.

Accordingly, the TJ process in Northern Uganda was framed around this ladder narrative. As a result, the crafters of the Juba Peace processes and the government of Uganda estimated that they would follow the necessary processes to a certain finality, which was resettlement and reintegration of the LRA combatants and

captives. This inspired agenda item V of the Juba Peace Agreement on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) that was signed in 2006 between the government of Uganda and the rebel group—LRA. This, in its view, was to harness this sort of normalised narrative about transitional justice processes stabilised in relevant international standards, including the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups. The government of Uganda instituted the Amnesty Act 2000 as a tool to end rebellion by encouraging renunciation of rebellion in exchange for no prosecution for picking up arms against the state (although this did not cover the top commanders who were already indicted by the ICC on account of crimes against humanity). The core areas of the Amnesty Act were: providing amnesty to rebels to renounce rebellion; second was, facilitating an institutionalised resettlement and repatriation process; thirdly, providing reintegration support like skills training for ex-combatants and promoting reconciliation. The Act also established the Amnesty Commission to implement the provision and issuance of the amnesty certificates. Although the act elapsed on 20th May 2012, an almost immediate public outcry, particularly from the Northern part of Uganda, forced the government to renew it on 25th May 2012, for another 12 months. However, Part II of the renewed Amnesty, 'Declaration of Amnesty', was removed by the Minister of Internal Affairs. This effectively ended the amnesty and left the Amnesty Commission with only the task of concentrating on the reintegration of ex-combatants already amnestied (Agger 2012:2).

It is important to note that the previous programmes were quite many, spanning from: Northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme (NURP- I from 1992 to 1998, NURP-II from 1999 to 2005, II, III) in the 1990s; in 2003, the government of Uganda established a USD133 million Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) programme to run up to 2010. This programme was meant to mainstream the strategic problem of resettlement and poverty reduction in the 18 districts of Northern Uganda. Upon its end, NUSAF II came into existence with a total programme funding of USD 100 million to end in 2015.

Like its predecessor I, it was to consolidate this effort but targeting more households and local communities in 40 districts, extending the geographical coverage beyond the traditional districts of Northern Uganda to include districts in Eastern Uganda. The rationale was that the districts in Eastern Uganda, like those in Northern Uganda, were to be assisted to 'catch up' with the rest of Uganda (Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey 2010:1219). Similarly, NUSAF III was established on 27th May 2015 worth USD 130 million, which extended districts beyond the traditional Northern Uganda districts, bringing the new total to 56 districts. As NUSAF was being implemented, the drafting of the PRDP ensued around 2005 and as a subsidiary intervention due to pressure from United Nations (UN), government of Uganda established the Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan (EHAP) in May 2006, which only closed with the launch of PRDP on 15th October 2007 as a development plan to help Northern Uganda transition for the war affected areas in Northern and Eastern Uganda.

However, both NUSAF and PRDP were mainstreaming rehabilitation, resettlement and poverty agenda in Northern Uganda, a number of pertinent issues became

apparent. First, it has been estimated that the interventions, particularly, the PRDP among the returnees, have been ambiguous with a largely vague blueprint for reconstruction, insufficient and strengthening existing elite networks instead (Odora 2011:41). In her view, PRDP has repeated the mistakes of previous programmes for Northern Uganda (Odora ibid.). Second, there has been a constant re-morphing of the political geography of the north, leading to a turbulent redrawing of the boundary of what traditionally constituted Northern Uganda, and as such, increasing the number of districts from 18 to 56. The implication has not been simply ambiguity in what or which districts constitute the north, but also creating obscurity and patronage in the interventions in the traditional north. Third, both PRDP and NUSAF were not designed as a programme to be implemented but as '…organizing paradigm that all stakeholders will adopt when implementing their programmes in the region" (GOU 2007:iii). This has since created a general feeling that most of these are 'money-seeking baskets' and a conduit for patronage and a façade for government to obtain donor funding and simply use it for State consolidation (Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey 2010:1234).

Drawn from a 'war story' assumption and potentially implicated as violence-prone (Laliberte 2016:27), the violence in Northern Uganda, and particularly the geographical imaginaries of the violence located in Acholi, has been seen by the government of Uganda as a place-bound violence and also as a post-war landscape for interventions. In this narrative, there is a merging of predilection towards violence, tying place and culture (Laliberte ibid.) and so, informing a certain intervention type or attitude. It is this discourse that has since been mobilised to shape how narrative and messaging that enforces and rationalises failures. The question is in which way is this possible? The Uganda's National Development Plan III argues that there were "certain elements in Uganda's traditions, culture and religious norms that were not supportive to modern approaches… and have therefore hindered economic growth and structural transformation" (Laliberte ibid.:31). This re-read from the vantage point of the north as the least developed of all the regions in Uganda, sees an implicit mention of the north as the culprit. Consequently, imbued in the programme, are blames of flailure on the population's own violence attributes and culture. This resonates with the neo-liberal logic that reduces failure(s) to personal levels and blames it on individuals as sufficiently not civilised or incapable of developing themselves.

In this case, the programmes were in a sense to help in re-governing of the north or Acholi, and using the programmes to 're-educate' and 'reorient' the people of the north, and particularly, the Acholi (Laliberte ibid.:22). With this in view, the war in Northern Uganda was reviewed more as a dysfunctional form of behaviour or culture of violence to be modified rather than an indication of structural problems. As such, reduced to a culture of violence, culminating in what Laliberte (ibid.:11, citing Escobar 2001:150) refers to as 'politics of fixity'. Within this logic, the interventions were not developed at the core but rather, to create a re-governing relationship. This last sentence comes as a surprise to both the readers and the government. The reason is, while the interventions were depoliticised as a result of place-bound violence or war in Acholi, this created its own government narratives and conversation,

producing a knowledge type that privileges blaming the Acholi communities for their own post-conflict situations. With these interventions depoliticised, it obscured the interventions and doubled as a platform for State control and governing. Otherwise, politicisation of the problem of the north and Acholi in particular, could have made the underlying political forces visible.

Nevertheless, a government-based indicator of reintegration is the state of peacefulness and security built around the notion that there is no more fighting, no more systematic violence and incursions from the LRA and no more weapons in the hands of former combatants and returnees. Additionally, the process of return and reintegration on the part of the government seemed not to be riddled with challenges and as such, not exactly a big question. This indicator is premised on the dominant literature that argues that return and reintegration is linear towards a certain finality, namely: taming or domesticating former combatants and returnees perceived to have a 'bush-like' behaviour. Within this frame, the 'reintegration' of the former combatants and returnees was high on the priority list because they were perceived to be a real threat to peace and stability and therefore, their containment became a strategic success.

On their part, the returnees faulted this approach, saying that it was skewed against them. Many have since argued that *'the government programmes and provisions lump the whole population together without due consideration for those who were abducted like us'*. That, *'NUSAF, PRDP and so on, are not for us'*. Another respondent argued that apart from the care from his parents and relatives, *'the government had not come to help us who were abducted. I do not know why the government thinks we are not there or is it because we have no voice or someone to talk for us?'* The general argument is that they: *'have not been helped much'*, while clarifying that the help they had received, one of the respondents said, was *'the usual package of beddings, some simple equipment and some little money from some NGOs*' and that, *'the government has not yet helped us and we are waiting'*. In general terms, what comes out is that the government interventions are not only limited and skewed but also not known by the returnees. Therefore, a combination of a number of things like: limited resource capacity, skewed and unknown programming have generated a feeling of neglect and confusion among returnees.

However, the expressions the study got from government officials pointed to a more concerted effort by the government to target and resettle the returnees. In a way of being infuriated, common phrases used by government officials ranged from: *'these people (referring to returnees) expect too much'*, *'reintegration has been fully carried out'*, *'joni ma gudwogo ki ilum (these people who returned from the bush)', 'returnees are the ones causing land conflicts'* and many other critical issues of the returnees.

At the end of the day, we seem to have heard both conflicting sides, all pointing towards recollection and unsettling the process on the part of returnees, while on its part, the government seems to be more inclined towards reducing controversy and recollection because it would stay the 'peace' and 'reintegration'. In cases of disclosure or memorial, which most times are carefully worded in phrases like *'maybe we did not do much'*, or *'well, this is a sensitive issue'* and so forth, it leaves the

argument in a state of ambivalence and ambiguity. First, it gives the impression of careful weighing, measuring and setting events to a scale (McCormack 2003:1), so that the narratives on the experiences are not wayward. Second, one gets the feeling of limiting platforms through which alternative narratives can be pursued, while reproducing a certain particular way of remembering, recollection and forgetting. Meanwhile, the returnees' narratives about their post-conflict experiences are new forms of co-producing and uncovering the materiality of unsettling post-conflict return and reintegration experiences and challenges, seem to re-signify the whole debate on post-conflict return, resettlement and reintegration. This reconnection seems to create subjectivities about the present or the post-conflict situation (Barrere and Bonnard 2012).

Examining the feelings of returnees on the terrain of return and reintegration, and how they feel, the common framing is that it is plagued with uncertainties, making 'return' and 'home' a complex and an unviable phenomenon. To them, the question of: 'return to what, reintegration to what?' is critical and yet unanswered. This is a re-reading and re-thinking of the durability and stability of return, and questioning whether there is a 're' anything, since there is a constant slipping into an abyss of '*nothing moving on while what is the case is a perpetual getting stuck'*. This is an act of unsettling return and reintegration, questioning its dominant assumptions and the pre-filled meaning (Purdekova 2015:12). To the returnees, return and reintegration as a subject of inquiry and practice in Northern Uganda has been fragmented and ambiguous, with no obvious meaning and therefore, complex. This alters the key themes and vocabularies for inquiry and relocating the subject of return and reintegration from a straightforward matter of fact to a complex one. In that case, it is a call to analytically think through how the returnees configure an alternative imagination of return and reintegration by denaturalising it into a 'de'-integration in order to establish in their views of a 're'-integration.

The questioning of their everyday uncertainty or problems for purposes of a critical re-reading has made the returnees possess a political character of reading situations politically. The constant hardship, anxieties and disappointment as a result of 'neglect' have made returnees question and sometimes reject even the 'official' presentation or narrative about return and reintegration popularly advanced as having been 'properly conducted' or 'ended well'. Instead, they read it politically as a political problem of 'being bypassed' and 'abandoned at home' (Purdekova 2016:18). From this point on, we need conceptual tools to explain this *political reading*, and how it interlaces with political notions and practices of election and voting in Acholi sub-region in northern Uganda.

4 Situating the Debates

Resettlement, reintegration and development have been mapped as intertwined in the mainstream literature, fueling the narrative that they are co-substantive elements (Black and Koser 1999, Koser 1997). Since the dawn of the twenty-first century,

around 2002, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Bank (WB) have consistently popularised this in its 4Rs: Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (UNHCR 1997:2, UNHCR 2004:268–271 cited in Tegenbos and Vlassenroot 2018:13), making it become more of an 'aid-centric' process or more attention to recovery of livelihoods (Tegenbos and Vlassenroot ibid.; citing Fransen 2017 and Bascom 2015). However, this has, in many ways, ignored the political realities in the decision-making. While the terms 'resettlement' and 'reintegration' are deployed, they remain what Macdonald and Kerali (2020) refer to as a formulaic mentality. One can say they are broad rhetoric with little space for consensus, what Dresch (2012:1) accuses as 'the explicit use of generalising concept' that has its own political normative terminology, expressing its 'oughts' and 'musts' of the normal. In this case, the normals are those who conform to a particular political 'normality' frame, and those who pose a threat to normality are acted on as part of the regulation of the social and political order (Macdonald and Kerali 2020). In this case, 'normal' is more of a political and less of a taxonomic classification, a sort of thing Fuller (1971) calls a political programme for living together.

However, the turbulent spaces of return, resettlement and reintegration narratives from the returnees point less to meta-narratives of TJ and more to the mundane everyday 'co-existence' reality (Prieto 2012), the ambivalence of rhetoric and, according to the returnees, the kind of things on the ground. It is this double that shifts the debate from the 'normative' to the 'politics' of resettlement and reintegration. Building on Hammond (1999:228), we rethink 're-integration', 'reconstruction' and 'recovery', and shift to an emphasis on 'social change' (social transformation) and much more, a 'social change' with a political process or act, making it a political contract. In that case, resettlement and reintegration is a political act to a political community, making it not simply a mere place or physical resettlement. That means a shift from 'residency' problem to more about the question of 'citizenship' (Tegenbos and Vlassenroot, Ibid.:12).

In that case, the resettlement and reintegration projects and programmes as part of TJ processes need to be seen in two ways: as expanding the State's reach as well as the State acting on the returnees. This implies that the State can then be seen as an intervention tool of governance while reducing or destroying returnees' agency. In this case, we reorient our purview on inefficiency or challenges, not just as administrative challenges but more as a strategy of a political economy nature. It is this that practically orients and symbolically places the State and the returnees in the new order and platform for the reproduction of political power itself on the side of the State (Purdekova 2015). In another sense, as recent literature (Mats and Keen 1997, Enzo 2012) shows, it is problematic, therefore, to frame resettlement and reintegration from projects and programmes because of the complexities involved, and rather, look carefully at the political economy; namely, the political, economic and social issues, particularly: the power and profit issues. This, as Mats and Keen (ibid.:797) argue, is rooted in war and mutates, gets adapted and survives into the 'post-conflict'. This provides key framing of the issue at hand.

In that case, the study focused on the political economy or materiality rather than abstractions of resettlement and reintegration or transitions to a certain finality. That means, the study instead followed the practices of resettlement and reintegration itself to understand how it is a form of politics whose techniques involve certain action or production of visibility and invisibility. We argue that TJ is bound up with politics and therefore, it sought to understand how state practices and failings are constitutive of TJ intervention complex. This is central to our argument and frames our debate that politics, rather than the ladder and processes, is central to understanding the TJ intervention complex in northern Uganda. In another sense, it elaborates on the centrality of politics and the political instrumentalisation of the transitional justicescape. Through the mundane everyday practices in Northern Uganda, the study shows how transition is no longer a linear progression towards certain normative finality but tends more towards circularity, implying on a broader scale, an emphasis that there is hardly any on-going transition and it challenges the mainstream 1990s TJ notion of 'transition' and looks at it not necessarily as an unregulated field but more as a political field that needs to be carefully calibrated.

5 Resurgent Political Re-reading of Government Programmes

Before the study goes into understanding the State's behaviour, we need to appreciate the State's image about the returnees and also the returnees' image about the State and particularly the government of Yoweri Museveni, and how these connect to the State's *presencing* behaviour and the subsequent reactions from the returnees. To begin with, emerging from constant unidirectional lectures in the 'bush' by the LRA's leader Joseph Kony, the returnees were pre-exposed to a particular way of viewing the government and the person of Yoweri Museveni. Such lectures were both broad and specific. For example, Bianes (2017:35) identifies one such narrative in which the LRA reportedly marked Museveni's famous metaphor in one of the rallies in which he compared the insurgency in Acholi as 'grasshoppers' in a bottle biting and killing each other. Refuting this, Joseph Kony argued that; '…it is the stupid Acholi who are in a bottle biting themselves but not himself nor his group in the bush".

Framing the government of Museveni and Museveni himself as bent towards 'destroying' Acholi, this narrative framing constructed to borrow from Purdekova (2008:4) 'a new political and social imagined landscape', invigorating among the LRA fighting force, an appeal to the 're-Acholicisation as a some kind of political re-ordering to return 'peace, 'dignity', 'pride' and 'prosperity' in Acholi (Komakech 2019:110). Therefore, the continued rebellion and particularly, the continued stay in the bush, reconfigured the notion of the 'bush' and re-read in the new light, not as the 'wild' but as a 'location' and a 'habitation'. In their estimate, while Museveni's Acholi was a 'wilderness', a territorially 'pathological' site where the damned

'hopelessly inhabited', the 'bush' in their new reconfiguration was an episode of flight from the 'old' Museveni's inflicted and ambiguously inhabited Acholi and overpopulated and perverted with greedy Museveni's traitors (Acholi *Macon*—Old Acholi, *Acholi B),* their 'bush' is different. To them, the 'bush' became the 'location' for which fighting was motivated and unto which the fighters called 'Acholi *Manyen* (New Acholi, Acholi A) (Komakech 2019:112, citing Prugyl 2003:336). The Acholi *Manyen* was then an alternative repair meta-narrative which was to function as an authoritative incentive for the rebellion. It is in this context that massive abductions were rationalised and in the wave of this 'enlightenment', the abductees were to somehow understand their own abductions.

Consequently, one sees that there has been a hesitant relationship between the government of Yoweri Museveni and the Acholi in Northern Uganda since 1986, when Museveni took over power from the Acholi-dominated Military Junta of General Okello Tito, who had in 1985 led a successful coup against an elected civilian government of Milton Obote. These historic episodes, including the eventual decade-long civil wars and massive displacements, killings and abductions in predominantly Acholiland, have since been embedded in the local worlds of both the State and the returnees, bringing in the challenge of using the phrase of Macdonald and Kerali's 'co-existence' reality (ibid.:23 citing Prieto 2012). Once constructed by government as: 'former rebels', 'insurgents', 'bush returnees' and so forth, the returnees live in a turbulent space, while narratives against the State such as: 'failed to protect us against the rebel incursions and abductions', 'planning to decimate Acholi land', 'revenge politics' and so forth (Branch 2005: 2–3), placed the State and the government of Yoweri Museveni, in a precarious situation. What that means is that the reality or the materiality of the wars induced different experiences, creating an alternate timeline of memories as a result of alternate history in a constant state of flux and possessing multiple alternative interpretations of events and impacts.

On its part, the returnees felt that the State's metaphorical framing was not a taxonomic classification but rather, politics of threat construction and therefore to be re-imaged as a 'group' to be careful about or to steer the public towards a certain viewpoint (Boeynaems et al. 2017, citing Scot 1997). In their view, this foregrounds a particular view on them and allows a fluid and ambiguous way of constituting a certain order while de-constituting some. With the politics of being normal as the ideals of resettlement and reintegration into the political order, 'programmes for living' and expressing the 'ought' and 'must' (Macdonald and Kerali ibid.:23 citing Fuller 1971, Dresch 2012) in the political order, seem to have been conceived and elevated.

In a sense, we see a complex re-reading of the interventions as more to do with resurgent politics of historical relation than bare programmes of resettlement and reintegration. This, in a sense, emerges from the government and returnees' existential realities as narrated or in their resurgent memory, complicating the very terms 'resettlement' and 'reintegration' and more, creating a negative trust capital against the returnees and, in turn, against the State (Purdekova 2016). This is about the politics of entitlements and State responsibilities, fulfillment and

accountability (Purdekova ibid.:10). However, faced with uncertainties and anxieties about the current and imagined futures, the State's production of narratives, actions and intentions is seen doubling as neglect and a sense of deception (Purdekova ibid.) by the returnees, further complicating the impressions between the State and returnees.

That therefore necessitated a need for an analytical conceptual tool to shift from the discussion of 'effectiveness' to discussions on 'production of gaps' and how ineffectiveness may still be useful in the scheme of things. In another sense, we decided not to dwell on 'ineffectiveness' as such but rather, what the production of gaps functions to serve (Purdekova ibid.:7). Meaning, a careful look at the enforced government articulations and or active silence in an ambiguous setting with multiple messages in its concrete deployment (Purdekova ibid.:8) in its lived experience (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:8) Accordingly, we reconceptualise 'returnee support' as an unknown activity and seek to understand it from the statist and political manifestations as invoked and intensely deployed beyond the classical 'post-conflict' recovery programmes to how government programmes and support to this group is to be understood in very specific settings. In other words, how the production of activities or programmes by the government and laying claims to its potential for resettlement and reintegration is deeply sets of *presencing.* In that sense, it is therefore not the absence of activities seen but rather, appearance and its own politics, masking or performing a political work (Purdekova 2015:6). In a sense, it is a doubling in which the formal narrative and registers interlace with actual political work.

This shifts our analytical category from rhetorical adherence to the central narrative and materiality (Purdekova 2017: 341) of the processes and gaps of programmes and interventions, to its politics, making the programmes not only unstable but an enterprise as well. Consequently, the study looks more into not simply the politicisation but repoliticisation of resettlement and reintegration, what Purdekova unsettles as making the underlying political forces visible while also appreciating that invisibility is also a political form with a political outcome. The study calls this *presencing.* Scharmer (2018) draws a more normative understanding of presencing derived from two words: *presence* and *sensing,* in which there are the key attributes of the politics of being conscious and the politics of presence. Yet as a technique, it is blinding (not to see reality), desensing (not empathising), absencing (losing the connection), blaming others (inability to self-reflect). Purdekova (2016:60–62) gives the concept a more critical framing, as a layering of ambiguity and ambivalence, and therefore, questioning any easy distinction between 'visibility' and 'invisibility' in the exercise of provisions or programmes and simultaneous subversion.

Through layering, namely, posing for view from a standpoint of being visible through layered officiating of groundbreaking or launch of a programme or project, on one hand, and on the other, blaming implementers and many times the beneficiaries for failing to meet targets or implement an activity, the State's mode of subversion became strategic and made production of invisible manoeuvre possible. Purdekova (ibid.:61) shows how 'while visibility is typically associated with greater certainty and ascertaining, it is in fact the ambiguity and ambivalence …that allows

it to be replicated and redeployed'. The fragmentation of programmes and projects, spatial locations and implementation phases is therefore not to be viewed as polarities but rather as a back-turning, a counter point that keeps the State and the programmes or projects in a contradictory centrifugal harmony. Whereas the programmes and projects appear in an autonomous mode, in fact, are in a concurrent rhythm and intersection of harmony with the State layering.

This intersection and intertwining of the State and the programmes by interpellation are in a presenting space as 'always-already'. The 'always' is a condition of control just as much as 'already' is acting (Sergio 2012:85). This imperative, seen topologically, therefore, is the fragmentation of the programmes as a technique of subversion (Deffner and Hoerning 2011). From its Latin etymology, *fragmentum* or *frangere,* which means 'broken piece' or 'to fall to pieces' or 'to break', this kind of fragmentation is structured because it has its original entity, which is the State. In that case, it recedes to the State while it draws from the State. It is some sort of detachment which counters Scholz's (2005) 'exclusion-inclusion' frame and, instead, should be seen more as a network. This network, as Ramos (1982) cites Heywood (1994:100), is the third wave of power, the invisible power in concealing contradictions. It is this kind of concealment, this invisible power game, which is itself a theory of power and its attendant manoeuvre, which can only be visible when re-read politically. It is this last word that the returnees picked up as an analytical category to situate and understand their perpetual condition amidst several interventions, causing agitation to shift from 'humanitarian type' of interventions to a 'social contract' they have with the government of Uganda.

6 Conclusion

Reclaiming the centre stage of their experiences and processes of their need rather than programmatic thinking and support, the returnees focus more on the 'double motives' with which projects or programmes double as 'neglect in the time of care', reconstituting this as neglect of the 'social contract' itself. Here, the contours of the social contract are not used heuristically or normatively like in the case of the classical social contract theorists such as John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, JJ Rousseau and many others, but descriptively (UNDP 2016:8), to refer to the mundane everyday realities of living and the relation between the State or the government of Uganda and the returnees. From a descriptive point, the use of the social contract in the estimation of returnees is to help us understand how experiences and narratives of trust and relation of distrust are central (Purdekova 2016:11) among the returnees against the State. This is drawn on the idea of entitlements and delivering on key provisions by the State, an issue the study shall follow up on in the subsequent paper.

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Development and Institutions

Concepts of development have been defined—and often imposed—through financial and political institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, crystallized by the "Washington Consensus." This perspective typically views development as a linear economic process, moving from pre-industrial poverty through industrialization to an affluent post-industrial economy linked to participation in world trade. Consequently, Africans are left behind because of their lack of manufacturing, technology, and post-industrial infrastructure. What is missing is recognition of development as a set of diverse processes, on the one hand, and of the exploitation of African resources that subsidize the "developed" economies through natural resources, cheap labor, and markets, thereby contributing to their underdevelopment (See Rodney, Walter. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Howard University Press, 1974 and Mariam Mniga, *Recolonizing Africa: An Ethnography of Land Acquisition, Mining, and Resource Control*. Routledge, 2024).

The chapters in this section explore alternative perspectives and institutions of development—from the recent emergence of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) as an alternative to Western institutions, to the legal and policy tensions that arise when regional trade agreements are evaluated within broader global trade regimes. They also examine resource pressures at the local level, such as the impact of undocumented migration on land in Tanzania. Finally, we journey to the Niger Delta, where we encounter the ubiquitous conflict between sustainability and human security related to resource extraction.

Expanding the epistemic basis of our inquiry reconfigures development as a set of contested institutional choices that result in unequal distributions of benefits and burdens in multiple development processes.

BRICS Infrastructure in the Context of International Investment Cooperation



Irina Zotovna

Abstract Investment cooperation among BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) is one of the priorities listed in the BRICS Economic Partnership Strategy. The list of objectives of this Strategy includes, in particular, the following: promoting the development of market relations, expanding market access opportunities as well as investment cooperation and creating a favorable environment for investors and entrepreneurs in all these countries (Abonyi and Feil 2017). Investment cooperation, along with other areas, is designed to strengthen balanced and inclusive economic growth and increase the level of the international competitiveness of BRICS economies (Almeida and Silva 2018). It is worthwhile mentioning that BRICS actually accounts for 17.3% of world merchandise trade, 12.7% of world trade in services, and which together form 21% of the world gross domestic product (GDP), at par of the purchasing power of national currencies—about 30% of world GDP.

Investment cooperation among BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) is one of the priorities listed in the BRICS Economic Partnership Strategy. The list of objectives of this Strategy includes, in particular, the following: promoting the development of market relations, expanding market access opportunities as well as investment cooperation and creating a favorable environment for investors and entrepreneurs in all BRICS countries (Abonyi and Feil 2017). Investment cooperation, along with other areas, is designed to strengthen balanced and inclusive economic growth and increase the level of the international competitiveness of BRICS economies (Almeida and Silva 2018). It is worthwhile mentioning that BRICS account for 17.3% of world merchandise trade, 12.7% of world trade in services, and which together form 31% of the world gross domestic product (GDP), at par of the purchasing power of national currencies—about 30% of world

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GDP. The desire to expand and strengthen ties in the field of investment cooperation requires clear guidelines, reflected in all the main documents of BRICS.

Thus, the actual problems of multilateral investment cooperation in the BRICS format were quite widely covered in the Goa Declaration of October 16, 2016, adopted at the end of the VIII BRICS summit in India (Arapova and Chkoniya 2016). The leaders of the countries expressed confidence in further stimulation of growth on the scale of regional integration with the obligatory observance of the principles of openness and equality in order to ensure the development of multilateral investments in industrial, trade, and commercial relations. Thus, the main purpose of the article is to consider current problems and identify possible areas of cooperation between partner countries that contribute to economic growth based on the implementation of the BRICS multilateral investment policy.

The research is based on statistical data from official websites of international organizations, analytical materials of National Committee on BRICS Research, Bank of Russia, and BRICS declarations. The paper analyzes the state of investment relations of the BRICS countries and finds a solution to the problem, backed by the general scientific research methods in the framework of comparative, logical, and statistical analysis, as well as through the analysis of the structure, dynamics, and graphical interpretation of information in the research field. To achieve the study's goal, we also analyzed data characterizing the features of foreign investments and the foreign investments' policy of BRICS.

In the process of implementing the above methods, it is possible to draw the following conclusions: direct foreign investment in Brazil grew sharply between 2009 and 2011 but has slowed since then (Bank of Russia 2019). However, according to the UNCTAD World Investment Report 2021, FDI inflows fell by 62%, from USD 65 billion in 2019 to USD 25 billion in 2020 (World Investment Report 2021 n.d.). Brazil's COVID-19 pandemic saw a significant drop in foreign direct investments (FDI) in 2020 as the privatization program and infrastructure concessions were suspended for several months. The worst hit industries were transport (inflows fell by more than 85%), financial services (inflows fell by 70%), oil and gas production (while foreign direct investment fell by 65%), and the automotive industry (also declined by 65%). However, even amid the COVID-19 crisis, significant investments continued to be made in the country (Brazil Central Bank n.d.). Brazil was ranked 124th out of 190 countries in the World Bank's 2020 *"Doing Business Report,"* significantly less than the previous year, when it was ranked 109th. However, the country is still one of the largest recipients of FDI in the world (Barry 2020).

Brazil is an attractive market for international investors due to several factors: a domestic market of almost 210 million people, the availability of easily exploited raw materials, a diversified economy that is less vulnerable to international crises, and a strategic geographic location that provides easy access to other South American countries. However, investing in Brazil remains risky due to several negative factors, including cumbersome and complex taxation, bureaucratic delays, and heavy and harsh labor laws (International Trade Center 2018). Although they are open to international trade, some of the barriers to FDI in Brazil include onerous

labor legislation, resulting in high costs for foreign companies and retaining a significant portion of local business in the informal sector as an area of economy in which the manufacture and turn-over of goods are not statistically evidenced. High production costs (wages, credit, energy, and logistics); insufficiently developed infrastructure; high level of regulatory risk (high taxation and tight fiscal system); high susceptibility to changes in commodity prices in international markets; lack of skilled labor also prevent FDI (Gladun 2017). In its turn, the National Investment Bank (BNDES) encourages foreign investment: most of the barriers have been removed, especially in the stock market and a very large number of public companies have been privatized (The National Investment Bank 2021).

There are also many incentives, including Brazilian initiatives to attract investors: the Inovar-AutoProgram, aimed at improving technological development and increasing energy efficiency; Consulta Pública Ex-Tarifário, which allows companies to innovate by temporarily reducing the tax rate on capital goods imports; Renai, which provides potential investors with information on business opportunities in Brazil. Moreover, the Brazilian federal government offers investment support through funding and double taxation treaties. The Brazilian Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (ApexBrasil) also contributes to international cooperation. The agency discloses information to potential investors about the national tax system, industrial property protection, labor and environmental legislation, credit support, and incentives for foreign investors.

We are more optimistic about situation in the Russian Federation. Despite the slowdown of economic growth, the Russian Federation earns a lot by attracting direct and portfolio foreign investment for the development of the national economy. At the same time, the Russian Ministry for Economic Development considers the indicator of investment in fixed assets as being significant, since it determines the potential of the economic growth. According to the Russian Action Plan, the growth of investments in fixed assets is the main priority of economic and financial development of the country (Plan of measures n.d.). The main areas of activity in this respect are the improvement of the investment climate and a reduction in business costs; financial support of investment activity; comprehensive infrastructure development; development of a competitive environment and increase in the efficiency of companies with public participation.

These measures can only be implemented by mutual activity by private and public institutions, such as the Ministry for Economic Development, the Bank of Russia, the Federal Antimonopoly Service, and other public authorities, involved in national economic programs. The most promising industries for FDI are infrastructure development, telecommunication, manufacturing, transport and other services (Kamm 2016). The actual share of investments in fixed assets in Russia is only 19% of GDP, despite the positive dynamic over the past 5 years. Real estate and expenses for land improvement, as well as machinery and equipment (Fig. 1) dominate the structure. To improve the situation, it is necessary to provide public support within the framework of an agreement on the protection and promotion of investments, while improving regulation. Thus, the projects that meet the criteria for the ratio of accumulated investments in fixed assets until 2024 per ruble of state support may qualify



Fig. 1 Dynamics of investments in fixed assets of the Russian Federation. Source: Statistical information of the Russian Federal State Statistics Service URL: http://www.gks.ru (accessed on 11.10.2021)

for forming an agreement and receive funding from the federal budget (Khorbaladze 2021). It is also planned to allocate from 26 to 39 trillion rub. In its turn, the adoption of Federal Law No. 69 of 01.04.2020 "On Protection and Encouragement of Investment in the Russian Federation" provides a legal basis for creating a better investment climate and supporting cooperation between public and private FDI to the national economy (Labes 2018). Actually, Russia's policy in attracting foreign investment is quite diverse. Primarily it is aimed at creating a better investment climate and infrastructure development, as well as improving the legal framework in this area.

Since 1995, India has become one of the largest recipients of foreign investment (Lawson et al. 2017). Over the past 25 years, the volume of foreign investments received by the country has grown almost 29 times to 64 billion US dollars in 2020 (see Fig. 2). The volume of foreign direct investment in India averaged 2.6% of the total global volume in 2009 increased to 3.3% in 2019 (FDI Statistics n.d.). The forecast for the growth rates of attracted foreign investments in India remains positive.

The Indian policy of attracting foreign direct investment has its own peculiarities (Littrell and Ramburut 2017). First of all, this is the desire of the government of India to attract and convey a priority treatment of foreign capital for the creation and development of new technologies, modern and high-tech industries, as well as the construction of such industrial and social infrastructure facilities that would require significant financial investments. At the same time, at the beginning of the FDI attraction program, priority was given to projects "from scratch" (greenfield investment), and only in recent years has the share of mergers and acquisitions increased (Sajjad 2018). As a result, foreign direct investment flows are directed to the

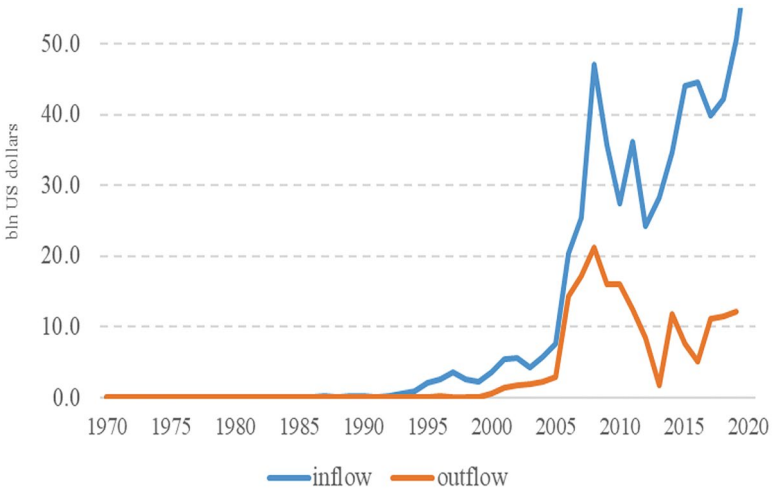


Fig. 2 Volume of FDI to India in 1970–2020, US dollars billion. Source: Made by authors based on the FDI Statistics. Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade. MoClGol.URL: https://dpiit.gov.in/publications/fdi-statistics (accessed on 11.10.2021)

Table 1 FDI inflows into equity by sector from April 2000 to December 2020

Sector	Amount of FDI inflows (In US$ million)	% of total inflows
Services sector (Fin., Banking, Insurance, Business, Outsourcing, R&D, Courier, Tech. Testing and Analysis, Other)	85860.23	16.47
Computer software & hardware	69296.23	13.29
Telecommunications	37627.80	7.22
Trading	29736.00	5.7
Construction development (townships, housing, built-up infrastructure and construction-development projects)	25934.68	4.97
Others	273134.27	52.35

Source: FDI Statistics. Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade. MoCl Gol. URL: https://dpiit.gov.in/publications/fdi-statistics (accessed on 11.10.2021)

industries that are the highest priority for India: services (finance, banking, insurance, outsourcing, R&D, etc.), software and computer technology, telecommunications, trade, and construction. In total, over the period 2000–2020, accumulated investments in these sectors of the economy amounted to $248.5 billion (see Table 1).

The increased attention to the Indian economy by FDI is explained by the gradual liberalization of the economy since the mid-1990s and significant easing in the sphere of foreign capital flows.

In its turn China, over the past 10 years has been one of the largest recipients of FDI in the global economy (Seyad 2016). Foreign investments in China hit a record

high amid a strong recovery from the coronavirus. According to the official statistics, the net foreign investments flow to China reached 442.8 billion USD in the first half of 2021. The total 442.8 billion USD represents a 168% jump over the same period of 2020 (International Trade Center 2018). The data show the favorable dynamics of China's economy and its investment attractiveness for foreign investors. Overseas investments in China include direct investment and portfolio investment, which separately accounted for 40% and 27% of net inflows in the first half of 2021 (Steinbach 2016). Generally, there are two main factors that determine the main reason for China as a leader in foreign capital inflows: the Chinese market with its large population.

International companies are investing in China to gain access to its national market and the ethnic Chinese who live abroad but retain ties to their homeland have huge assets. The FDI flow from Hong Kong and Taiwan to the Chinese economy account for about two-thirds of all foreign investments of the country. Actually, there are over 25 million ethnic Chinese in Taiwan and over 6 million in Hong Kong. The liquid assets of ethnic Chinese are estimated at about 2 trillion USD. China plays a leading role in attracting FDI and continues to develop new procedures of increasing inflows effectively by developing market institutions. Export expansion by attracting FDI has helped China to accumulate the required foreign exchange reserves to modernize production, which at the same time stimulates FDI inflows.

As far as South Africa (SA) is concerned, the interest of the investors both in the country and in the African region as a whole is growing. Participants of the international financial relations from different regions are involved in interaction with South Africa and are investing in the development of different types of industries of the country (Stephen 2014). The most influential players actively cooperating with South Africa can be divided into two groups: the BRICS countries and the developed countries: USA and its metropolises (Stuenkel 2015). The latter are gradually yielding their positions after SA joined BRICS in 2011 (Sunde 2017). Interaction between South Africa and the countries, participating in the intergovernmental association is developing: a number of agreements on mutual funding of large infrastructure projects have been concluded both at the level of the bloc of countries and at a bilateral level. An important role in this process is also played by the BRICS New Development Bank. For instance, in September 2021, the BRICS countries signed agreements on financing 28 projects in various fields of activity (IT, logistics, trade, culture, etc.) for a total of 2 billion USD, 11 of which will be supported by South Africa (The BRICS countries 2021) as shown in Fig. 3.

The TOP40 SAR index of the South African stock exchange rose from 23655.66 to 50816.05 rand. The largest companies from South Africa more than doubled their market capitalization. Actually, the most developed sector of the SA economy in terms of capitalization is the financial sector, in particular, the subgroup of companies in the financial services, such as Zeder, Old Mutual, PSG, etc. In the last decade of 2021, South Africa has become not only a recipient of investments but also makes investments, which reflects the dynamics of the indicator of international investment position (IIP) of the country (Fig. 4), (IMF Database, 2021). Thus, since 2015, South Africa has become a net lender with a positive net international investment position. In 2015, one can observe a decrease in the volume of liabilities to external

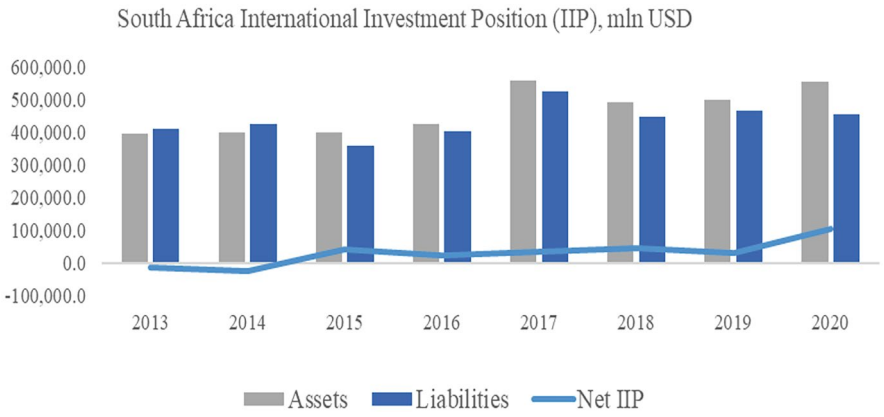


Fig. 3 International Investment Position of South Africa (2013–2020). Source: Developed by authors based on the IMF Database. URL: https://data.imf.org.(accessed on 11.10.2021)

Table 2 Structure of investment inflows and outflows in South Africa. USD billion

Type of investment	Inflows 30.06.2021	Outflows 30.06.2021
Direct investments	145.7	38.1
Portfolio investments	240.2	208.1
Derivatives	9.9	9.4
Other	61.4	49.2
Reserves	–	54.4
Total	457.2	559.2

Source: Statistical Data and Reports. South African Reserve Bank. URL: https://www.resbank.co.za/en/home/publications/international-investment-position. (Accessed on 13.10.2021)

creditors, which may be due to changes in the legal regulation of foreign investments. At the same time, the country began to carry out foreign investments more actively than to accept them; investment assets kept their upward trend.

It should be noted that there is a positive correlation between the rates of economic growth in South Africa and the dynamics of foreign direct investment over the past 20 years, which indicates the need for a policy of stimulating foreign investment in the country's economy for its further sustainable development (Pauwelyn 2017). According to the World Investment Report 2020. South Africa is the region's largest investor in overseas economies and ranks second in foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows after Egypt, 2019 has shown a significant decline in FDI inflows to the African region (by 10%). with the largest decline in absolute terms in South Africa and Nigeria (World Investment Report 2020). The decline in FDI inflows was due to weak growth rates of regional and global GDP as a whole, which reduced the interest of large investors in developing countries with a diversified and resource-oriented investment profile, including South Africa. It is also essential to define the structure of investment flows in South Africa (Table 2).

Table 3 Directions of FDI inflows and outflows in South Africa. USD billion (2019)

FDI inflows		FDI outflows	
Total	145.2	Total	215.0
UK	45.4	Netherlands	93.5
Netherlands	25.6	UK	26.2
Belgium	15.9	USA	15.7
Japan	8.8	Mauritius	11.2
USA	8.8	Australia	7.9

Source: Statistical Data and Reports. South African Reserve Bank. URL: https://www.resbank.co.za/en/home/publications/international-investment-position(accessed on 13.10.2021). IMF database. URL: https://data.imf.org/(accessed on 13.10.2021)

Thus, according to the results, the net IIP of South Africa remained positive. The structure of outflows from South Africa is dominated by direct investments, investments are transferred to the developed economies and foreign portfolio investments are also made mainly in the most stable companies included in the S&P500 index and other major stock indices. Other assets and liabilities are represented by loans issued by the South African banking sector to non-residents and their deposits (Statistical Data and Reports n.d.). Portfolio investments predominate among the inflows. Although direct investment accounts for approximately a third of the total volume of inflows, foreign investors, in particular from developing countries, prefer less risky investments with the possibility of obtaining high returns and higher liquidity. Nevertheless, the dynamics of FDI in South Africa is constantly increasing, which indicates the growing interest of foreign investors. Consider the directions of inflows and outflows of foreign direct investment in South Africa in the context of countries (Table 3).

Brazil, Russia, and India have a number of agreements with South Africa, but they are more inclined to make small portfolio investments and enter into partnership agreements. So, Brazil invests in South African companies in the field of mechanical engineering (Marco Polo, WEG). Russia is interested in developing cooperation in the development of new deposits and mining (Renova Group of Companies, Evraz), among Indian investors. One can single out companies engaged in mechanical engineering (Tata, Mahindras) and pharmaceutical companies (Ranbaxy, CIPLA).

BRICS successful cooperation in the investment field requires adequate regulation treatment. The existing differences in investment policy and legal regulation aggravate the administration of projects and development programs. It takes time to overcome the difficulties and to manage risks. Let us focus on this issue in order to understand it better and to find ways of solving the problem of FDI policy implementation.

Foreign investments in Brazil are limited and require a special permit for exploration and mining, as well as telecommunication, broadcasting, and healthcare. However, the investment regime in Brazil is liberal and allows foreign investors to have a controlling interest in the companies. The Foreign Investment Promotion Agency provides information on the permits required to establish companies. All

foreign investors are also required to appoint a representative in Brazil who, together with the representative of the company receiving FDI, will be responsible for registering the transaction in the Foreign Direct Investment module of the Central Bank of Brazil (RDE-IED) in accordance with the instructions of the Central Bank. The registration and declaration of foreign investors is the responsibility of the Central Bank of Brazil. There are also some forms of government assistance to investors: the government encourages foreign investment in the form of tax exemptions aid, funding, and agreements that limit double taxation. The Special Customs Regime for the Export and Import of Goods for the Exploration and Production of Petroleum and Natural Gas (REPETRO) is a tax incentive to allow the import of certain goods by suspending import duties, federal excise taxes, and the Freight Margin for Merchant Ships (AFRMM).

In addition, there is a special regime of incentives for infrastructure development (REIDI), which consists of the suspension of PIS and COFINS for the sale or import of new machinery, tools and equipment, construction materials, and certain services used or included in infrastructure projects in transport, port, energy, basic hygiene, and irrigation sectors. In addition, the Brazilian government has launched an infrastructure investment program. Another important aspect of the regulatory framework for foreign direct investment in Brazil, that is worth noting is that the state is a member of the Free Trade Zone of Manaus (ZFM). Brazil has signed several bilateral agreements to protect foreign investments. Brazil is also a member of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency convention. Recent agreements and foundations for investing in Brazil include bilateral investment agreements with countries such as India, Morocco, UAE, Suriname, Ethiopia, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Angola, Cuba, and USA and agreements with investment clauses (TIPs) with MERCOSUR, Peru, Chile etc.

The research allowed us to conclude that it is advisable to follow the path of harmonization of intergovernmental investment policy and foreign direct investment in reaching the goals of sustainable development. Various methods and instruments can be used to stimulate FDI, including tax incentives, financial support, and double taxation treaties. The example of China shows the importance of a carefully designed long-term FDI promotion policy for ensuring the advanced development of target industries and sustainable growth of the country's economy as a whole. Differences in foreign investment regulatory framework, taxation, labor legislation, and poor infrastructure development are obstacles to further cooperation in the investment sphere of the BRICS countries. In this regard, it is important to develop investment cooperation in agriculture, medicine, industrial and social infrastructure, green and blue energy production, and science and technology.

The conducted analysis confirmed the need for the development of tools and methods for financing the interaction of the parties in order to promote sustainable development within negotiated short- and long-term strategy for BRICS economic partnership. It is noted that the priorities of long-term strategy for BRICS is strengthening the position of countries in the global economy. It seems appropriate to expand the usage of infrastructure and green bonds in national currencies related to support the development of the national economies of the BRICS member countries

and increase the participation of development banks with the participation of BRICS members and institutional investors of all forms of ownership in the processes of stimulation partnership cooperation. In this respect, it is reasonable to introduce economic policies that pave the way to economic development, such as better access to loans and government grants to new industries and tax relief for manufactured exported goods. Actually, the BRICS member states are involved in achieving the goal of accelerating the use of national currencies in serving the needs of trade and investment policies. It seems appropriate to speed up the process of harmonization of financial relations regulation that contributes to BRICS financial interaction and expands the participation of economic entities in the progressive development of the national economies.

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Compatibility Assessment of East African Community-European Union-Economic Partnership Agreement (EAC-EU-EPA) within World Trade Organization (WTO) Framework: Implications for Tanzania's Economy



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Abstract This article assesses the compatibility of the East African Community-European Union (EAC-EU) Economic Partnership Agreement framework (FEPA) within the World Trade Organization (WTO), specifically whether the framework constitutes a threat or an opportunity for the Tanzanian economy. The paper reviews and analyses information from previous and contemporary writers on the framework. After a thorough review and analysis of information, the paper suggests that the FEPA between EAC and EU partner states is a serious threat to the Tanzanian economy. By using its bargaining power, which is influenced by its gigantic financial and human resource capacity, the EU is potentially situated to siphon resources from Tanzania and other EAC countries, in terms of revenue, trade, agriculture, industrial, employment, private sector and sovereignty scenarios. Also, the agreement seems to be incompatible with the WTO objectives, hence the researcher has recommended that the EAC should stop the EPA process and concentrate on the EAC Customs Union to make it fruitful to both parties, taking into account that new members, in particular Southern Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo, joined in 2006 and 2022, potentially making it a giant regional integration.

1 Introduction

The Economic Partnership Agreement depicts a framework for economic and trade cooperation between 27 European Union (EU) countries and 71 countries from Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific (ACP) (The Cotonou Agreement, 2000; Matambalya, 2003). This cooperation is built around trade liberalization involving

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opening up the markets for products from both sides by reducing tariffs and non-tariff barriers to trade (GATT, 1994).[1] It forms the cornerstone of the Cotonou Agreement,[2] which integrated the world's largest single market (EU) and some of the world's poorest countries (ACP) into a new era of development cooperation Busse and Grossman, 2004; Ngangjoh-Hodu and Matambalya, 2009).[3] The parties involved are the seven negotiating groups from the ACP group of states as one part[4] and the EU, formally known as European Community (EC) or European Economic Community (EEC), as the other part with 27 member states (The Cotonou Agreement, 2000).

The purpose is to have each group negotiate independently with the European Union countries.[5] The economic integrations have been observed by various scholars[6] as a panacea for the world economy, that they can bring opportunity to all people, eradicate poverty, and act as a bridge for development (Nalunga, 2009, Nyerere, 1973, Nkurumah, 1963). As has been observed by the report on Economic development in Africa that:

> The importance of regional economic cooperation and integration as a means for accelerating and consolidating economic and social development has long been recognized by African decision-makers. Unity, cooperation, and integration of Africa were long-standing aspirations of many African leaders, including George Patmore, W.E.B Dubois, Marcus Garvey, as well as African nationalists such as Kwame Nkrumah who, in his book Africa Must Unite, called for African unity. Hence the call for integration is well-rooted in African

[1] In the Preamble of The Cotonou Agreement (Partnership Agreement Between the Member of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States as the one part and the European Community and its member States of the other parts, 2000/483/EC official Journal 317(2000) signed in Cotonou Benin on 23 June 2000 revised in Luxembourg on 25 June 2005).

[2] The Cotonou Agreement, Partnership Agreements between the members of the African, Caribbean, and Pacific group of states of the one part, and the European Community and its member states, of the other part signed in Cotonou Benin on 23 June 2000.

[3] M. Busse, & H. Grossmann, Assessing *the Impact of ACP/EU Economic Partnership Agreement on West African Countries*, 294 HWWA Discussion Paper (2004).

[4] The 15 Caribbean Countries, 14 Pacific countries, and the African countries, were divided into five negotiating groups, South under Southern African Development Community (SADC) and East under Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA). East African Community (EAC), Central Africa countries under (CEMAC) and West Africa under ECOWAS. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/bilateral/regions/acp/regneg_en.htm. Accessed 27 March 2011.

[5] Wherefore on November 2007, the EAC came together and pulled themselves out of ESA. Although this was a good move for EAC, it left the ESA group in disarray with some countries initialing the interim EPA as individual countries while others decline to do so. As a result countries agreed on different liberalization schedules. Available at http://www.worldproutassembly.org/archives/2007/09/epas_clashing_w.html. Accessed 8 March 2011.

[6] Dr. Silvia Gaiani of Department of Agricultural Economics and Engineering in University of Bologna when addressing the topic "The Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs): a threat or an opportunity for sustainable development?" R. Mukandala, on The Opening Speech on The Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and The Role of Religious and Civil Society, Workshop held on Monday 23 March 2007, 2 BJØRN-Oliver Magsig German lawyer graduated in Business and Environmental Law from University of Dundee. When addressing his topic "Economic Partnership Agreements A panacea for Development?"

> history, albeit, as in other regions, the initial aim was more to gain greater political clout and voice in the international arena.[7]

Therefore, Tanzania, just like any other developing country in the world recognized that cooperation and integration with other countries is indispensable for its economic growth (Nyerere, 1973 and Arkadie, 1995). However, this economic integration has registered a huge number of disappointing results for the Tanzanian economy. They are characterized by multiple and overlapping memberships, complex structures, and eventually conflicting and confusing commitments and interests(Haule and Werema, 2008; Fundira, n.d., Bormann et al., 2007).[8] For instance, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo are members of SADC and also they are members of EAC, the other four member of EAC are member of COMESA. With all this complicated and confusing commitment, the EPA is currently underway (Fundira, n.d., and Nalunga, 2009).

The hope for the coming Tripartite Agreements[9] is to curb the problems of multiple and overlapping membership and contradicting and confusing interests, and has already faced some critics that they cannot solve these prevailing problems.[10] The main reason is that the tripartite agreement excludes the EPA's negotiations that remained in the original groups of negotiations, which are SADC-EU-EPAs, ESA-EU-EPAs, and EAC-EU-EPAs (UNACTAD, 2009). Therefore, it is imperative and vital to attempt to question the compatibility of EAC-EU-EPA framework within the WTO systems as to whether this framework is a threat or opportunity on the Tanzanian economy and is the dual concern of this chapter.

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[7] United nation Conference on trade and development, "*Strengthening Regional Economic Integrations in Africa's Development*" Economic Development in Africa, Report 2009.

[8] R. Haule and F. Werema, "EC-ACP Economic Partnerships Agreements [EPAs] and Their Economic Impact on Developing Countries" Journal of African and International Law, Vol 1, Songea, 2008 p 35.

[9] The tripartite agreement is the agreement which set to involve the three regional integrations that are SADC, COMMESA and EAC into a single Economic Integration. Heads of state from COMESA, the EAC, and SADC met on 12 June 2011 to launch a substantive programme to harmonize the trade arrangements amongst the three regional economic communities (RECs), with a view to establishing a single Free Trade Area (FTA) encompassing all member states by 2013.

[10] M. Stern & W. Ramkolowan, Tripartite FTA: does it make economic sense? DNA Economics at: http://www.dnaeconomics.com/pages/trade_policy/?zDispID=NewsArtTripartite_FTA_does_it_make_economic_sense. Accessed on 29 June 2011. As they said there are a number of practical building blocks that need to be put in place for such an arrangement to work; and a number of pre-conditions that need to be met for it to make economic sense.

2 The Issues on Board

Tanzania has engaged in a trade relationship with the European Union (EU) through the framework of EAC-EU-Economic Partnership Agreements (FEPAs)[11] since November 2007 on a reciprocal basis The EAC-EU Framework for Economic Partnership Agreement, 2007).[12] But the "reciprocal" nature of this agreement represents a threat to the national economy; how could reciprocity work when we are talking of the relationship between developed EU countries with developing EAC countries,[13] that is, the world's largest single market and the poorest (EAC) countries in a cooperation.

In line with this observation, the extent of liberalization does not comply with the WTO provisions, the EC (now EU) has already opened up 100% of its economy to EAC countries save for arms and ammunition while the EAC has undertaken to liberalize 82.6%, which is above WTO's trade threshold of 80%.[14] These facts were also evidenced by Professor S.A. Matambalya and Wolf who contend that: "From the start of the EPA negotiations, the EU has been trying to go beyond the WTO and Cotonou requirements to obtain agreements that fit its broader trade policy objectives and interests at the expense of its development objectives Matambalya and Wolf, 2001; Haule and Werema, 2008)."[15]

Furthermore, this framework lacks the development content, whereby the EU relies on its position of not including Economic and Development Cooperation under the EPA framework. Therefore, Tanzania and other EAC Partner States will realize limited benefits since they will be unable to export to the EU market due to supply side constraints (Busse and Grossman, 2004).[16] This was evidenced by the

[11] Because of the inability to conclude the full EPA negotiations by 31 December 2007 to counter the expiration of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, the EU proposed the initialing of framework EPAs to provide a bridge until the conclusion of the full EPAs.

[12] http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/bilateral/regions/acp/regneg_en.htm. Accessed 27 March 2011. See also The EU-EAC Framework Economic Partnership Agreement (FEPA). But how well do the EAC have prepared in terms of domestic productive and competitive capacity to seizure such opportunities if after all they are fair.

[13] Haule & Werema, supra, note 9, 29.

[14] The GATT requirement that preferential trade arrangements must lead to the gradual removal of tariffs and non-tariff barriers on "substantially all trade" has been interpreted by the EC Commission to mean that ACP countries are allowed to exempt up to 20% of their imports from tariff reduction. But It is said the Framework Agreement comprises of Market Access on Trade in Goods, Development Cooperation issues, and Fisheries. The EAC has offered 82.6% of her trade with the EU, and retained an exclusion list accounting for 17.4% of the trade with EU. For its part, the EU has offered Quota Free Duty Free Market Access with exception of ammunition; and transitional arrangement for sugar and rice. These are available at http://www.eac.int/news. Accessed on 27 March 2011.

[15] F.S. Matambalya & S. Wolf: "The Cotonou Agreement and the Challenges of Making the new EU-ACP Trade Regime WTO Compatible" 35 Journal of World Trade, (2001).

[16] W. Kabatabaazi, "The EU-East African Community Economic Partnership Agreement: The Impact of EPAs on the Right to Food." Lap Lambert Academic Publishing, New York, 2010.

then minister for Industries, Marketing, and Trade, Dr. Mary Nagu as quoted by the local newspaper saying:

> We (EAC) did not sign the Framework Economic Partnership Agreement (FEPA) in June, this year (2010), because our partners (the EU) refused to incorporate our important development and trade issues in the document.[17]

In April 2011, the then EAC secretary, General Juma Mwapachu, while making his farewell speech was quoted by the media as admitting the rocky road ahead for the conclusive phase of EPA negotiations with the EU (Matambalya and Wolf, 2001).[18] And recently it was reported that the EPA negotiations between the East African Community and the European Union have stalled.[19] This hesitation brought about by the EAC countries is due to the fact that EU has consistently been non-committal and non-responsive on EAC economic and development issues (Arkadie, 1995 and Dagne, 2010).[20]

Experience shows that only the signing of the framework EAC-EU-EPAs has exposed the economy of Tanzania and other EAC countries to duty free products from EU which arguably will lead to loss of employment, de-industrialization, the shrinking of local manufacturing sector and loss of revenue. This was also stated by His Excellence the late President B.W. Mkapa when he observed that:

> The negotiations have not moved much since last June, the EPA remains on the table and member states seem to be preparing themselves to reengage. The problem with the EPA is that it is largely a reciprocal trade agreement between EAC countries and a giant economic power house, the EU. Under the EPA, EAC countries would have to bring to zero, tariffs on EU products for 80% of our imports from the EU. The consequences of this are deep and myriad. Opening the bulk of our fragile manufacturing and agricultural sectors to EU imports will mean that EU products will easily out-compete many of our local firms and farms. The EU will be able to monopolize our local markets in certain products, both within the EAC, and also in other African markets (if they also sign EPAs). The current rise in production and exports we are witnessing in East Africa, will inevitably take a hard beating. Not only will regional employment be affected as imports from Europe increase and

[17] "EAC EPA experts set to chart negotiating strategy with EU," The Guardian, 2 January 2011.

[18] Economic Partnership Agreement Trade Talks Stall," The Daily Nation, Sunday 3 April 2011. See more on "More understanding of EPA talks needed says EAC Secretary General". 29 October 2010. http://www.thecitizen.co.tz/news/3-features/5121-more-understanding-of-epa-talks-needed-says-mwapachu and East Africa says EU trade deal talks still on. Reuters. 30 November 2010. Accessed on 23 March 2011.

[19] "Economic Partnership Agreement Trade Talks Stall", The Daily Nation, Sunday 3 April 2011. This follows an objection by the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) for the use of funds mobilized by the secretariat from a development partner to facilitate the process. The negotiations stalled as a result of the objection by East Africa Legislative Assembly (EALA) members to the use of funds mobilized by the EAC secretariat from Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) to facilitate the process.

[20] EAC-EC-EPA, Ministerial Preparatory Meeting (Ministers for Trade Session) report (EAC/SR/37/2009), of 3 July 2009.

> displace domestic farms, the opportunity we have to transform, develop and industrialize our economies will be put to jeopardy.[21]

However not only EPAs is viewed as a threat to the economy but also to the regional integration processes, which are currently underway, especially the EAC customs union and a common market as the EPA will lead to trade diversification. The EU has continued to pay lip service to the importance of regional integration.

The EU-EAC-EPAs' objectives, which ensure an overall sustainable development of the EAC states, allows their smooth and gradual integration in the world market and the eradication of poverty[22] yet no tangible benefits have been achieved.[23] The devastated economies of EAC countries, including Tanzania, are still in a critical condition. Despite the World Trade Organization's report[24] that the EPA is compatible with the WTO by citing Article XXIV,[25] the Enabling Clause,[26] and article V of the GATS.[27] But the article detected that these agreements do not observe the provisions they claim to have drawn their mandate from (Matambalya, 2007; Haule and Werema, 2008).[28] Some of the clauses in the FEPA are incompatible with the WTO provisions and flexibilities, for instance, reciprocity whereby the EAC are not in a position to provide reciprocal business with EU member states. Other issues, such as unequal trade partners, unfair trade arrangements, and the violation of the principle established in the enabling clause, lead to the question as to whether the EPAs will uphold the central development of Tanzanian economy. Therefore, from

[21] B. W. Mkapa, EPA puts Industrialization and development prospect of EAC in Jeopardy, Available at http://www.trademarksa/org/news/ also in http://www.seatinuganda.org. Accessed on 20 July 2011.

[22] Available in the Agreement Establishing a Framework for an Economic Partnership Agreement Between The European Community and Its Member States, On the One Part, and The East African Community Partners States on the other Part. (FEPA) M. A. Hangi, EU-EAC Economic Partnership Agreements Negotiation: current status—A draft report submitted to CUTS-International from www.esrf.org.tz retrieved on 8 April 2011.

[23] Haule & Werema, Supra, note 9, 25.

[24] World Trade Organization (WTO), "Trade Policy Review Body – Trade Policy Review-East African Community Members-Report by the Secretariat." September 20. WTO, Geneva.2006 Available at: http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp272_e.htm. Accessed on 17 February 2011.

[25] WTO, Uruguay Round Agreement—Understanding on the Interpretation of Article XXIV of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994 (1994) Available at <http://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/10-24_e.htm> (Accessed on 29 April 2011).

[26] Paragraph 4(a) and part IV of Trade and Development of the GATT (This clause, is a result of the Tokyo Round (1979), provides a legal basis for developed country preferences in favour of developing countries, through the differential and more favourable treatment. Paragraph 1 states that: " … notwithstanding the provisions of article 1 of the General Agreement, contracting parties may accord differential and more favourable treatment to developing countries, without according such treatment to other countries …."

[27] Article V of the General Agreements on Trade in Services.

[28] African Ministers Call for Rethink on EPAs. South Bulletin. 25 November 2010. Available at http://www.southcentre.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1433:sb52&catid=144:south-bulletin-individual-articles&Itemid=287&lang=en. Accessed on 28 August 2011.

these facts is where the desire to write this chapter emerges to assess the compatibility of the Framework EAC-EU-EPAs within the WTO as to whether it is a threat or an opportunity for Tanzania.

3 Methodology

The study was conducted as desk-based research, which involved a review and assessment of various documentary sources comprising secondary information mixes to compatibility of the framework EAC-EU-EPAs within the WTO. These included, amongst other things, decent journals, articles, periodicals, proceedings, magazines, newsletters, websites, newspapers, working papers, books, thesis, and reports from various stakeholders scrutinizing the subject. Thus, a sound qualitative technique because it was useful in providing an in-depth understanding of intra-regional integration pros and cons and reflection of EAC-EU-EPA. Data were analysed through content analysis whereby the major substance of analysis is communications (Babbie, 1992; Brown, 2001). Despite drawbacks of content analysis, such as being limited to the examination of documented communications and the possibility of the problem of validity and reliability (although it also has some merits in terms of validity and reliability), the advantages of it outweigh its demerits as emphasized through its use in this article. It is economical in terms of time, money, and resources such as staff; safer, i.e., it is easier for partial or full replicability; it allows one to study processes occurring over long periods of time; and it is unobtrusive, i.e. it seldom has any effect on the theme being studied.

4 Findings and Discussion

Despite the fact that the content of the framework EAC-EU-EPA is still uncertain because until today the full EAC-EU-EPA has not been signed, except for Kenya, and the processes are still ongoing,[29] it is already possible to examine what are or what will be the economic effects of EAC-EU-EPA on the Tanzanian economy. In this regard, the chapter has scrutinized different scenarios, to assess the total effect of the EPAs on the Tanzanian economy. The scenarios were based on government revenue scenarios, trade, the agriculture sector, the industrial sector, the private sector and the regional integration. This approach is widely discussed on what EPA is expected to deliver to the EAC countries' economies, specifically for the Tanzanian economy (Hamouda et al, al., 2005)

[29] I. Mfinanga, Assistant Director of Regional Integration Programmes in the Ministry of Industries and Trade while responding to the question from the researcher on telephone interview on Monday 27 June 2011.

4.1 Government Revenue

In this scenario, the chapter has focused on the effect of the EAC-EU trade relationship, which involves a reduction in tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade in goods and services and other various ranges of issues. Reducing trade barriers in economies, where tariff revenue is one of the most significant sources of government revenue, leads to serious implications to economic growth. This was observed also by the late, former president of Tanzania as pointed out earlier.

The loss of tax revenues due to the tariff elimination of imports from the EU duties can affect a government's ability to provide essential public services, such as education and health. The impact assessments on EAC-EU-EPA on the Tanzanian economy show that this trade arrangement will have a serious impact on Tanzanian government revenue and would have significant development implications.[30] For instance, USD $162.5 million in government revenue lost due to an EAC EPA every year, and in Tanzania, the calculated revenue losses due to EPA is estimated to be 32,491,000 per annum.[31] This is a serious loss to the Tanzanian economy as the budget depends mostly on foreign aid and will continue to be dependent under the EPA trade regime (Busse and Grossamann, 2004).

4.2 Trade Scenario

The evidence shows that EU is the EAC's main trading partner.[32] The relationship with Europe has existed for a long time, since colonialism in Africa during the nineteenth century. The EAC were the main producers and exporters of raw materials and the main importer of the European manufactured goods. Therefore, the EPA will continue to strengthen this trade relationship, which has no benefit to the EAC side. The EU continues to be EAC's largest trading partner accounting for 19.9% in 2009 compared with 18.4% recorded in 2021.[33]

With this regard, this trade relationship will lead to major fiscal losses; the first one is the financial loss in form of trade diverted from non-EU countries, and the

[30] S. Karingi, R. Lang, N. Oulmane, R. Perez, M.S. Jallab, H.B. Hammouda, "Economic and Welfare Impacts of the EU-Africa Economic Partnership Agreements", ATCP Work in Progress No. 10. 2005.

[31] Available at http://www.uneca.org/atpc/Briefing_papers/6.pdf P.4 The Economic and Welfare Impacts of the EU-Africa Economic Partnership Agreements African Trade Policy Centre Briefing No. 6 Poultry Farmers Set To Lose In EAC-EPA Deal - CSO analysis of possible EAC—EU EPA deal Accessed on 23 July 2011.

[32] Mkapa supra note 233. Available at http://www.trademarksa/org/news/ also in http://www.seatin-uganda.org and http://www.africareview.com/opinoion/The+EPA+will+bring+more+costs+than+benefits/-/979188/1187686/-/tq0upr/-/index.html. Accessed on 20 July 2011.

[33] The citizen, EAC Services exports hit $12.9 billion. https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/business/eac-services-exports-hit-12-9-billion-3923638

fiscal loss induced by the tax exoneration of imports from the EU. The total fiscal deficit is expected to be millions of USD.[34] Since Tanzania has nothing to compete with the EU, therefore the EU will be able to monopolize the local markets for Tanzanian local products, take over the business of natives, and in the end result, Tanzania will be colonized again.

4.3 Agriculture Sector

This scenario presents an assessment of impacts of the EPA on the Tanzania agricultural sector. Although mining and tourism have become important in recent years, agriculture has remained the main sector for the economy of Tanzania. From experience, the EU mainly exports industrial goods to Tanzania and Tanzania imports mainly industrial goods. As agriculture employs 80% of the active population in Tanzania, this relationship could induce significant losses in terms of employment. The opening up of our economy to the EU will mean that EU products will easily out-compete many of our local firms and farms (Haule and Werema, 2008).[35]

The removal of tariffs on agricultural trade on which Tanzanian exports depend could lead to loss of government and individual income, the employment of the majority of Tanzania as well, and this could lead to poor living standards for over 80% of the population, which is heavily dependent on agriculture.[36]

It should be borne in mind that the EU provides subsidies to its farmers to the tune of about 85€ billion yearly. Europe has refused to eliminate or reduce these subsidies in the EPA negotiations, and they have also not done so in the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations. Under these circumstances, the agricultural trade with EU will always be lopsided and unfair (Hammouda et al., 2005).[37]

Furthermore, the increase in EU trade exports appears, partially, to be as a result of trade diversion from African countries, meaning that EPA's reform focused on agricultural liberalization and also contradicts one of the principles of the Framework Economic Partnership Agreement on deepening integration. Our main use to Europe will be to sell primary commodities to them, and to re-import these goods once

[34] Supra note 235.

[35] Mkapa supra note 234. Available at http://www.trademarksa/org/news/ also in http://www.seatin-uganda.org and http://www.africareview.com/opinoion/The+EPA+will+bring+more+costs+than+benefits/-/979188/1187686/-/tq0upr/-/index.html. Accessed on 20 July 2011.

[36] Matambalya, F. and Wolf, S. "The Framework Agreement: Who will benefit from the Co-operation between the EU and the ACP States?" In Agriculture and Rural Development, Vol. 7 (2000). Pages 6–10.

[37] Mkapa supra note 234. Available at http://www.trademarksa/org/news/ also in http://www.seatin-uganda.org and http://www.africareview.com/opinoion/The+EPA+will+bring+more+costs+than+benefits/-/979188/1187686/-/tq0upr/-/index.html. Accessed on 20 July 2011. As the characteristics of Tanzania economy during colonialism that Tanganyika remains the producer of raw materials and importer of manufactured goods from Europe, which made our economy to be a dependent economy.

Europe has added value to them. It would be difficult, if not impossible under these conditions, to compete with Europe. Rather a donor recipient relationship would prevail.[38]

4.4 Industrial Sector

The Tanzanian economy will be left wide open to more competitive products from the EU. This will lead our local industry products to lack access to the domestic market as well as the world market as it has been dominated by the EU countries. These can be understood by considering the amount and level of competition that industries in Tanzania will face once tariff barriers are removed on imports from the EU.[39] Besides, it is common knowledge that the EU industrial base is more advanced in terms of technology, and that products from the EU are of higher quality. Once tariffs are removed, the goods will additionally be cheaper, and it is thus likely that the demand for local products will fall, hence affecting the local industries in terms of production activities. The concern is that it is also difficult for the few remaining industries to withstand further liberalization with the EU and automatically, most industries in Tanzania will drop to insignificance (Ngangjngoh-Hodu and Matambalya, 2009).[40] Not only will regional employment be affected as imports from Europe increase and displace domestic farms, the opportunity we have to transform, develop, and industrialize our economy will be put in jeopardy.[41] For example the SIDO [small scale industries in Tanzania,] will be highly affected (Matambalya and Wolf, 2001).[42]

[38] Mkapa supra note 242.

[39] R. Mukandara, Economic Partnership Agreement (EPAs) and the Role of Religious and Civil Society, Workshop held on Monday 23 March 2007.

[40] Mkapa supra note 234. Available at http://www.trademarksa/org/news/ also in http://www.seatin-uganda.org and http://www.africareview.com/opinoion/The+EPA+will+bring+more+costs+than+benefits/-/979188/1187686/-/tq0upr/-/index.html. Accessed on 20 July 2011.

[41] Mkapa supra note 244. Available at http://www.trademarksa/org/news/ also in http://www.seatin-uganda.org and http://www.africareview.com/opinoion/The+EPA+will+bring+more+costs+than+benefits/-/979188/1187686/-/tq0upr/-/index.html. Accessed on 20 July 2011 note 214.

[42] E. K. Zgovu (Department of Economics University of Malawi, Zomba) and (Josaphat P. Kweka Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) Dar es Salaam, Tanzania) AERC Research Paper 184 Consortium, Nairobi African Economic Empirical Analysis of Tariff Line-Level Trade, Tariff Revenue and Welfare Effects of Reciprocity under an Economic Partnership Agreement with the EU: Evidence from Malawi and Tanzania 2008 Also available at http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/tanzania/tanzania_economy.html. Accessed 27 May 2011.

4.5 Employment Sector

The labour force is growing rapidly and outstripping growth in employment opportunities. Sixty percent of the labour force is under 30 years old (National Census 2022). According to the World Bank study in 2015, Tanzania has about 800,000–1,200,000 new job seekers each year (Haule and Werema, 2008).[43]

The other area of interest to the EU is the liberalization of EAC services markets. This will have ramifications on employment, as well as our ability to regulate critical sectors, with far-reaching consequences. Services range from professional services to business, retail, telecommunications, environment, water, transport, energy, health services, etc. Liberalization means that our ability to regulate certain sectors will be curtailed.[44] The EPA will affect the employment of majority of Tanzanians due to the decline in agriculture sector and closure of the industries due as a result of competition from EU.

4.6 Regional Integration

Regional integration has been and remains a top priority for African governments and almost every state is a member of at least two regional integrations. For instance, Tanzania and DRC are a member of SADC and are also members of EAC, the remaining four members of EAC are members of COMMESA (Ajumbo, 2011). This overlapping and multi-membership of the East African regions led to the failure of the implementation of policies within the integration. For instance, in the Eastern African region, some countries are members of both SACU (Southern African Customs Union) and SADC, others are the members of COMESA, and together they belong to EAC, on top of all of this the existence of EPAs is too much for them despite all this complicated and confusing commitment the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) is currently underway. It weakens the regional integration efforts, as EAC countries are significantly losing from the agreement to the benefit of the EU countries. This is the reason why the regional integration process is not progressive and has performed so poorly in Tanzania (Dagne, 2010).[45]

[43] Tanzania economy profile 2011 available at https://www.cia.gov/liblary/publications/the-world-factbook/. Accessed 12 July 2011.

[44] Mkapa supra note 245. Available at http://www.trademarksa/org/news/ also in http://www.seatin-uganda.org and http://www.africareview.com/opinoion/The+EPA+will+bring+more+costs+than+benefits/-/979188/1187686/-/tq0upr/-/index.html. Accessed on 20 July 2011.

[45] Action Aid International, The Trade Escape—WTO Rules and Alternatives to Free Trade Economic Partnership Agreements, 5 (2005); Christian Aid, For Richer or Poorer, 15 (2005).

4.7 Private Sector

The 100% duty free, quota free access to EU markets, already operational Aid for Trade is an added support mechanism. Private sector development is taken care of in the EPA text: "The Parties agree to work together to promote sustained growth, strengthen regional integration, foster competitiveness, increase production, supply capacity, and value addition of the countries concerned. "Consolidating the EU market for EAC's exports, even for countries (LDCs) covered under the Everything But Arms (EBA) initiative, there is a need to have a more predictable regime than just a unilateral offer/arrangement. A transparent and predictable trade regime shall increase FDI inflows Simplified (user-friendly) rules of origin."

5 Other Effects of EAC-EU-EPA

Loss of sovereignty and lack of political commitment are another negative effect that the East African regions experience due to the existence of Economic Partnership Agreements. The pressure and conditions imposed by this negotiation led the East African Community leaders to be very submissive and this led to a loss of sovereignty. This is very dangerous for these countries because it leads a country into political instability and people to lose confidence in their leaders.

Disintegration of the East Africa Community, according to my observations will be experienced in the long run due to Economic Partnership Agreement, this is because of diversion of trade and failure to implement the policies, missions, and visions of the East Africa Community. The funding has been the key element and indeed a tool under Economic Partnerships Agreement negotiations. East Africa Regions have been promised finances to support the regional integration; however, no amount of funds can compensate the disastrous outcome of flawed policies of EPAs (Haule and Werema, 2008).[46]

Violation and infringements of human rights is another effect, which has been experienced by Tanzania, this is due to the fact that the EAC-EU-EPA negotiations hinder the EAC countries, including Tanzania, to enforce human rights. The political and economic strengths of EU were in itself a threat and a pressure in the negotiations.[47] The EPAs have been held out as a development tool; therefore, funding has been a key element in the EPA negotiations to twist the EAC negotiator to sign the treaty, and in any case no amount of funds can compensate for disastrous outcomes of the flawed policies. The entire negotiation was neither transparent nor

[46] W. Roux, "Economic Partnership Agreements: The new game of divide and rule" Labour Resource & Research Institutes (LaRRI) 2008.

[47] Haule and Werema, supra note 44, p 39 as the quote Joint Civil Society Statement on the Eve of the Economic Partnership Agreements on the Eve of the Information Seminar in Lusaka–Zambia 30 May 2007, p 1.

involved the opinion of the Tanzanian. Despite the campaign mounted by the trade unions, businessmen, scholars, academicians, and other stakeholders to stop the EAC-EU-EPA process,[48] yet the EPAs operate and they are unlikely to be reversed (Nalunga, 2009).

6 Conclusion

To sum up, the rational and promising objectives of the EAC-EU-EPA do not bear any sign of reality, only the opposite to these is likely to occur. It also shows that, the EPAs in their current form will not foster the economic integration in the East Africa region. The fact that the agreement has divided the ACP countries into various negotiating groups and each group is supposed to negotiate independently with the EU countries a step which is contrary to the regional integration principle of the EPA negotiations. As a result, the agreement not only reduce group powers in negotiations, but also leaves the ACP countries divided and weak in striking better trade deals. This has led to the conclusion that Economic Partnership Agreement is nothing than a new game of divide and rule similar to the system used during colonialisms (Matambalya and Wolf, 2001; Haule and Werema, 2008).[49]

The EPA has been held out as a tool that will address the development challenges facing Tanzania and EAC region at large due to some development funds. These include, EDF,[50] funds from SIDA,[51] which facilitate the EPA process and the regional

[48] See B. M. Mkapa, EPA puts EAC Industrializations and development prospects in Jeopardy Sunday June 19. He condemned the EPA and called for stopping of the signing of the Comprehensive, He said "*If we sign the EPA, our main utility to Europe will be to sell primary commodities to them, and to re import these goods once Europe has added value to them. It would be difficult. It would be difficult, if not impossible under these conditions of competing with Europe, for EAC to develop, the EAC to develop and economically diversify*."

EPA F. Matambalya, The Merits and Demerits of EU Policies towards Associated Developing Countries: An Empirical Analysis of the EU-SADC Trade and Overall Economic Relations within the Framework of the Lomé Convention," Peter Lang Science Publishers, Bern/Frankfurt/New York/Paris/Vienna (1999). R. Mukandala, The Opening Speech on "The Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and The Role of Religious and Civil Society," Workshop held on Monday 23 March 2007, p 2. R. Haule and Fredrick Werema "EC-ACP Economic Partnerships Agreements [EPAs] and Their Economic Impact on Developing Countries" Journals of African and International Law, Vol 1, African Institute for Comparative and International law, Songea, 2008 p 25–50.

[49] W. Roux, "Economic Partnership Agreements: The new game of divide and rule" Labour Resource & Research Institutes (LaRRI) 2008.

[50] European Development Funds (EDF). Available at http://europa.euscadpluslegenlvbr12102.htm.htm. Accessed on 23 August 2011.

[51] Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) The EAC secretariat reported that it had secured Swedish Kroner 24 million from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) to facilitate EPA negotiations by EAC experts during the EAC Sectoral Council meeting held on 29 November 2011. Sida was initially meant to cater for, among others, supporting the EAC capacity building for defining trade negotiations through research and studies. The money was also intended to cover the costs of organizing negotiation meetings and sessions, technical support to

integrations process. However, evidence shows that it is up to the EAC to offer grants or withdraw them and when they reach the targeted country, they are managed by a specific committee from European Union. Therefore, in any case no amount of funds can compensate for the disastrous effects of the EAC-EU-EPA on the Tanzanian economy (Hammouda et al., 2005).

Tanzania can expect limited or no benefit from the EU-EAC-Economic Partnership Agreement. Tanzania will only face tremendous challenges in industrializing our economy, revenue losses as well as the negative impact on the agriculture sector where many small-scale industries will face many challenges or even closure in the presence of the EPA. It will be difficult to develop the agriculture sector under unfair competition with the EU.

This cost will be particularly heavy for the public; therefore, for these reasons the author urges governments in the region to intervene regarding the EAC-EU-EPA offer and make sure that they stop signing the EPA just as Dr. Gaiani puts it: a strong turnaround in the negotiations is therefore urgently needed, rather than merely introducing hesitant flexibilities on few issues (Matambalya, 2001).[52]

7 General Recommendations

Throughout the analysis, the view has been that the EPA is a serious threat to the Tanzanian economy. With this regard, therefore, the chapter does hereby suggest the following:

First, Tanzania should call off the EAC-EU-EPA negotiations, since the EPA will bring no positive impact to Tanzania economy as emphasized by His excellency, the late, Mr. Benjamin William Mkapa contended that the EPA puts EAC industries and economic development in jeopardy; therefore, the EPA will bring more cost than benefit.[53]

Tanzania should concentrate with the Tripartite Agreement[54] as the best option to replace the EPAs. Because it is a strong belief of the author, the tripartite agreement will promote the unity and solidarity of the majority of African countries as most of

the EAC secretariat, sensitization and public awareness of EPAs, project management, monitoring, and evaluation.

[52] Dr. S. Gaiani, when addressing her topic *"Economic Partnership Agreement A threat or an opportunity for Sustainable Developments*?" at the Faculty of Agriculture at University of Bologna.

[53] B. W. Mkapa (Former President of the United Republic of Tanzania). EPA puts Industrialization and development prospect of EAC in Jeopardy, Sunday 19 June 2011.

[54] The tripartite agreement is the agreement which set to involve the three regional integrations that are SADC, COMMESA, and EAC into a single Economic Integration. Heads of state from COMESA, the EAC, and SADC met on 12 June 2011 to launch a substantive programme to harmonize the trade arrangements amongst the three regional economic communities (RECs), with a view to establishing a single Free Trade Area (FTA) encompassing all member states by 2013.

them share a common history and level of economy. And also, their combined strength will make their voices heard in the international arena.[55]

The emerging tripartite arrangement of the EAC-SADC-COMESA will further consolidate this opportunity of expanded regional integration[56] while solving the problems of overlapping and multiple-membership as well as complex structures and eventually conflicting and confusing commitments. However, policy makers have to undertake a careful examination of the tripartite agreements and make them a better option for EAC countries including Tanzania as was the case of the EU.[57]

Further, the author suggested that rather than use energy on negotiating the EPA, Tanzania and other EAC regions should concentrate their efforts on consolidating their new customs union that is the EAC custom union.[58]

Tanzania should put its energy in restructuring its economy and strengthen its agriculture sector, which is the backbone of her economy. This is because the agriculture sector contributes to the national economy and it follows that, it increases the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), exports and earnings, employment, food supply and raw material for our industry. The government of Tanzania should put more emphasis on its agricultural revolution and development policies (Kilimo Kwanza) to bring agriculture tally with aspirations of Mwalimu Nyerere, the father of the Nation of Tanzania, i.e. agriculture is the backbone of Tanzanian economy.[59]

Another suggestion is Tanzania should see the possibilities of industrializing her economy[60] as has been the case of China;[61] therefore, instead of putting more emphasis on liberalization policy and involvement in the EPA, Tanzania should see

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[55] United nation Conference on trade and development, "*Strengthening Regional Economic Integrations in Africa's Development*" Economic Development in Africa, Report 2009.

[56] Available at http://www.seatinuganda.org and at http://www.africareview.com/opinoion/The+EPA+will+bring+more+costs+than+benefits/-/979188/1187686/-/tq0upr/-/index.html. Accessed on 20 July 2011.

[57] M. Stern and Y. Ramkolowan, Tripartite FTA: does it make economic sense? Available at http://www.dnaeconomics.com/pages/trade_policy/?zDispID=NewsArtTripartite_FTA_does_it_make_economic_sense. Accessed on 27 June 2011.

[58] The main objectives are to liberalize and promote cross-border trade among the member states. Thus, in design and effect, customs unions have basic features that aim at fully utilizing the existing potential of member states for promoting economic cooperation in various areas. A customs union provides an opportunity to optimize complementarities in trade, investment, production, etc. of the member states.

[59] Kilimo Kwanza is a Tanzania policy that pronounces out the national commitment on agriculture; thus, the policy calls for the private sector to mobilize new investment to promote a modern and profitable agriculture sector in Tanzania. It also calls for the transformation of smallholder farmers into commercial farmers.

[60] It is a part of a wider modernization process, where social change and economic development are closely related with technological innovation, particularly with the development of large-scale energy and metallurgy production. It is the extensive organization of an economy for the purpose of manufacturing.

[61] J. V. Stalin, "The Prospects of the Revolution in China," Works, Eng. ed. FLPH, Moscow, 1954, Vol. VIII, p. [379].M. Tse-tung, "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party, December 1939.

the possibilities of reviving her economy and transform it from one of mainly agriculture to industrialization.[62]

Another possible option suggested is the preference of the Everything But Arms (EBA), which is an initiative of the European Union under which all imports to the EU from the least developed countries are duty and quota free, with the exception of armaments. African Caribbean and Pacific countries will benefit more with EBA preferences rather than those of the EPA.[63] Furthermore, the author calls for unity among the African countries on negotiating the EPA. Unity will strengthen their bargaining power and they will act as a single block as the EU countries do. Just as Kwame Nkrumah put it:

> No single part of Africa can be safe, or free to develop fully and independently, while any part remains un-liberated, or while Africa's vast economic resources continue to be exploited by imperialist and neo-colonialist interests. Unless Africa is politically united, under an All-African Union Government, there can be no solution to our political and economic problems.[64]

This means that for African countries, including Tanzania, their true salvation lies only in their unity and integration. This was also supported by the South African president that "we have to overcome ACP imbalances through solidarity and the use of combined strength to make voices heard."[65] The same was repeated by B. W. Mkapa that "Like President Mbeki, I believe an African renaissance is possible and necessary."[66]

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[62] It is a part of a wider modernization process, where social change and economic development are closely related with technological innovation, particularly with the development of large-scale energy and metallurgy production. It is the extensive organization of an economy for the purpose of manufacturing.

[63] EBA extends duty and quota free access to all products originating in LDCs except arms and ammunition. Available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armaments. Last accessed in 23 June 2011.

[64] K. Nkrumah, "Africa must unity" First published 1963. Reprinted 1963, 1964 (three times), 1970, 1974, 1985, 1998.

[65] was the message from *South African President* Thabo Mbeki, while addressing the third summit of the ACP heads of state and government, Nadi, Fiji, 18 July 2002.

[66] B.W. Mkapa, while making his speech at annual Thabo Mbeki, lecture 25 May 2011.

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An Evaluation of Undocumented Migrants' Impact on Land Resources in Tanzania: A Case of Mtwara Region



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Abstract This paper analyzes the impacts of undocumented migrants on land resources in Tanzania, the case of Mtwara Region. Tanzania receives migrants from neighboring countries and beyond. Some of these migrants come to the country temporarily, whereas others become established permanently in the country. Though some of them have done so in harmony with the appropriate rules, others have come and stayed in the country without the related authorized requirements and these are recognized as "illegal" migrants. The investigation used a sample of 100 respondents, randomly selected from the studied area. The methods used in data gathering were interviews, a questionnaire, a documentary review, and focus group discussion. Several theories relating to national land use are presented to acquaint the reader with relevant prototypes, frameworks, and approaches. The exploration found that there is poor security on the country boundaries, dishonesty, and numerous porous ways, which lead to the inflow of illegal migrants in this southern region of Tanzania, Mtwara in particular. The findings of this research show that the lack of funds and political inclination have led to reduced technology, insufficient number of workers, and inadequate working tools. The research recommends that in order to maintain competence and adequacy in safeguarding the country from illegal migrants, there is a necessity to increase the obligations of the government, communities, and other stakeholders regarding these issues.

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1 Introduction

Politics, the economy, social issues, and the provision of public services are all impacted by illegal immigration. Instances of illegal immigration have been documented throughout the world. By the end of 2007, the United Nations High Commission (UNHCR) estimated that there were around 33 million illegal immigrants living throughout the world. By 2007, there were 2.7 million additional illegal immigrants who were involved in land acquisition, up from 1 million in 2001. The overall number of undocumented immigrants has slightly increased globally (UNHCR 2008; Cadenas et al. 2021; Durand and Massey 2019; Laque 2021). The most afflicted continent in the world is Africa; Sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the most severely affected area, accounting for 67% of all illegal immigrants and 72% of African deaths brought on by illegal immigrants. Illegal immigrants are disproportionately represented among young persons aged 15–24 (Bakewell 2020; Mushomi et al. 2022; Ospina 2019).

For instance, 104,000 foreign nationals arrive in the United States, on average, each day. This group consists of 99,200 tourists, business visitors, and students, as well as 3100 immigrants who have been granted visas that allow them to settle down and become citizens after five years. Every day, almost 2000 undocumented aliens arrive in America (Davidson and Farquhar 2020; Dzordzormenyoh and Perkins 2022; Landgrave and Nowrasteh 2019). More than half avoid capture at the border between Mexico and the United States; the remaining individuals enter legally but break the conditions of their guest permits by working or failing to leave on time. The volume of uninvited immigrants entering the country has decreased as a result of the recent recession and unemployment. Even if they lost their jobs, the majority of illegal foreign workers remained as there were few employment opportunities back home. Civilian employment decreased from 146 million at the end of 2007 to 138 million at the end of 2009, a loss of 8 million jobs as a result of the recession.

The U.S. Senate's failure to pass a comprehensive immigration reform measure in 2007—a bill that included a requirement that companies fire workers whose names and social security numbers do not match—led to a rise in the enforcement of immigration rules. For the first time in twenty years, there were fewer undocumented foreigners in the country in 2008–2009, although experts can't agree on why. Some studies point to the recession, while others discuss the results of federal and state enforcement initiatives to prevent foreign nationals from working in the United States (Azizi and Yektansani 2020; Block 2021; Hoekstra and Orozco-Aleman 2021).

Undocumented presence in the state of Arizona is now illegal under a bill that was passed in April 2010 and is one of several regulations that more states and towns are passing to address unauthorized migration. According to opinion surveys, there is a general lack of satisfaction with the "broken" immigration system. Congress has been unable to come to an agreement on a three-pronged package for ten years that would increase enforcement against unauthorized immigration, legalize the majority of unauthorized foreigners, establish new guest worker programs,

and expand existing ones. This would benefit 459 million American residents, not including illegal aliens. More than 200 million more people have been added to the population, primarily as a result of immigration and the children of immigrants. This is a future that does not need to occur (Alvord and Menjívar 2022; Chalfin and Deza 2020; Chang 2021).

The majority of recent immigrants have been Asian and Hispanic, changing the demographics of the United States. Of the 203 million people living in the United States in 1970, over 83% were non-Hispanic whites, while 6% were Hispanic or Asian. Asian or Hispanic people make up 20% of the population nowadays. Approximately 50% of Americans will be non-Hispanic white by 2050 if current trends hold. The majority of immigrants come to the US in search of employment opportunities. 15% of American workers were born outside of the country in 2009 (Markides and Rote 2019; Portes 2020; Zhang et al. 2022).

Tanzania is one of the nations in Sub-Saharan Africa that has issues with illegal immigration. The prevalence of illegal immigrants in the population (defined as those aged 15 to 49) was reported to be 5.7% nationwide, with illegal immigrants being a somewhat higher percentage. According to this prevalence analysis, 1.05 million people, including adults and children, are thought to be living unlawfully in the country. There are encouraging signs as the aggregate national statistics are stable and even declining marginally. The prevalence rate was 7.7% for women and 6.3% for males in 2003–2004, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs, however, these rates are a little lower (Danane 2022; Manby 2019; Mwanicheta 2020). The relevance of issues relating to illegal immigration and land resources in Tanzania is increasing, particularly in light of the country's explosive population growth, which now totals 66.46 million people in January 2023. Increased illegal immigration worsens land disputes, jeopardizes the employment of citizens, and may eventually lead to societal unrest. Given the circumstances, a scientific investigation was required to explore the nature and scope of the issue, as well as public perception and response (Brankamp and Daley 2020; Kipingu and Shayo 2021; Naiposha et al. 2021).

People from countries other than Uganda, including Rwanda, Burundi, and Luo from South-West Kenya, have been drawn to Uganda by illegal migration. South and Central Nyanza in Kenya are the Luo people's native regions, whose densities were 366 and 218 per square mile, respectively, in 1962. The densities can range between 1000 and 8000 people per square mile in some places, including Kisumu. The Luo travel to metropolitan areas in pursuit of employment due to the constraints caused by a lack of arable land, and the majority of them migrate for an extended period of time (Igoye 2020; Koval et al. 2021; Mbugua 2019).

A minister recently declared that even if they are discovered simply using Tanzania as a transit country, the country will have no tolerance for illegal immigrants from the Horn of Africa. During a visit to the Holili border checkpoint in the north, the minister for East African Cooperation, Mr. Samuel Sitta, stated that Tanzania was obligated by international agreements to not provide entry for illegal immigrants. He claimed that if the country permitted illegal immigrants to cross its borders on the pretext of humanitarianism, it ran the risk of getting involved in wars

with other nations. "Out of compassion, we cannot permit them to travel via other nations. In dealing with unauthorized immigration, we are obligated by international commitments," The minister was speaking to local officials and traders in the border town. The minister was responding to requests from some officials and civil society organization members who proposed that foreigners from the Horn of Africa states should be permitted to pass through the country (Cooksey Stowers et al. 2020; Hirschler and Hofmeier 2019; Nalule and Nambooze 2020).

Mr. Sitta was informed by Mr. Frederick Kiondo, a top immigration officer at the border town, that unlawful immigration deaths had damaged Tanzania's reputation. The foreigners died while being transferred in airtight lorries, some died when the boats carrying them capsized, and others simply passed away from hunger and thirst in various hiding places. At a conference in Kilacha, close to the border town, Mr. Kiondo stated that Tanzania should create its "own solutions" to deal with the issue, which has become worse due to the increase in fatalities. He said that Tanzania should set rigorous requirements on the former to bar them from entering because the majority of illegal immigrants were from the Horn of Africa and entered the nation through Kenya (Ekanade 2020; Kahimba 2021; Nalule and Nambooze 2020).

The majority of unauthorized immigrants come from Ethiopia and Somalia, while there have been recent reports of others arriving from Sudan. Some are reportedly from Middle Eastern nations. Since the start of the year 2016, 600 instances have been documented. According to Mr. Kiondo, the immigrants were using hired agents to make their way from the Horn of Africa to southern Africa. He said they were successful in raising $200 for the visa fee (Adugna et al. 2019; Msuya 2021; Sheridan 2019).

Since its creation as a political and physical entity and the establishment of the colonial boundaries, Tanzania has been the destination of illegal immigrants from its neighbors and beyond. Some of these immigrants entered the nation temporarily, while others chose to remain there permanently. While some have entered and settled in the nation in compliance with the relevant legal requirements of the Tanzania Immigration Act No. 7 of 1995, others have done so without doing so. These immigrants are referred to as "illegal" or "irregular." Such a person's migration path is thus referred to as "illegal migration" or "irregular migration." In Tanzania, the issue of illegal migration is getting worse every day as authorities attempt to curb it, but it seems to be out of control (Brankamp and Daley 2020; Van Hook and Glick 2020; Weima and Hyndman 2019).

The main causes of such a systemic failure appear to be four. All around the world, law-and-order measures on their own are unsuccessful. This appears to be true even after government spending on enforcement soars, as it has in Tanzania and numerous other nations. The Tanzanian experience also shows that even border militarization is considerably less effective than those who support such measures often claim. In reality, net illegal immigration has been increasing by an average of 3000 people per year despite such increased investment and restrictions. Each year, several hundred would-be immigrants perish or put their lives in danger trying to

enter Tanzania. Furthermore, after they undertake significantly greater investments (in smuggler fees and personal danger) necessary to circumvent Tanzanian border restrictions, many Tanzanians who previously moved back and forth are now "locked-in," what many experts refer to as "circularity" (Mlambo and Ndebele 2021; Ng'andu 2019; Weima and Hyndman 2019).

Immigration policies contribute to sending and receiving migrants and transit nations, and generate self-reinforcing dynamics that promote continuous migration. Push and pull elements are both present in these dynamics. Rather than downplaying the importance and resilience of modern industrial societies, policy objectives for these societies might instead focus on reaction flexibility and sensible, clear laws that a state can firmly enforce. All transnational contacts—economic, political, social, and cultural—contain at least some migration-related effects unless a state buries itself in isolation. Attempts to avoid these repercussions by upholding a state's antiquated immigration policy only encourage immigrants to enter and remain in the country illegally (Lewela 2019; Mutinda 2021; Nassali 2019).

Working with rather than against the forces of globalization on migration may be more effective if a state feels that it wins from the openness that globalization institutionalizes. People who are trying to escape conditions they find intolerable will frequently test the defenses of different receiving states by joining the illegal migration stream. In reality, they will proceed regardless of whether they must endanger their own lives, pay expensive fees, manipulate the asylum system, or use any other admission method that may be available. When they get there, they quickly integrate themselves into the gray market. This and other expressions of skepticism about the status quo of immigration policy may appear to some politicians, interest organizations, and members of the public as though they are "going soft" in their efforts to curb illegal immigration (Chambiri 2019; Cockx et al. 2019; Nassali 2019). Of course, either method of action could, in any circumstance, prove ill-advised and harmful. However, a strong law-and-order component to the overall strategy against illegal immigration is still required because illegal immigration weakens or perverts a number of international and domestic policy ambitions, as well as a society's legal order. Foreign policy problems can take numerous forms, as seen in the International Convention of Illegal Immigrants and other UN resolutions (Gooding 2019; Londo 2020; Sheridan 2019).

The growing power of trafficking and smuggling organizations may really be one of the most important effects of illegal immigration. Unauthorized immigrants frequently mortgage their own lives and futures to their smugglers because such networks increasingly only receive a portion of their costs up front (for example, the flow of Somalis and Ethiopian migrants towards our borders). The salary and working conditions system, social contribution plans, and legal and social order of the receiving society are all threatened by this class of contemporary indentured servants. From the perspective of the countries of origin, smuggling syndicates not only put the lives of their citizens in danger and routinely exploit them, but they also undermine the authority of public institutions and make relations with the governments of transit and destination countries more difficult (Emmanuel 2020; Tshimpaka and Inaka 2020; Whitaker 2020).

The analysis determines how illegal immigration has affected Tanzania's Mtwara region's land resources. Tanzania is increasingly receiving migrants from neighboring nations and abroad. While some outsiders continuously arrive in search of transitory residence, others have made significant advances. While some have entered and settled there in accordance with the relevant legislation, others have done so without adhering to the necessary legal requirements. Illegal immigration is a problem that needs to be solved immediately, confidently, and obligatorily. Illegal immigration is a significant concern that cannot be brushed aside in favor of other national issues like the fight against terrorism or the earlier battle against drugs. Illegal immigration is connected to the wars on terror and drugs, and it is actually the result of a bigger issue caused by criminals taking advantage of lax or inconsistent immigration law enforcement, the economy, and disrespect for the rule of law (Haule 2019; Misana and Tilumanywa 2019; Mtui 2013).

Since it inherently contradicts national or international registration requirements, illegal immigration is not treated like legal immigration under Tanzanian law. Unauthorized immigration, however, might be viewed as a byproduct of immigration law. Countries establish immigration laws, and migrants who arrive through dishonest or irregular means, or who do not have a formal residence permit are assumed to be ineligible to enter. Undocumented migration frequently reflects these developments because fundamental shifts in the way the state intervenes to control migration frequently amount to little more than the creation of new administrative classifications to categorize their flow. Unauthorized immigration in the 1990s seems indissociably linked to the more restrictive immigration laws put in place over the previous ten years (Andrew 2019; Brankamp and Daley 2020; Ekanade 2020).

The number of illegal immigrants is, by definition, difficult to quantify. Estimates of these flows for Tanzania are based on the volume of illegal immigrants detained. Numbers may be skewed by stricter enforcement and creative approaches to apply national immigration regulations and detain unauthorized immigrants. The literature's estimates of the number of undocumented immigrants differ from one another and from actual data (Funge et al. 2020; Gasto 2021; Kipingu and Shayo 2021).

The argument goes that people who immigrate illegally are more docile, fragile, and have the know-how to camouflage within the community. The theory is based on the supposition that, as a byproduct of industrialization, possibilities for jobs that are already available but are turned down by native workers open doors for alternative labor sources or land resources. Tanzania has established efforts to stop the flow of illegal immigrants as a result of the rising number of them, partly in response to domestic political pressures brought on by rivalry for land resources within the country and political unrest in its neighbors. Between April and November 2007 alone, a total of 1031 illegal immigrants from the Horn of Africa were apprehended and kept in custody in Tanzania. By January 2008, the figure stood at 1289 persons from 12 different nationalities. The numbers continue to increase and by April 2008, the figure of Ethiopians and Somalis alone had risen from 1168 to 1279.

The Tanzanian government invests enormous sums of money to address this type of persistent illegal immigration. On April 10, 2023, for example, police in the southern region of Njombe announced that they were holding 63 illegal migrants from Ethiopia who were among 100 immigrants who sneaked into Tanzania via Nairobi and Mombasa, Kenya. A total of 40 other immigrants were said to be on the run. Police in the region arrested the immigrants after intercepting the lorry they were travelling in following an accident.

In 2021, then-President John Magufuli ordered the release of 1789 Ethiopians imprisoned for entering Tanzania illegally. Magufuli's pardon came after he met with his Ethiopian counterpart, Sahle-Work Zewde, who was in the country for an official visit. Likewise, according to a 2022 report by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), a UN agency that ensures the orderly and humane management of migration, as of 2022, there were 793 Ethiopian migrants in various detention centers across Tanzania.

According to the research findings, the government can create specific tactics and plans to reduce the rise of illegal immigration. The study's findings will also assist foreign organizations and other interested parties in developing appropriate resources to find practical solutions to the problem without taking away Tanzanian citizens' access to their land. The analysis will also demonstrate how the researcher should respond to inquiries like, "Why are there so many illegal immigrants in the Mtwara Region as well as the Southern parts of Tanzania?" Finally, scholars and social analysts can use this study as a reference to cover the enormous knowledge gap that exists in this field, demonstrating their familiarity with it and establishing connections with other similar initiatives. The community as a whole will learn about issues that influence their lives from this assignment, such as how illegal immigration affects land resources. Thus, this study intends to identify how illegal migrants become a threat to land resources in the Mtwara region. And, secondly the study examines measures taken by the government of Tanzania and considers the issue of illegal migrants as a threat to land resources.

2 Theoretical Literature Reviews

The reader will be introduced to theories, paradigms, frameworks, and techniques in the area of illegal immigration and land resources in this somewhat ambitious section. Theoretical concerns need to be given more focus in this subject. Theory supports us in our factual ignorance. Although there isn't a precise theory of land resources, many ideas from other fields, like sociology, psychology, and political science, have been incorporated. The push-pull theory and Migration System theory, two theories of migration and land resources, are connected to the study.

3 The Push-Pull Framework

In general, neo-classical and historical-structural theories of migration fall short in their attempts to explain why some residents of a country or region migrate while others do not, as well as why people frequently move between specific locations in a spatially concentrated, typically non-random manner. Therefore, it can be beneficial to consider some of the geographical models created primarily by geographers and demographers (Mohamed and Abdul-Talib 2020; Pan 2019; Zhao et al. 2021). According to Malmberg (2021), the following variables influence the decision to migrate: elements relating to the areas of origin and destination, so-called intervening barriers (such as distance, physical hurdles, immigration rules, and so forth), and individual characteristics. In addition to the fact that opportunities are typically highly localized, Lee argued that migration tends to occur within clearly defined "streams," from specific places at the point of origin to specific places at the destination. This is because the flow of knowledge back from the destination facilitates the passage for later migrants.

Although Malmberg (2021) does not appear to have coined or used the phrase, his theoretical model is frequently referred to as the "push-pull" model. The push-pull model is essentially a model of individual choice and equilibrium, and as a result, it resembles neo-classical micro models in many ways. The push-pull model has become the preeminent migration model in secondary and postsecondary education and has skyrocketed in popularity in the literature on migration. Numerous environmental, demographic, and economic factors are thought to influence migration decisions by the majority of researchers who have used the push-pull framework. The pushes and pulls are typically attributed to two main factors: (1) rural population growth, which places a Malthusian strain on agricultural and natural resources and drives people out of marginal rural areas, and (2) economic conditions (higher wages), which draw people into cities and industrialized nations (Asoba and Mefi 2020; Khalid and Urbański 2021; Mohamed and Abdul-Talib 2020).

4 Migration Systems Theory

The migratory systems theory method is strongly related to network theory. The theory of migratory systems was first proposed by the geographer Mabogunje. This theory's primary premise is that moving between sending and receiving countries modifies the social, cultural, economic, and institutional circumstances there, as well as the entire developmental context which takes place when moving between countries. While migration systems theory emphasizes that migration not only affects and is affected by the direct social environment of migrants but also completely restructures the societal or developmental context of the concrete spaces in which migration takes place, network theory primarily focuses on the crucial role of personal relations between migrants and non-migrants and the ways in which this

social capital facilitates, perpetuates, and transforms migration processes (De Haas 2021; Leal and Harder 2022; Masten et al. 2019).

According to the theory of migration, a network of locations exists connected by alternating flows and countercurrents of people, goods, services, and information likely to encourage additional interchange, including migration. He emphasized how information flows and feedback mechanisms shape migration systems by drawing on general systems theory. He emphasized the significance of feedback mechanisms, which allow for the transmission of data regarding the migrants' reception and progress back to their place of origin (Brettell and Hollifield 2022; De Haas 2021; Muyonga et al. 2020).

5 Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in the Mtwara Region. The Ruvuma river forms the southern border with Mozambique. The Ruvuma region forms the western boundary of Mtwara region. The Mtwara Region has a population of 1,270,854 as per the 2012 Tanzania National Census. Six districts make up Mtwara's administrative divisions: Masasi, Nanyumbu, Newala, Tandahimba, Mtwara Urban, and Mtwara Rural. The area between the two that is closest to Mozambique is Mtwara. The Ruvuma defines the boundary, and the Mtwara Region is bound by Ruvuma Region to the west, Mtwara Region to the north, and the Indian Ocean to the east (Imakumbili et al. 2019; Ndomba and Maluka 2019).

Rainfall in Mtwara Urban is bimodal, with the short (Vuli) rains occurring between November and January and the long rains occurring between March and May. Overall, it gets roughly 1000 mm of rain annually on average, though there are large variations from year to year and the inland area receives significantly less rain than the coastal district. Due to its close proximity to the sea, the area experiences year-round humidity that is relatively high, and its monthly average temperature is between 24 and 28 degrees Celsius. With substantial commercial plantations of cashew nuts, sisal, and coconut in what are now Mtwara Rural regions, Mtwara is a significant hub of trade and administration (Benta 2020; Chimbyangu 2020; Dimoso 2020).

However, Mtwara's commercial prominence has decreased since 1952, when it replaced Dar es Salaam as the main metropolitan center in southern Tanzania because of its deep-water port. Due to its relative isolation, Mtwara Region is currently one of Tanzania's least developed areas. Census data analysis also reveals net outmigration and gender disparity, both of which point to a lack of viable career possibilities. With over 95% of the population dependent on agriculture, shifting cultivation is still a major type of smallholder farming in the district. The coastal settlements' economies also rely heavily on fishing, but the catches are typically tiny and traditional fishing gear is used most often (Bishoge et al. 2022; Chimbyangu 2020; Kamat et al. 2019).

The completion of the road's paving between Kibiti and Mingoyo (Mnazi-Mmoja) will put an end to the region's position as a backwater and serve as a spur for land development. Although the soil fertility is typically low, the majority of the land is thought to be suitable for some type of farming. This has caused the agriculture industry in Mtwara to stagnate, along with minimal use of modern agricultural inputs including inorganic fertilizer, current varieties, and mechanization. While the production of cash crops is not as profitable as it could be, staple food production covers local needs with very little surplus (Dimoso et al. 2020; Ndossy 2020; Shole and Kayunze 2019).

Every year, crops are grown on about a fifth of the world's theoretically arable land, or around 1000 km^2 of arable land. The main income crops are cashew, sesame, and coconut, while the main staple crops are maize, sorghum, rice, and cassava. A very small area is irrigated, and rice farming is the main purpose of this irrigation. Due to regional culinary preferences and inadequate transportation, horticultural crops, with modest markets include tomatoes and amaranthus (mchicha). The history of cashew nut production in Tanzania has also been turbulent. The cashew sector once served as the backbone of the rural economy, but since the early 1980s, it has experienced a sharp collapse (Benta 2020; Dimoso 2020; Kitali and Malekela 2021).

About 25% of Mtwara is covered by forest. Six inland Forest Reserves (FR) are located there and are governed by the central government. The FR is incorrectly situated; it should be located farther to the north-west, past the Mchinjibi, a branch of the Mbwemkuru River that runs by the village of Mipingo. The Makangara FR is currently being transferred to Joint Forest Management (JFM), a collaboration between the Mtwara District Council and nearby communities. Nyangamara LAFR is being built with the support of the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania (WCST) for biodiversity protection, and five local Land Forest Reserves (VLFRs) are almost ready to be developed under village management for a variety of objectives (Imakumbili et al. 2019; Liwenga et al. 2019; Sweya et al. 2022).

A manageable, small sample of 180 people has been created by examining Native American research. Ward Executive Officers (WEO) and Village Executive Officers (VEO) were used by the researcher to gather data. As a result, the information provided was useful in determining the effectiveness of information regarding illegal immigrants and land resources in Mtwara. In quantitative research, it's thought that if a sample is carefully selected using the right methodology, it will be feasible to generalize the findings for the entire research population. However, for many qualitative researchers, the objective is not to generalize their findings for the entire research population. They might instead attempt to describe or clarify what is occurring within a smaller group of individuals. They acknowledge that everyone is unique and that the findings might alter if the research were carried out with a different set of people, but they feel that this may offer insights into the behavior of the larger research population (Bush and Amechi 2019; Greening 2019; Tracy 2019).

Since no single approach can act in isolation and any bias can alter the entire image of reality that the researcher is examining, multiple sources of information were required to gather the necessary knowledge. More than one mixed approach was employed in this investigation. Data collection techniques included questionnaires, observations, interviews, and documentation. The researcher employed

questionnaires for quantitative data and interviews and observation for qualitative data. In order to accommodate respondents who do not speak English, the questionnaires were created in both Swahili and English. Primary data from WEOs, VEOs, and groups of people were gathered through observation, questionnaires, and interviews. Secondary data were obtained from documentary reviews from various sources such as journals, books, and reports related to the study.

Both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques were used in this investigation. The data gathered when using the qualitative method is typically descriptive. The quantitative approach typically employs structured tools, logical data analysis, and numerical information. The plan that outlines the method and technique of study intended to collect pertinent data that satisfies the research objectives and provides the answers to the questions is known as the research design (Bruner et al. 2019; Kas et al. 2019; Kwiek 2021).

Editing was done to remove errors and omissions from the data collected in order to guarantee that the investigation's data met quality standards. Editing, it is said, is done to make sure that the data are correct, trustworthy with other information acquired, consistently entered, as successfully as possible, and has been prepared to make coding and tabulation easier. Coding, which involves assigning numbers to responses, makes it easier for a researcher to enter data fast and accurately using a keyboard's numeric keypad. Because coding made responses more understandable and reduced their bulk, it made analysis more effective and reduced the chance of data entry errors. Using SPSS, data input and analysis were completed. Coding and SPSS program entry were done with the quantitative data from the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were used with the SPSS to calculate the various percentages of respondents. Microsoft Excel was used to import data from SPSS in order to create charts, tables, line graphs, and histograms. The means were used to compare different things in different ways.

A research design can be thought of as a set of guidelines for data gathering and analysis that seeks to balance relevance with the study goal. Additionally, study design specifies the kinds of methodologies that should be used. It outlines the location and methodology of the investigation. The research design displays the equipment, processes, and suggested data analysis for the sample (subjects). Non-interventional inquiring research is the focus of this study. The blueprint for an investigation's approach and strategy, known as the research design, tries to collect relevant data that will support the study's objectives and provide the answers to the questions. A research design can be thought of as a set of guidelines for data gathering and analysis that seeks to balance relevance with the study goal. Additionally, study design specifies the kinds of procedures that will be used. It outlines the location and methodology of the investigation. Research design outlines the sample (subjects), tools, processes, and suggested data analysis timeline. The replies from qualitative data, which were gathered utilizing checklists of key informants and focus group discussants, were analyzed using content analysis (Harris 2019; Kazdin 2021; Kumar et al. 2019).

The key to this study's examination of qualitative data was the use of content analysis, a technique that looks at artifacts of social communication like written

texts or transcriptions of verbally recorded conversations like interviews and field notes. Condensing the information from the various in-depth interviews and FGD into free-flowing summaries allowed researchers to search for distinctive aspects of messages pertaining to the problem of illegal immigration and land resources. The results are displayed in a variety of ways, including tables, numbers, percentages, and narrative remarks. For simple interpretation and comprehension of the research findings, line and bar graphs are used (Cr 2020; Gupta and Gupta 2022; Rinjit 2020).

The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) 16.0 version computer application was used to examine quantitative data. Calculated descriptive statistics included minimum and maximum values, frequencies, modes, averages, and percentages. The relationship between the dependent and independent variables was ascertained using inferential analysis. In this study, both the qualitative and the quantitative data from the interview were obtained through the questionnaire. The SPSS program was used to code and enter the quantitative data from the questionnaire. Content analysis, a technique that looks at written documents and other artifacts of social communication, was used to assess qualitative data (Abu-Bader 2021; George and Mallery 2019; Koirala et al. 2020).

The interview schedule must be pilot tested with a small sample of responders before being revised. Although interviews followed a set of questions, they were significantly less formal and standardized than those in the general survey. All of the predetermined questions had to have answers (albeit not always in the same order), but the interview was not over after that. Because every couple is unique in some way from the others, it was important to learn as much as possible about the specifics of each couple's experiences and problems as identified by the person conducting the interview. The set questions served as a starting point for this process, and any interesting information that surfaced in the respondents' responses served as the basis for follow-up inquiries (Mishra and Alok 2022; Pandey and Pandey 2021; Snyder 2019).

Three key portions of the interview schedule utilized for staff responders are included in the excerpt. The schedule is a tool for enabling the respondent to talk about the crucial subjects between the questions on the schedule and those posed by the interviewer. Both closed-ended and open-ended questions were utilized in the study to gather data. This made it easier to gather data and allowed respondents to provide correct information. Although open-ended questions allow the respondent to provide classification, closed-ended questions offer greater uniformity of responses and are easier to process (Gupta and Gupta 2022; Mishra and Alok 2022; Rinjit 2020).

The written questionnaire or rating scale is the primary quantitative self-report technique. It may appear easy to develop a questionnaire, but it is not. There are a lot of questionnaires out there that are poorly constructed. Taking care of the respondent is the main adage. A Likert scale is used in most questionnaires. Clear, straightforward, and succinct items are good. The number of points, the kind of anchors, and whether to use polar or bipolar scales are only a few of the problems with constructing the response scale. Acquiescence and social desirability are two examples of response sets that describe a tendency to react to things without considering their content. They must be taken into consideration while creating and analyzing self-reported measures. In order to better convey to readers the challenges involved, the researcher, as in other sections of this research, detailed the procedure from the

perspective of creating a measure. The main argument is that while evaluating a measure, more factors than merely reliability and validity need to be taken into account. It is important to pay great attention to the intricate details of the measure's construction. Writing the questions or items, choosing an acceptable response scale, and deciding on the topics to be covered and their order are all steps in the questionnaire design process (Grassini and Laumann 2020; Kandasamy et al. 2020; Westland 2022).

Taking care of the respondents was the researcher's golden rule for all facets of questionnaire creation. And put yourself in their position and inquire about what it was like to receive the questionnaire on the subject of illegal immigration and land resources. Making things as simple and frustration-free as you can was also seen as important. It is a good idea to complete the questionnaire as part of the pilot testing. The intention is not to obstruct respondents' ability to express their ideas and experiences, but from a general human relations perspective, as well as from a scientific standpoint, it makes sense to try to avoid alienating responders. People who are angry won't give you accurate information (or even any information at all—they might just toss the questionnaire in the trash). The individual questions or items were then written when the themes' coverage had been determined. The wording of a question was quite important because it can affect the type of response that is provided. It is important to remember the following fundamentals of item construction: neutrality.

When conducting qualitative observation, the observer makes an effort to write down a narrative account that, like a literary description, vividly describes the situation. The account, however, makes an effort to be specific and methodical rather than figurative and intuitive, unlike a literary description. Participant observation characteristics: Its foundations are found in anthropology's ethnographic method. It entails the researcher immersing themselves in the environment and taking copious field notes. Methodological issues include observer bias and reactivity. Ethical concerns are raised by secret observation (Eisend and Kuss 2019; Säfsten and Gustavsson 2020; Willmott 2020).

Participant observation is a technique in which the observer joins a group or organization (like a juvenile gang or a mental hospital) in order to get firsthand knowledge of how it operates. Participant observation is defined by a time of extensive social interaction between the researcher and the subjects in their natural environment, during which the data are collected covertly and methodically. Participant observation researchers were frequently the clear focus in actual practice (for example, to study the social structure of a psychiatric in-patient ward). The research questions were typically focused on discovery. When using a grounded theory approach, participant observation is frequently used because the theory changes as the investigation goes on (Harvey 2021; Seim 2021; Shin and Miller 2022). In this instance, the researcher gathered data through studying the environment's characteristics. This made it easier for the researcher to assess the socioeconomic context of land use. In order to supplement and confirm some of the findings from the semi-structured interview, a direct physical observation was used. According to Shin and Miller (2022), observation includes the senses of touch, smell, and hearing in addition to the visual aspect. Observation is crucial because it gives context for the setting in which the study was conducted.

Quantitative observation techniques have the benefit of making dependability calculations easier. One issue in practice is observer drift, when observers begin with great reliability but gradually start to form eccentric norms or act carelessly. It's crucial to continuously assess the observers' reliability to avoid this. Field notes are used to document the observations. They describe the environment, the persons present (perhaps with a graphic), and their verbal and nonverbal conduct. The scene is brought to life by good field notes. Additionally, items that are unclear should be noted for later clarification, and the researcher's own actions should also be mentioned to aid in effect evaluation (Ahmad et al. 2019; Golse and Paul 2022; Zhang et al. 2019).

Throughout the entire study-conducting procedure, ethical principles were given careful consideration. Before starting the study, all gatekeepers must give their consent, which is the first step in the procedure. Prior to conducting interviews, for instance, participants' consent was obtained by providing consent forms, with pertinent information, for them to sign, indicating their willingness to take part in the study. What to do when you witness illegal or immoral conduct and whether participant observation should be overt or covert are two significant ethical dilemmas. Although these problems could also arise in quantitative observation, participant observation literature has highlighted them more. Such deceit, however, violates the ethical concept of informed consent and exposes the researcher to accusations of spying or voyeurism. Research proposals employing covert observation ought to be reviewed for ethical appropriateness (Cammaerts 2020; Kaewkungwal and Adams 2019; Zheng et al. 2020).

The consistency of behavior across time can be used to evaluate participant observation reliability. As we have already established, all observation is to some extent biased since it is influenced by prior knowledge and expectations, whether these are held consciously by a theory or unconsciously by an ethnocentric or generalized worldview. These biases affect how observers perceive the world, and reports from informants may also be skewed due to the individual informants' unique worldviews and personal interests (Hosseini et al. 2022; Jowett 2020; Rees 2020).

The researcher pre-tested the instrument, such as the questionnaire and the interview guide, by conducting a pilot study with some of the respondents, in order to assure the validity and reliability of the instrument for data collection. As a result, the researcher uses a variety of methods, each of which benefits from the use of a different instrument. The researcher also enlists the help of the supervisor to review the tools and determine whether they will in fact measure what the researcher intends to test. The researcher then makes the appropriate adjustments to the tools (Khaleel et al. 2021; Rees 2020; Zheng et al. 2020).

6 Results and Discussion

This section examines the presentation and analysis of the results and how they relate to the modes of delivery that could guarantee the efficacy and effectiveness of illegal immigration and its effects on Tanzania's land resources. Similarly, this section offers suggestions based on the major problems identified through results and

conversations. The two study objectives and hypothesis serve as a guide for the findings reported in this section.

7 Socio-Demographic Variables of Respondents

The purpose of this part is to characterize the respondents' social and demographic traits. Social variables consider education, marital status, and primary occupation, whereas demographic variables include age and sex. These factors, including an individual's age, can have an impact on knowledge and the migration process; as a result, as people get older, their level of awareness of land resources and illegal immigration rises. Age is a key demographic variable, and vital statistics, censuses, and surveys all utilize it as their main basis for classifying demographic groups. The respondents were required to provide their precise birth years while answering questions about their age. The results presented that the respondents' ages ranged between 15 and 20.

Likewise, among the 180 respondents, 7% were between the ages of 20 and 30; 26% between the ages of 30 and 40; 47% between the ages of 40 and above; and 20% were older than 40. Because they ranged in age from 15 to 40, the majority of respondents (80%) in the study region were engaged in some form of activity. All respondents' average ages were 38%. The sex of the migrants was also a significant factor in this topic. One of the fundamental and significant aspects of demographic information about land concerns this factor. In this instance, 48% of the respondents were women and 52% were men. The disparity in the number of male and female responders can be attributed to the majority of men being leaders or members of NGOs, local governments, or political organizations, whereas the majority of women are not. As opposed to institutions or organizations, families are where the majority of women are found.

8 Socio-Economic Variables

8.1 Education

In order to combat poverty and stop illegal immigrants from acquiring land, education is a crucial component. The ultimate goal of education is to boost labor productivity. The number of years the respondents had spent in education was a question during the study (Bertolini 2019; Singer 2019; Sunam et al. 2021). According to the study's findings, 74% of respondents (134) had completed their secondary education, 20% had earned a diploma, and 6% had a doctoral degree or higher (10). According to the results, the majority of the respondents had a formal education, which is significant for their day-to-day economic activities as well as learning about illegal immigrants.

8.2 Marital Status

In any community, a person's marital status affects how they behave and how well they comprehend problems with illegal immigrants and others. Marriage is a significant contributor to both men and women's exposure to land resources, illegal immigration, and the main method of land acquisition (Botha and Frost 2020; Mooney et al. 2021; Wilkinson 2020). When completing the survey, participants were asked if they were married, widowed, single, divorced, or legally separated. According to the study's findings, 109 of the respondents were single (61%), while 51 were married (28%), widowed (1%), divorced (12%), and separated (3%).

9 Main Occupation

The term "major occupation" refers to a respondent's primary line of work, which may include self-employment in the food industry, small trade, kiosk labor, shoe shining, photography, a government job, agricultural cultivation, or NGO work, among other things (Choi et al. 2020; Mutambudzi et al. 2021). According to the study's findings, 59% of respondents worked as crop cultivators, compared to 7% who worked for non-governmental organizations, 3% who worked for the government, 1% who worked for themselves, and 30% who had alternative jobs, such as begging and unemployment. Given that the majority of the respondents to the study had only completed their primary education, the low percentage of formal employment may be caused by the low level of specification that was linked to poor educational attainment. Due to the nature of their lives in the study area, where the majority are unable to engage in tasks demanding a lot of energy or manual labor, very few people, or 1%, were involved in crop production (Table 1).

Main occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Self-employment	2	1
Gvt employment	6	3
Non Gvt employment	12	7
Crop production	106	59
Others specify	54	30

Table 1 Background characteristics (n = 180)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Sex		
Male	94	52.00
Female	86	48.00
Age		
15–20	13	7.00
20–30	46	26.00
30–40	85	47.00
40 and above	36	20.00
Education level		
Secondary level	134	74.00
Diploma level	36	20.00
Degree and above	10	6.00
Marital status		
Married	51	28.00
Single	109	61.00
Widow	2	1.1.00
Divorced	12	7.00
Separated	6	3.00

Source: Authors

10 Identifying How Illegal Migrants Become a Threat to Land Resources in Mtwara: Information, Beliefs, and Attitudes Regarding Land Prices and Illegal Immigration

Fundamentally, knowledge is the ability of people to understand emerging social concerns and the potential to dismantle certain assumptions (Giroux 2020; Ravetz 2020). The majority of participants, 117 (65%), were ignorant about the threats of illegal migrants due to the availability and accessibility of daily information such as newspapers, and 63 (35%) said that they had a decreased interest in reading newspapers; accordingly, they were ignorant.

11 Involvement in a Seminar on Illegal Immigration and Land Prices

The respondents were questioned about whether they had taken part in any campaigns or seminars about illegal immigration and land prices, and their options were "Yes," "No," or "I don't know." According to the survey results, the majority of respondents—120 (66.6%)—agreed, while 49 (27.2%) disagreed, and 11 (6.1%)

claimed they were unsure. As depicted herein, the majority of individuals are aware of (have made decisions regarding) illegal immigration, as indicated by the common view of all respondents using the Likert scale weighting of 2.

12 Television as a Source of Information

Basically, knowledge gives people the ability to understand complex situations in society and to break down specific things (Giroux 2020; May and Perry 2022). Accordingly, the majority of respondents (61.1%) used television as a source of knowledge, whereas the remaining respondents (38.8%) were unable to watch television.

13 Price Fluctuation of Land Caused by Illegal Immigrants

The only options for the respondents when asked if the price fluctuation of land was brought on by illegal immigration were "Yes," "No," or "I don't know." According to the survey results, the majority of respondents, 110 (61.1%), agreed, followed by 49 (27.2%) who disagreed, and 21 (11.6%) who said they were unsure. The common opinion of all respondents, as determined by the Likert scale's weighting, was 1, suggesting that the majority of people are aware of (have decided) that illegal immigrants are to blame for price fluctuations.

14 The Negative Impacts of Illegal Migrants on Land Resources

In addition, a broad question was posed to the respondents to gauge the detrimental effects of illegal immigration on Tanzania's land resources. The majority of those surveyed believed that the flood of undocumented and illegal immigrants from Malawi and Mozambique was to blame for the impact of illegal immigration on land resources. The respondents were questioned about their opinions on the observed fact under investigation. The extent to which illegal migrants damage land resources was a question that was posed to the respondents in order to gather first-hand opinions from their experiences. The respondents were questioned about their opinions regarding illegal immigration as a threat to land resources; their options were limited to "Yes" or "No." According to the survey results, 56 (31.1%) of respondents said they agreed with the majority, while 124 (68.8%) did not, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Illegal migrants as a threat to land resources in Mtwara

Newspaper as a source of information					
Statement		**Frequency**		**Percentage**	
Yes		117		65	
No		63		35	
Seminar about illegal immigrants and land price					
Statement	**Frequency**	**Percentages**	**Weighting**	**Weighting total**	**Weighting average**
Yes	120	66.6	3	360	
No	49	27.2	1	49	
I don't know	11	6.1	2	22	2
Television as a source of information					
Statement		**Frequency**		**Percentage**	
Yes		110		61.1	
No		70		38.8	
Price fluctuation of land caused by illegal immigrants					
Statements		**Frequency**		**Percentage**	
Yes		140		77.7	
No		40		22.2	
Price fluctuation of land caused by illegal immigrants **Extent to which illegal migrants threaten land resources of Tanzania**					
Statement	**Frequency**	**Percentages**	**Weighting**	**Weighting total**	**Weighting average**
Yes	110	61.00	3	330	
No	49	27.00	1	49	
I don't know	21	12.00	2	21	2
The illegal immigration as a threat to land resources					
Category		**Frequency**		**Percentage**	
To a large extent		124		69.00	
To a small extent		56		31.00	

Source: Field data survey 2021

The respondents were asked to present their views on the observable fact in order to determine methods that could be used to control the arrival of illegal migrants in Tanzania. The majority of the respondents argued that there were many illegal migrants living in the country without immigration permits or any other legal documents allowing them to remain and they mentioned the following groups as being of most concern.

15 Foreign Peasant Farmers with a Relationship with the Land

After independence, a sizable majority of illegal immigrants from Southern Tanzania entered Tanzania in search of agricultural land. These are primarily from Mozambique and Malawi, two nations with high population densities and

insufficient amounts of land. These individuals are primarily located in the Mtwara region. They make up the majority of the population in some villages without receiving government assistance (Achiume 2019; Dzordzormenyoh and Perkins 2022; Emmer and Lucassen 2019).

16 Individual Labor Migrants

For many years, Mozambique, Malawi, the Horn of Africa, and people from the Great Lakes have migrated to Tanzania in search of jobs and other advantageous opportunities. During the colonial era, a number of people from these nations were imported into Tanzania as laborers, as contract labor replaced the ancient East-West Slave Trade (Emmanuel 2020; Msoline 2020; Mwanicheta 2020).

17 Extending Visitors

Mozambique, Malawi, and Madagascar border southern Tanzania in addition to other nations. These boundaries, which were drawn by colonialists, go against familial or even cultural relationships. For instance, it is difficult to distinguish Mozambican culture from that of the residents of Newala and Nanyumbu districts in the Mtwara Region. This is similar to the Makonde, which extends to both Tanzania and Mozambique. People cross the border routinely for social visits without permits in this situation, and some stay for an extended period of time or permanently (Brankamp and Daley 2020; Manby 2019; Whitaker 2020).

18 Herders from Neighboring Countries

Pastoralists from Mozambique and Malawi who bring their herds to the area to graze constitute another group of illegal immigrants, primarily in the Mtwara region. Due to the quantity of grazing land and the land tenure structure, anyone in Tanzania is permitted to graze their herds on any grassland, whether it is public or privately held, as long as the animals don't disrupt local permanent or seasonal crops. This is unlikely in the nations of origin due to the lack of grazing land or the land tenure system, in which nearly every square inch of land is titled and unauthorized access for any reason is prohibited, but government institutions have not yet taken any action to regulate the issue (Madu and Nwankwo 2021; Njamasi et al. 2022; Out et al. 2020).

Table 3 Types of undocumented migrants with no immigration permits

Migrants with no immigration permits	Frequency	Percentage
Peasant farmers who came for land	51	17.00
Individual labor migrants	43	13.00
Over-staying visitors	30	11.00
Pastoralists	25	8.00
Fishermen and tradesmen	31	6.1

Source: Field data survey 2021

19 Fishermen and Tradesmen

Many migrants travel to Tanzania to take part in trade, fishing, and other economic activities like these near the beaches of the Ruvuma River and the Indian Ocean. There are also many traditional medicine practitioners, some of whom claim to possess mystical and spiritual abilities. The Mtwara Region is home to the majority of this group's migrants, who come from Mozambique (Allie 2019; Murunga et al. 2021). In Tanzania, several of these have continued to advance. Peasant Farmers who came to Tanzania in search of land 51 (17.2%), Individual Labor Migrants 43(12.7%), Over-Staying Visitors 30 (11.1%), Pastoralists 25 (8.3%), and Fishermen and Tradesmen 31 (6.1%) are the groups that respondents listed according to their weight, as indicated thereafter in Table 3.

20 Problems with the Government on the Issue of Undocumented Migrants

According to a field investigation, the majority of respondents (68.8%) indicated that the government controls the issue of illegal immigration to a significant extent; while only a third of respondents (31.1%) indicated that it does so to a lesser extent. When asked if they could, respondents mentioned some of the biggest obstacles facing the government in resolving the issue of migrant invasion. Significant flaws in Tanzania's Immigration Act No. 7 and its 1997 Regulation, as well as other methods that contribute to the influx of unauthorized immigrants, were discovered. In addition, the penalties are extremely light and not severe, and the magistrate has been given more authority and responsibility to decide on punishments. Furthermore, the actions implemented or the punishments meted out to offenders do not match the crimes committed by illegal immigrants (Gasto 2021; Gaynor 2019; Suresh et al. 2020).

These difficulties facing the Tanzanian government are demonstrated by the study. In circumstances when migrants cannot speak English or Swahili, there is a lack of financial resources for medical care, lodging, food, and the hire of interpreters during statement taking. This consumes a large amount of time and money for finding and paying interpreters. Due to a lack of dedicated immigration detention facilities, the government uses local police stations to hold unauthorized immigrants until the final

decision to deport them to their home countries is made. Criminal penalties are also offered by the Immigration Act for unauthorized arrival and stay. These criminal laws, which include lengthy prison penalties, do not appear to have been consistently enforced up to this point. Lack of holding facilities, motor vehicles, and aircraft for operations and monitoring, given the fact that all illegal immigrants are deemed to have committed immigration violations and must therefore be brought before the law, is a major problem (Brankamp and Daley 2020; Kipingu and Shayo 2021; Williams 2019).

Furthermore, there is no effective approach for dealing with irregular migrants other than bringing them before a court of law due to their lack of legal knowledge or familiarity with the national language or another language outside their mother tongue. The international community lacks a comprehensive legal framework to address irregular migration and access to protection, according to the current legal landscape and existing regulations. This is due to the simple fact that in some cases, the security of states is threatened by irregular migration, which is assumed to be connected to terrorist movements. In this situation, the international community and state security agencies should collaborate to create a key mechanism to protect irregular migrants' human rights regardless of their immigration status (Fengler et al. 2022; Igoye 2020; Mlauzi and Small 2019).

Additionally, there are not enough current communication and information system facilities for governing boundaries and controlling tools like motorboats, binoculars, walkie-talkies, and mini-photo studios. Lack of sufficient human resources and transportation options for commuting between the border and the mainland and territorial water centers (Christiaensen et al. 2019; Sheridan 2019; Whitaker 2020). As shown in Table 3, when participants in this study were asked about the difficulties the government faces as a result of the immigration rate, the results revealed that the budget is inadequate, there is corruption, the immigration law is weak, there is a need for diplomatic relations, there are porous routes, there is a need for 15(8.3%), there is a need for 9(5%), there is no civil education, and there are others 6(3.3%).

Tables 3 and 4 show the measures and considerations taken by the government of Tanzania on the issue of illegal migrants as a threat to land resources.

Table 4 Challenges facing the government in dealing with undocumented migrants

Challenge	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate budget	28	16.00
Corruption	21	12.00
Feeble Immigration Act	13	7.00
Meager diplomatic relations	15	8.00
Existence of permeable routes	9	5.00
Deficiency of public education	8	4.00
Others	6	3.00

Source: Field data survey 2021

21 Summary of Findings

According to the report, there is little knowledge of illegal immigration in Tanzania. Lack of information and the impact of illegal immigration on Tanzania's socioeconomic development were two key causes of the problem. The research's findings have shown that Tanzania's government is making every effort to strengthen the laws against illegal immigration. However, the research shows that people learn the fundamentals of culture and society through reading newspapers, listening to radio and television, and occasionally attending seminars on illegal immigration that are hosted by organizations like the IOM.

In addition, it is now time to demonstrate our community's efforts in partnership with the media to ensure that the needs of illegal immigrants are clearly understood by all audiences, in response to the desires and voices of the stakeholders. The population of Tanzania is large enough to influence how smoothly or disastrously the situation develops. Generally speaking, the issue involving pastoralists, peasant farmers, individual labor migrants, fishermen, tradesmen, and others has been scrutinized to illustrate the true fissure of fundamental grounds that led to Mtwara to become congested with these groups because the local employed people employed who live there are largely not pastoralists but are farmers, which led them to establish new kind of life for the reason that their land has been taken by other economic groups. The results of the research have made clear the need for government institutions to give illegal immigration and land resources their full attention.

22 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study shows that as the body of knowledge grows, so does our grasp of issues relating to land resources. Illegal immigrants were discovered to mostly use borders, maritime routes, land routes, and misuse of visa terms. They obtained this information from sources including television, radio, and newspapers. While newspapers and village meetings were the appropriate sources of information at the local level, radio and television were the most popular sources of information among these. Radios were a good choice because, unlike television, which requires power, they are less expensive and can be used by many people in rural regions. The degree of education, traditional beliefs, income, and occupation did not appear to have much of a correlation with illegal immigration.

23 Recommendations

The study suggests that district authorities educate local residents about illegal immigrants to help them report those who occupy Tanzanian land. Moreover, the government and other stakeholders need to exert all their power to prevent illegal

immigrants from neighboring countries taking up land resources that are becoming less and less accessible to citizens because each citizen should have the right to able to own them. Responsible village officials, such as immigration authorities, should use a variety of techniques to inform residents about illegal immigrants. In order to provide information on illegal immigration, NGOs like the International Organization for Migration (IOM) should be encouraged to create offices outside of cities. The report also recommends holding seminars, workshops, and long- and short-term training sessions for providers of services to illegal immigrants. The emphasis of a defense program should be by communication between citizens and government organizations. This means that programs involving illegal immigrants ought to promote dialogue on issues involving illegal immigrants and land resources.

Publicity about illegal immigrants, goods, and messages to audiences with particular interests is another tactic. T-shirts, polythene bags, and purses are examples of materials that can be used for this. These can show images, logos, and statements intended to increase civic awareness of land resources. In publications (sports magazines or sports pages), football, and the pop music industry, people's consciousness on resource orientation (in Mtwara, the industry is largely dominated by the young generation). These can be used to spread information on illegal immigrants. Likewise, the government should employ conventional media outlets like radio, television, posters, and radio to spread awareness of defense strategies in rural areas.

Government employees, such as immigration agents, should counsel the community to keep addressing the issue of illegal immigration through proven legal means. Finally, it may be necessary for the government, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and other interested parties to coordinate their efforts in areas of shared concern in order to prevent illegal immigrants from being given access to prime or strategic land or from being employed in any capacity by administrative bodies in rural areas, such as village offices.

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Peace and Sustainability: Striking a Balance in the Niger Delta



Imoh Colins Edozie

Abstract This paper examines the conflict in the Niger Delta and the people's plight within the context of environmental sustainability and peace. This is a case of social injustice leading to violence in the area. The survival of the people has been marred by controversy over the pollution of the land by the oil-producing companies, the lack of a duty of care for the environment by responsible government officials and the inability of the government to provide for the people. The above situation has led to violence and a lack of sustainable peace in the region. The people lack essentials amid the colossal wealth that is exploited in the area. The concept of sustainable development calls for the provision of the needs of present and future generations. However, this paper argues fundamentally that sustainability is meaningful only to those who can survive to see it. Therefore, immediate priority must be given to environmental remediation and the restoration of local livelihoods. By restoring the ecosystem and improving quality of life, we dismantle the primary economic incentives that drive individuals toward conflict, ultimately paving the way for sustainable peace in the region. This peace will lead to the preservation of the environment and provide for future generations. The paper affirms the environmental ethics of the Niger Delta that are all-inclusive, for humans, animals, and plants, for the Niger Delta belongs to all, and we are all interdependent within a complex chain. The environmental issues of the Niger Delta can be viewed through a minimalist lens in a cosmopolitan political philosophy. The paper concludes with a call for an enforceable intervention not driven by a sense of pity and humanitarianism. The people of the Niger Delta need affirmative action as a forward-looking tool to be able to participate actively in the country. Companies that do business in the area should apply precautionary principles when in doubt. All those who pollute should be made to pay, and government officials should follow and enforce the regulations. A robust environmental justice movement will be needed to pressure the stakeholders to do the right thing.

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1 Reflections

There is enough for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed.—Mahatma Gandhi

There is, however, a distinct ethical paradox in expressing deep concern for the wellbeing of unborn future generations while simultaneously ignoring the plight of the impoverished today. The moral obligation underlying sustainability is an injunction to preserve the capacity for future people to be as well off as we are. This has a terribly hollow ring if it is not accompanied by a moral obligation to protect and enhance the well-being of present people who are poor and deprived. If one thinks that people will be deprived in the future unless different policies are followed, then one is morally obliged to ask whether people are deprived right now. It would be a gross violation of the universalist principle if we were to be obsessed with intergenerational equity without at the same time seizing the problem of intergenerational equity: the ethic of universalism certainly demands such impartiality (Anand and Sen 2000).

The world is hitting global limits in its use of resources. We are feeling the shocks each day in catastrophic floods, droughts, and storms–and in the resulting surge in prices in the marketplace. Our fate now depends on whether we cooperate or fall victim to self-defeating greed. Moreover, the limits to the global economy are new, resulting from the unprecedented size of the world's population and the unprecedented spread of economic growth to nearly the entire world.

Jeffrey D Sachs (2011), in an article: The Earth provides enough to meet everyone's needs.

2 Introduction

Economic growth does not happen in a vacuum. There is the interplay of technological advancement and the use of resources, which produces by-products of waste and pollutants that might injure the health of humans and the earth. However, our pursuit of more advancement and growth without careful thought of the implications can lead to serious environmental consequences. Therefore, the paradox of unrestricted growth needs to be balanced by responsible growth within the earth's carrying capacity and population, reduction in depletion of resources, and reduction in the production of pollutants. This will undoubtedly come with a price, which is a trade-off between short-term gain and long-term survival of the planet.

The world seems to be in crisis. The threat of global climatic crisis, floods, warming of the earth, soil erosion, extinction of species, acid rain, and others currently makes living on the planet quite interesting. The quest for consumerism, driving economic production to an unsustainable level, producing waste, and depleting materials is a cause for concern for people of the earth. The illusion that science will solve all problems and that finite growth is possible over nature is part of the cause of the present situation. Technological development and advancement create increasing economic and social standards that have not led to a corresponding

positive impact on the environment. This situation is apparent in the Niger Delta in Nigeria.

The Niger Delta region is rich in human and natural resources, arts, and culture. It has an abundant environment and is home to Nigeria's oil and gas resources. It is the wealthiest region of West Africa, accounting for about 90% of Nigeria's export earnings. This area is rich in oil and gas and ideally has enormous potential for agriculture, aquaculture, solid minerals, and tourism. Therefore, this area should be popular, but sadly, the reality is it is a forgotten area (Akpomuvie 2011; Emmanuel et al. 2009; Uyigue and Ogbeibu 2007; Imoh 2017). The socioeconomic reality of the region today, however, is a paradox of poverty amidst plenty, leading to conflict.

3 Niger Delta and Conflict

The Niger Delta has been the centre of violent conflict, despair, neglect, poverty, and a poorly nurtured environment for over two decades (O'Neill 2007). It is one of the most badly polluted areas of the world. Conflict is a natural and intrinsic part of the growth process of any nation, and Nigeria is no exception. According to Onuoha (2005) and Okonta and Douglas (2003), the conflict in the area is intractable between various parties: community against community, youth against elders, community against oil companies, militants against government forces, etc. The people live in poverty and lack the necessary infrastructure amid the immense wealth exploited in the region and the vast budget for the area's development. This poverty can be attributed mainly to the pollution of most of the farmlands and rivers. The traditional means of livelihood of the people have all but collapsed; there is little social structure, like health, education, and sanitation, to cater to the needs of the population. The people are left alone with high mortality rates and high school dropouts (Osuoka 2007; Afinotan and Ojakorotu 2009; Imoh 2017). The above situation has led to a potent cocktail of violence, underdevelopment, poverty, a lure for quick money, and environmental damage (Idemudia and Ite 2006; Obi 2010; Omeje 2004).

There is another dimension to the conflict that can be attributed to the contradictions inherent in the political economy of Nigeria. This disparity is visible in the struggle for survival by the people of the Niger Delta, who are recognised within the Nigerian nation as a minority ethnic group. The inequitable sharing of revenue is a case in point: before the discovery of oil, the derivation formula was 50% at independence for the regions, but with the discovery of oil in the minority region and the creation of internal boundaries creating the current 36 states, the allocation gradually declined to as low as 1.5% before its increase to 15% in 1999 (Babalola 2014; Akinola and Adesopo 2011). It is worth noting that this did not happen during the democratic dispensation. During the Second Republic of civilian administration, the allocation was 1.5%, and the military increased it to 3%. Then, at the end of the military regime, democratic governance was ushered in, and the allocation was increased to 13% (Akinola and Adesopo 2011). Unfortunately, democratic dispensation has not been able to agree on an increase or change in the revenue allocation

formula. The closest potential agreement was at the Constitution Reform Conference, but the deliberation was deadlocked, and no decision was reached. The complex dynamics of the conflict have various dimensions, as stated by Obi (2010):

> Complex conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta, where the intersection of global, national and local forces and processes also influence or define the various actors, high stakes and lines of partnership, struggles, and conflict. It also underscores some of the contradictory alliances and strategic calculations that underlie a transnational process of extraction and dispossession and the attempts by some local forces to either ride on the process for narrow ends, resist the predatory global-state alliance actions which expropriate their resource and pollute the environment or navigate between the two positions based on calculations of expediency. (p. 114)

On the surface, it might seem to be a simple conflict over resources, their control, and the lack of development of the area, but in reality, multiple factors fuel the conflict. These include global actors and local collaborators, meaning that multiple sources need to be explored to resolve the conflict. The need for a solution has led to constant experimentation and interventions.

The abuse of human and environmental rights is destroying the social and economic development of the Niger Delta (Osuoka 2007; Omeje 2005). The Niger Delta is a theatre of constant experimentation with various interventions. From the Willinks' commission in 1958 to the creation of the Niger Delta Ministry in 2009, a lot of effort has been made to ameliorate the poverty and the lack of development in the region. However, the result shows that the interventions used a more humanitarian and settlement-based approach than a people-oriented development process. Conceptually, some of the reasons for the failure of the projects, according to multiple sources, including Onuoha (2005), include a crisis management approach to projects, discontinuity in government, grossly inadequate funding, white elephant projects and duplications, official recklessness and corruption, lack of political will and commitment, exclusion of civil society, weak coordination, and poor partnership. However, in all this, it is the people who suffer. The lack of development affects their life chances and opportunities.

The challenge to develop the area can be summarised with four broad (interconnected) development challenge themes: economic, infrastructural, environmental, and socio-political. These challenges have implications for people. The core issue in the ND appears to be the failure of the government to provide social and economic infrastructure, which in turn causes conflict—a case of structural violence causing direct violence (Galtung 1969). This issue can also be viewed within the concept of distributive justice, the inequalities in the distribution of benefits and opportunities in the Nigerian State. These are at the heart of the issues; therefore, community members should be empowered to overcome this kind of injustice. It is, therefore, imperative to design an appropriate development framework to empower people to address the living conditions that prevent them from being what they cherish. The injustices and structural violence in societies should facilitate the quest for environmental and social justice. This paper will focus on environmental challenges, linking them to sustainability and peace.

4 Environmental Challenges and Implications

The Niger Delta has severe environmental challenges. There is coastal erosion and rising sea levels, and the oil and gas activities have led to severe oil and gas pollution. Some projects in the area are poorly executed, with impact assessment procedures improperly done. There is acute biodiversity loss, and the lack of basic infrastructure has led to poor sewage and solid waste management. The water bodies are the means of disposal for almost all waste. These same water bodies are the water source for all purposes, and in most cases, it is not treated before use. This evident neglect has led to a lack of trust, cooperation, and partnership between the people and stakeholders, leading to scepticism of the government's intentions.

Young people who should be in school are not in school. The destruction of the means of livelihood of the people has led to increased poverty, with a large population of unemployed (youths with poor or no skills) who are easy prey to be involved in crime. Most of the situation's causes can be attributed to a lack of environmental ethics of care. The environment is treated as a wasteland, ignoring the negative implications for the humans, animals, and plants living in that space. The lack of an ethics of care for the environment is a serious contributing factor to the conflict in the region. Therefore, addressing it will lead to the sustainable development of the Niger Delta.

5 Ethics of Care for the Environment and Sustainability

The desire to sustain and maintain the earth's carrying capacity for the present and future generations is paramount in the discussion of sustainability. However, the case of minorities and people living in poverty must be considered in the discourse. The fundamental question should be how we articulate environmental ethics that support the aspirations of the people of the Niger Delta. There is a limit to economic growth because of its massive impact on the environment. Economic growth is essential. It provides jobs. It leads to increased human capacity, technological expansion, communication, etc., but it also has vast negative implications through environmental pollution, as witnessed in the Niger Delta.

The vision for the Niger Delta is a land of opportunity that is sustainable and contributes to the health, welfare, prosperity, and well-being of the people and the country. That vision entails environmental ethics that respect the land and its people. It calls for the development of the land sustainably for the present to survive and the future to be guaranteed.

Various environmental ethics discourses include what Attfield (1999) called 'perspectival anthropocentrism', focusing on humans as the ultimate creature. According to Naess (2003), deep ecology advocates a departure from a human-centred perspective towards an 'ecocentric' worldview regardless of their instrumental utility to human needs. Advocates of deep ecology reject that there is a

ranking order in the universe; therefore, nonhuman resources do not exist to be freely exploited by man. Taylor proposed a life-centred approach to the environment. A life-centred approach is different from a human-centred approach. In the life-centred approach, he stated: 'we have prima facie moral obligations owed to wild plants and animals themselves as members of the Earth's biotic community'. This life-centred approach resonates in the protection of creatures.

6 Communitarianism and Cosmopolitanism

The environment can also be viewed from a cosmopolitan or communitarian perspective. The communitarian views are restricted to a vision of the environment as a community or a country. This has locational and boundary restrictions. The state is ultimate, and it holds that the community's right is more important than the state's. Every community is different; what is right and wrong is relative, and it is to be determined by the community itself, not by any external body. It has autonomy, is independent, and has no moral obligation to international laws, but has sole control of its decisions and should be treated as such. However, cosmopolitans see the world as comprising communities and should be bound to universal international obligations. The view of the individual is paramount; it recognises moral responsibilities to humans, not only to citizens. There is a need for boundaries, but they are not morally legitimate.

7 Distributive Justice

The Niger Delta environmental ethics can be discussed within distributive justice or environmental justice. Armstrong (2012, p. 3) stated that distributive justice issues are 'normative concerns as they relate to what people ought to get (what they are morally entitled to as well as what they ought to do or give (what their moral duties are)'. It is important to emphasise that distributive justice shows how the burdens and benefits of society are shared among the people. The manner and terms of the sharing, our entitlement versus our corresponding duty, scale, scope, and content of distributive justice are at the heart of the discussion. There are two approaches within distributive justice—the relational approach based on shared relationships and interconnections between and among people that can include institutions. The non-relational approach considers distributive justice based on our being humans. These positions can be discussed from an egalitarian or minimalist perspective.

8 Distribution of Natural Resources

The presence of oil in the Niger Delta is an accident of location. Therefore, it is just to distribute the benefit to the whole country if argued (Armstrong 2012) from the egalitarian viewpoint using John Rawls's difference principles. That is the situation, but the compelling and unanswered question is who should share the hazards and environmental degradation associated with it. In his words: 'I believe that the causes of the wealth of a people and the forms it takes lie in their political cultures and in the religious, philosophical, and moral traditions that support the basic structure of their political and social institutions, as well as in the industriousness and cooperative talents of its members'. This proposal is problematic because Nigeria's unity is always a question mark. It is a country where loyalty to the tribe is stronger than loyalty to the country. Therefore, which tradition should take precedence? We can examine the situation in the Niger Delta from Nagel's relational point of view that all citizens should have a good quality of life. Armstrong (2012), arguing on Nagel principles for distributive justice, stated three conditions to be fulfilled; it should be within imposed rules and institutions, it has a definite boundary, this applies to people who are considered joint authors, implying shared responsibility and the citizens are involuntarily subject to the rules and norms. Implementing this condition will be difficult, as articulated above, based on the lack of acceptance of a unified tradition. However, it is possible that with a national conference and legislation from the National Assembly, it can happen with little resistance.

9 Distributive Justice as a Human Right

Distributive justice and human rights have a long history of coexistence. The human rights discourse is divided into two broad categories: civil and political rights and economic, social, and cultural rights. Within the sphere of economic, social, and cultural rights is subsistence. This is the ability of a people to have the basis of life, which includes: clean water, clothing, shelter, food, and health care. If the state cannot provide the people with these facilities, it can be claimed that their human rights are violated. The right to subsistence is a fundamental right; failure to provide and defend it will lead to the failure of other rights. The continued conflict in the Niger Delta can be attributed to the failure of the state to uphold this principle. Therefore, the provision of basic rights of subsistence to the people of the Niger Delta is the beginning of the transformation in the area. The people in the area are entitled to basic rights to clean water, health facilities, housing, etc. Therefore, environmental ethics that uphold the human rights of the people are needed.

10 Right to Development: Present versus Future

The right to development must be fulfilled to meet the present equitably and future generations' developmental and environmental needs as articulated by the Rio declaration principle 3. Attfield (1999) opines earlier on rights-based approaches; the consideration should be on the present generation, as the rights to the future generation are not assigned to anybody. In applying the consequentialist approach, it is argued that agents with available powers and resources can satisfy the basic needs of future generations on two conditions. Attfield (1999, p. 158) argues that while the basic needs of the present generation must be safeguarded, future obligations should only be pursued when external factors do not prevent them from being realised. These conditions imply that the needs of the present should be met, but it should not be strictly about the present, but considerations should be given to the future. The need for the present is discoverable and can be deduced with lots of certainties, but the need for the future cannot be attributed with the same certainty; however, there is a need for equity.

Similarly, Anand and Sen (2000) argue that the present's survival should be paramount in considering environmental ethics. He queries the rationale for considering those who are yet unborn when the living are poor and not having a fair share of opportunity. He counters that the first option is to ensure that the disadvantaged are better off. Considering the future's deprivation needs to start with the present. 'If one thinks people will be deprived in the future unless different policies are followed, then one is morally obliged to ask whether people are deprived right now. It would be a gross violation of the universalist principle if we were to be obsessed about intergenerational equity without at the same time seizing the problem of intergenerational equity: the ethic of universalism certainly demands such impartiality'. This view is paramount in the Niger Delta for people living below the poverty line; it could be difficult for them to think about future generations when they are unsure of their own. The environmental justice movement will be a platform to help people articulate and agitate for their rights, but will these rights be for humans only?

11 Duty and What Kind of Duty

The concern of the environmental justice movement about sustainability in the Niger Delta is based on the belief in the people's entitlement to a good life. Armstrong (2012, p. 19) argues that there are two broad questions concerning implementation, which are the duty and what kind of duty is expected from the person. In analysing the duty type, consideration is given to the reason for performing the task, articulating whether it is out of a sense of charity or from a distributive justice perspective. For example, the execution of a project by international oil companies has been marred by corrupt practices because the intervention was done as a way of charity, and those given the contract take it as part of their entitlement. In this

way, the contract is not executed professionally and, in most cases, is not completed. However, if the interventions are planned as part of broad policies of change in the Niger Delta, the outcome will be different. The reason is that the intervention will be well thought out within the bigger picture of what the Niger Delta should be like and structured to tackle the root cause of the problem. Therefore, intervention in the Niger Delta should be structured to be enforceable. Thus, the environmental justice movement will agitate for it.

12 Environmental Justice

The United Nations, in its Agenda for Development (UN 1997), sees development in the context of sustainability as: Development is a multidimensional undertaking to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. Economic development, social development, and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development. This calls for a deep respect for the people by ensuring that a higher quality of life is possible in protecting the environment. The problem with these concepts is that, in most cases, it is not being implemented because those affected are in the minority and marginalised, coupled with the greed and power of the oppressors. It is in this respect that environmental justice movements are significant.

Uyigue and Ogbeibu (2007) claim that the Nigerian constitution does not recognise environmental justice and that the people have no place to seek environmental justice. The constitution does not recognise resource control but gives vast power to the state. The resources belong to the state. The oil companies operating joint ventures with Nigeria have extensive power and protection against the impunity with which they commit. The environmental justice movement strives to agitate against the social and economic injustices embedded in various institutions or structures that predominantly affect minorities. The tools of intervention are quite broad, from advocacy to civil disobedience. The awareness of the situation in the Niger Delta, from an environmental justice perspective, can be a starting point in having a movement that can change the lives of the people.

13 The Way Forward

The contradiction in the Niger Delta is indeed strange. It is a paradox that an endowed area can be poor; a region so blessed with a pristine and beautiful environment can be compromised shamelessly by oil exploration companies, government negligence, and lack of options/helplessness by its citizens. The resources of the Niger Delta should be used to create a suitable environment for the people to thrive and be better off. A lot should be done to salvage the situation, which can lead to

peace. The following proposal can help in achieving peace and development in the region.

14 Diversification of the Economy

The discovery of oil has led to a lack of attention to the other export earners in the country. Before oil discovery, there was the groundnut pyramid in the north, the cocoa exports in the west, and the palm oil trade in the east. Odukoya (2006) explains further that the shift from these goods to oil exploration also changed the dynamics of the mode of production. In oil exploration, the people were alienated as the international oil companies, whose sole motive was profit, were in charge. Therefore, they were not concerned about the people or the environment. The government's helplessness in controlling this situation and the corruption and greed of the ruling class were the start of the massive pollution and degradation of the environment of the Niger Delta. The diversification of the economy will reduce the pressure on oil production, and this reduction will lead to agitation for the oil companies to do the right thing. Tourism is an option that can be considered.

15 Affirmative Action

Affirmative action is a policy to compensate victims of injustice or disadvantaged groups; the concept of being disadvantaged is that you have not received your fair share of the primary goods. It may also be forward-looking to enable a more equitable society. Education is vital to the growth and development of a people. Scholarships and grants should be granted to all qualified students to enable them to be educated and break away from the cycle of poverty. Employment should also be provided to all qualified. Various training schemes should be provided to build on work capacity. Those interested in business should have the opportunity to access capital. People of the Niger Delta should be made to participate in the oil industry in crude oil and product lifting, licensed oil bunkering, oil bloc and marginal field allocations.

16 Polluter Pays and Precautionary Principle

Laws should be applied stringently to all polluters; the relevant environmental laws should be enforced. Sanctions should be placed on oil companies that pollute the environment. Adequate compensation should be paid to communities where such happens. The process of clean up should be adequately and professionally done. Oil

companies should practice the precautionary principle. If there is doubt, they should not carry out the operation.

17 Environmental Justice Movement

The sad reality is that proceeds from the oil industry are not enjoyed by the people affected most by the exploration's adverse side effects. The sharing of revenue entails that the whole country benefits from the exploration in the Niger Delta. The argument should be that if you share, you should also participate in the pain. The 13% derivation is not adequate. The environmental justice movement needs to be active in the Niger Delta to agitate for a clean environment and hold the various stakeholders responsible for environmental damage. There is a need to mobilise multiple stakeholders for the movement's success.

18 Conclusion

The plight of the people of the Niger Delta is for survival amid terrible environmental pollution caused by the operations of the multinational oil companies, with environmental regulators keeping silent. The people are suffering amidst plenty; how can we balance the needs of the people and the mantra for sustainability? It is the living that can talk about sustainability. Therefore, sustainability should be considered, with an environment cleaned up for the people to have a meaningful life. Ethics should drive the process.

Our environmental ethics affect our conception of the environment and how we relate to it. There are various ways we can define the environment; our definition also influences our actions. Attfield (1999) argues that the tension in our definition affects the way we tackle environmental problems. For most, an environment can be viewed from the existential perspective, where the environment can be relative to the creatures. This is different from an environment as a casual system. We can also view the environment as a relational concept having causes and effects in an objective perspective, dependent system; Attfield (1999) claims can be independent of awareness and understanding of the subject. He concluded that this is typically shared by various creatures, including humans, in an interpersonal environment. Accepting the ethics of care is paramount to transforming the Niger Delta into a living habitat for humans, flora, and fauna.

Conflict in the Niger Delta will be a thing of the past if an appropriate developmental framework is enforced in the region. The development paradigm that strongly emphasises the present generation is needed when the current generation is adequately catered for, so that the needs of future generations can be guaranteed. If the Earth becomes extinct, there will be no future to be considered. Therefore, all efforts should be made to ensure that the present generation is adequately taken care

of. This paper proposes that Niger Delta environmental ethics should have a minimalist perspective, implying that our interventions will be localised within the Niger Delta area, but recognising the global perspective to the struggle, as our ethics are also cosmopolitan. The various interventions in the Niger Delta were not successful because the projects were treated as humanitarian gestures. Therefore, there is a need for an enforceable intervention in the area. Finally, to ensure this change happens, there is a need for a strong environmental justice movement composed of various stakeholders who can collectively engage the government and oil companies to ensure environmental and social justice in the Niger Delta.

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Green Charcoal Uptake as a Source of Sustainable Livelihood in Refugee Settlements in Northern Uganda



Judith Awacorach, Quentin Gausset, and Kenneth Olido

Abstract The global economy continues to consume more natural resources to sustain livelihood and this is worse for settlements covered by the influx of refugees. Alternative cooking fuel, such as electricity, gas, biogas, ethanol, and solar, continues to be costly and unsustainable to both the refugee and host communities in Northern Uganda. This study focuses on green charcoal or briquette production from agricultural residues as an alternative to firewood and black charcoal. Green charcoal has the potential to contribute to the livelihood of the vulnerable population, thus lowering deforestation, reducing smoke-induced health issues, as well as create local employment. Data was collected in Northern (Gulu City, Adjumani, and Lamwo districts) using surveys, participant observation, photos, and in-depth interviews. Social Package for scientific studies (SPSS 23) and Smart partial least squares (PLS 0.4) were used for quantitative data in order to test the hypotheses, while content analysis was also used for qualitative data to assess the perceptions of green charcoal producers. The findings show that there was a positive and significant relationship between the eco-friendly innovations, income level, food production, environmental protection, job creation, and sustainable livelihood. These findings describe a model for developing green charcoal uptake through sustainable livelihood. The model can also predict uptake of green charcoal as an alternative source of cooking fuel that can sustain both the refugees and host communities. Therefore, further research on green charcoal uptake, as green charcoal producers using local methods, must impact on the sustainable livelihood.

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1 Introduction

Uganda is currently the third biggest refugee-hosting country in the world and the largest in Africa. The country's comprehensive refugee response policy constrains the available natural, technical, and financial resources, thus fueling conflicts between refugees and host communities (Miller and Ulfstjerne 2020). Refugee settlements have faced energy shortages, leading to deforestation, health risks, and above all, the climatic challenges. Furthermore, most households in the refugee settlements also prefer to use solid fuels such as firewood and wood charcoal for domestic cooking, like the host communities. This has continued to degrade the environment thus a great loss and more economic burden on strategies that can mitigate climate change. Concerted effort has been made to find ways of replacing wood charcoal with waste-derived briquettes, also known as "green charcoal." Green charcoal refers to charcoal made out of carbonizing agricultural residues/biodegradable materials as an alternative source of fuel for cooking (Ferguson 2012; Kung et al. 2015; Mugabi and Kisakye 2021; Tumutegyereize et al. 2016). This study focuses on the fuel conflicts among refugee and host communities in Northern Uganda. Green charcoal is known to offer a sustainable source of cooking fuel and environmental protection.

This study focuses on low-cost and affordable mechanisms or technologies for producing the briquettes. First, we present conflict analysis of the current domestic cooking fuel consumption patterns. The refugee and host communities spend their hard-earned money, shared natural resources, and time to ensure that the food distributed is cooked amidst the continuous reduction in the relief/aid supporting their existence due to the global economic crisis faced by international aid. A case in point is the recent presidential decree by the American head of state, which caused panic in many developing countries, especially for some African countries that were totally reliant on foreign aid for their survival, including Uganda. This is worth considering when developing an alternative cooking fuel products that can reduce the pressure on natural resource conflicts, like the fuel situation in Northern Uganda. Measures of Sustainable livelihood in this study constitute economic, environmental, and social dimensions (Chambers and Conway 1991; Lekshmi 2024; Lietaer et al. 2019; Nyamwena-Mukonza 2013). Therefore, the uptake of green charcoal production and practices is possible at the refugee and host community level, but depends critically on how well the cooking fuel product meets customer needs—and, hence, on the economic viability of the business proposition. At national and international scales, uptake tends to be enhanced by favorable guiding policies and perceptions of both the refugees and the host communities.

2 Background

Regional security threats, such as terrorism, armed conflicts, and civil unrest in the Great Lakes region have given rise to heightened risk of humanitarian crisis leading to an influx of refugees, and disruption of economic activities. For instance, the fragile security situation in South Sudan and the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, which has been a threat to regional peace and stability, leading to depletion of soil cover and conflicts among the refugees and host communities. The world is witnessing a reduction in concessional funding as developed nations retain funding for their own domestic consumption (NDP IV 2024). In addition, global public debt rose to USD97 trillion in 2023, an increase of 6% from the previous year. This situation is attributed to several shocks such as global financial crisis of 2008, the Eurozone crises of 2011, the COVID-19 crises of 2020–2022 which have led to a slowdown and uneven performance of the global economy. Consequently, developing countries are grappling with an international financial architecture that is limiting access to affordable development finance and pushing them to borrow more from more volatile and expensive sources. These conditions pose a threat to the public and the private sectors' ability to raise capital, besides affecting relief. There is a need to fast-track alternative options for raising capital for funding critical investments to support economic growth and development.

Uganda has long adopted a development approach toward refugees, whereby they aim to make the refugee population less dependent on humanitarian aid in the long run, as well as incorporate the host population in a more integrative development approach (Ahimbisibwe 2018; Moyo et al. 2021). Uganda's private sector is largely dominated by informal micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), 95% of which collapse within the first year. Those that survive remain small-scale and informal. This has equally affected the green charcoal production enterprises. The MSMEs account for 90% of the private sector and contribute 80% of manufactured output, 75% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and 90% of non-farm employment. These MSMEs are uncompetitive due to a lack of access to and high cost of credit, limited access to appropriate technology, high cost and unreliability of electricity, high cost of logistics and regulatory compliance, limited access to markets, and a weak framework for business incubation, thus affecting green charcoal uptake.

In addition, the accumulation of domestic arrears (Shs. 2.7 trillion in FY2022/23) and the inefficiencies within the judiciary in clearing commercial cases (Shs. 7 trillion locked up in courts) have undermined the growth of some enterprises, including green charcoal production. Peace, security, and macroeconomic stability are prerequisites for an efficient energy transition to cleaner energy sources. Peaceful and secure environments in developing countries attract both domestic and foreign investment; investors seek stable locations where their assets and operations are secure. Macroeconomic stability, characterized by low inflation and stable exchange rates provides a predictable environment for economic growth and efficient investment in the energy transition. It helps to attract foreign direct investment, which is crucial for funding development in developing countries. In addition, a stable

macroeconomic environment allows businesses to effectively plan and invest in long-term projects.

Uganda continues to receive a high refugee influx, up to (over 1.5), mostly from Southern Sudan, including those already settled. Refugee settlement in Northern Uganda continues to struggle for land, water coupled with energy crisis like any other part of Africa due to depletion of natural resources. Northern Uganda, like any other developing region, houses a number of refugees in several districts, including Adjumani, Lamwo, and Yumbe, among others. Up to 90% of Ugandans rely on firewood and wood charcoal as their major source of cooking fuel. Both the refugee and host communities continue to rely on the same sources of biomass fuel in the form of firewood and charcoal, thus resulting in cooking fuel conflicts.

Green charcoal uptake can provide sustainable livelihood in terms of economic, social, and environmental benefits as described in the livelihood framework. The study focuses on producing and using briquettes (green charcoal) from agricultural residues as an alternative to firewood and black charcoal. Green charcoal should contribute to stopping deforestation, reducing smoke-induced health issues and creating local employment. This study is premised on fuel conflict that undermines the peace and sustainable livelihood of both the refugees and the host communities (Miller and Ulfstjerne 2020). The study resonates with the motto of Gulu University, "*for community transformation,*" contributes to SDG 7: Chap. 14 on sustainable energy which states "everyone should have affordable, reliable and clean and modern energy services to decentralize value addition, competitiveness and improved quality of life" and the Uganda National Development Plan IV: Reduced share of traditional biomass in the energy mix from 75% in FY2023/24 to 50%. The Sustainable Energy Development of Uganda aims to increase access to and consumption of reliable, affordable, clean, and modern energy services.

The key focus areas are: increase in primary energy consumption; increase in the proportion of population accessing electricity; reduction in the share of biomass energy used for cooking; increase in transmission capacity; and enhanced grid reliability. High vulnerability to climate change and unsustainable use of natural resources pose a threat to sustainable development. The country has suffered from increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather vagaries (floods, landslides, and drought) due to climate change. The unsustainable use of natural resources, including deforestation and land-use changes, has led to a reduction in the forest cover from 24% in 1990 to 13.3% in 2022. The national wetland cover reduced from 15% to 13% in 2019. Failure to mitigate climate change and unsustainable use of natural resources will affect productivity in priority growth areas, food security, and the safety of people and their property.

Inadequate and unreliable clean energy supply is known to disrupt sustainable energy options, particularly in rural and underserved areas where access to stable electricity is often limited. To mitigate this, there is a need for engagement with the government, private sector, NGOs, and well-wishers to ensure a reliable investment in renewable energy (Miller and Ulfstjerne 2020). This could include establishing public-private partnerships to develop renewable energy solutions, such as green charcoal production, which can provide alternative sources of fuel in areas facing

energy challenges. In addition, it is paramount to promote the use of alternative energy solutions that are both cost-effective and sustainable biomass energy.

The world is in the midst of a triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. The global economy continues to consume more natural resources and this is worse for areas covered by the influx of refugees. Excessive use of biomass as fuel causes health and livelihood strains to women and girls who lose time in collecting firewood (Ahimbisibwe 2018). Alternative sources of cooking fuel, such as electricity, ethanol, LPG (gas), solar, and wind, are quite costly due to high taxes, tariffs, and technology (FAO 2023). The massive influx of refugees further fuels conflicts over natural resources with the host communities. It is estimated that by 2060, resource extraction will rise by 60% of the 2020 levels. Although developing countries like Uganda produce only one-tenth of the global emissions, they are the most heavily impacted by climate change, with their vulnerable populations suffering damaging outcomes in terms of health, food, water, education, and fuel, among others. Extreme weather events like droughts, floods, and changing rainfall patterns have significantly impacted agricultural productivity and food production. There is a need for mitigation measures against the adverse effects of environmental degradation in all investments in the anchor sectors to support peaceful co-existence among the refugees and the host communities.

3 Material and Methods

Mixed methods research design used. Dimensions for measurements were income level, eco-friendly innovations, environmental protection, food production, and job creation. A stratified sampling strategy was adopted to establish the study samples of the respondents. Simple random sampling was used for the quantitative approach and the respondents for the in-depth interview were identified purposively. Number of respondents =374. Data was collected (Gulu City, Adjumani and Lamwo districts) in Northern Uganda using surveys, participant observation and in-depth interviews. Social Package for scientific studies (SPSS 23) and Smart partial least squares (PLS 0.4) data analysis packages were used for quantitative data, while content analysis was also used for qualitative data. SmartPLS was conducted to test the research hypotheses. The findings show that there was a positive and significant relationship between the eco-label credibility of environment-friendly products and the customers' increased environmental knowledge and perceived quality of the products.

Besides, both environmental knowledge and perceived quality are identified to play an essential role in controlling green awareness. Eco-label in product attributes were found to be capable of changing the positive side of green awareness. These findings describe a predictive model in developing green awareness through environmental knowledge and perceived quality with the support of an environment-friendly product eco-label. The model can also predict customer green awareness and support the green marketing strategy. Therefore, further research on green

customer behavior is welcome, as green customer behavior must impact on the implementation of green marketing strategies. Also, we may predict the customer behavior of environment-friendly products, and implement better business strategies (Fig. 1).

Uganda is bordered by South Sudan in the North, where the majority of the refugees come from. Like most African countries, Uganda is landlocked and surrounded by Kenya in the east, Tanzania in the south, the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west, and South Sudan in the north. Approximately 74% of the Ugandan population lives in rural areas and relies heavily on peasant agriculture as the main source of their livelihood (World Bank 2021). This study covered the following locations: Gulu city, Adjumani, and Lamwo districts. These study areas are very suitable because of the massive cutting down of trees that has led to loss of biodiversity and its ability to host and sustain refugees for quite a long period of time in Northern Uganda (Table 1).

Demographic information included: Gender: M = 43%, F = 57%. Education level: None formal 36.6%, Primary level = 39. 3% while 20% accounts for the formal level. Location: urban settings accounts: 35.8% and rural production 64.2%. Though the producers in the Urban setting produce 250 tonnes of green charcoal per day and up to 4000 tonnes on busy days, while those in the rural produced 100 tonnes per day. (Table 2) shows the f-square and adjusted R value used in the measurement model of sustainable livelihood.

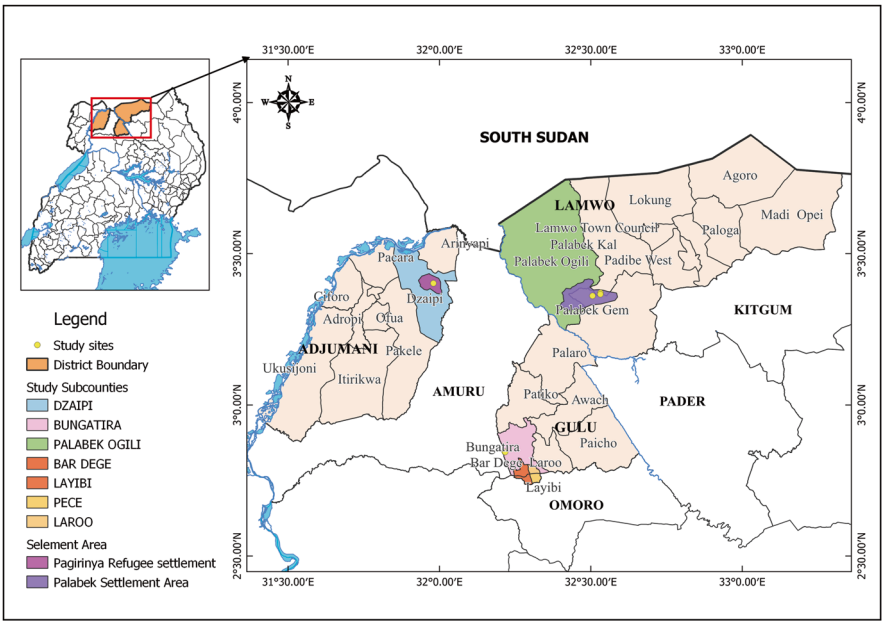


Fig. 1 Study area. Source: Developed for this research

Table 1 Biodata of respondents

	Count	Percent	Cumulative %
Gender			
Male	161	43.0	43.0
Female	213	57.0	100.0
Education			
None	137	36.6	36.6
Primary	147	39.3	75.9
O level	25	6.7	82.6
A level	26	7.0	89.6
Tertiary (certificate/diploma)	35	9.4	98.9
University(degree)	4	1.1	100.0
Marital status			
Married	207	55.3	55.3
Unmarried	138	36.9	92.2
Divorced	13	3.5	95.7
Widow/widower	16	4.3	100.0
Religion			
Catholic	167	44.7	44.7
Anglican	106	28.3	73.0
Born again	78	20.9	93.9
Muslim	23	6.1	100.0
Location			
City	134	35.8	35.8
District	240	64.2	100.0

Source: Developed for this research

Table 2 Predictive measurement models for sustainable livelihood estimates

f-*square* values and prediction value estimates for sustainable livelihood			
	f-*square*	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Eco-friendly innovation	2.274	0.980	0.989
Environment protection	1.909		
Food production	2.244		
Income level	6.030		
Job creation	1.814		

Source: Developed for this research

The f-*square* values show the relevance of the contribution for each dimension in this study, with a minimum value of 0.02; the higher the better the relevance of the dimension (Hair et al. 2020). The overall variance explained is 90.8% of the variable ($R^2 = 0.905$), showing that all the predictors of sustainable livelihood are significant. This is in agreement with many studies on green charcoal in other parts of Africa (Kung 2015; Bot 2022; Maimino et al. 2023; Asamoah et al. 2016). The

Table 3 Measurement models forsustainable livelihood estimates

Bootstrapped measurement model estimates for sustainable livelihood				
	β	Std. Error	*T* statistics	*p*
Eco-Friendly Innovation → SustainableLivelihood	0.273	0.018	15.045	0.000
Environment Protection → SustainableLivelihood	0.264	0.015	18.099	0.000
Food Production → Sustainable Livelihood	0.272	0.014	19.701	0.000
Income Level → Sustainable Livelihood	0.396	0.018	21.663	0.000
Job Creation → Sustainable Livelihood	0.229	0.014	16.608	0.000

Source: Developed for this research

information in the measurement model was further confirmed using the Bootstrapped estimates below, *using* 5000 subsamples in Smart PLS 4.0 (Table 3).

The T *Statistics* in the table above further suggest that income level dimension measures the greatest variance in the sustainable livelihood of green charcoal producers (T *Statistics* = 21.663, $p < 0.01$). For all the sustainable livelihood dimensions (income level, ecofriendly innovation, environmental protection, food production, job creation) $p < 0.01$, showing all dimensions have significant and positive effect on the sustainable livelihood of green charcoal producers in Northern Uganda.

4 Challenges in Green Charcoal Uptake

Both refugee and host communities lack awareness about cooking fuel options, besides issues of availability, affordability, and accessibility of the green charcoal, since few groups are trained. For members who are taking green charcoal production as a business option, they lack the marketing skills to promote their product, besides struggling with issues of quality controls (Mainimo et al. 2022).

Cultural perceptions and beliefs easily influence the choice of cooking fuel among households. This is also a problem in the refugee settlements, where the communities share diverse cultural affiliations with limited options and knowledge. While host communities have a strong affinity for food cooked with firewood and charcoal, the refugees also have their own perceptions. Some of the respondents asked, "*Can green charcoal roast meet and cook meat the way it comes out nicely like charcoal and firewood*" one respondent said, "*I only used green charcoal for cooking beans which take longer time to cook.*"

Funding (green finance-startup costs) is very high for refugee settlements to navigate when it comes to green charcoal production. Survival skills are much needed among the refugees and the host communities in order to have peaceful co-existence during the error of energy transition (Katutsi et al. 2024).

5 Opportunities for Green Charcoal Uptake

Training programs should be frequently availed to both the refugees and host communities as a source of motivation for those who may be interested in practicing green charcoal production. This is because other people become buyers of the product, since not everyone may be at a production level. Additionally, new people may have been interested in taking up production and some of the people who have learnt may have returned with the skills already acquired.

Loans for startups should be availed by financial institutions; grants, donations, seed money from non-governmental organizations and small savings groups where green charcoal producers can get facilities and practice green charcoal production. Awareness creation among the refugee and host communities should be done through various means such as local and camp leaders, radios, community groups, and other forums to increase their knowledge of alternative sources of fuels.

Partnerships with other key stakeholders in the energy transition should be encouraged. These include: government support through the Ugandan National Development Plan (NDP IV), Private sector-market linkages, United Nations Commission for Refugees (UNCHR), non-governmental Organization (NGOS), religious initiatives, and other stakeholders that are not in the list above.

6 Limitations

The study did not seek the opinion of donors who support refugee settlements. More study could look into mechanisms to enhance uptake of green charcoal from the perspective of development partners and financiers with a view to bringing peace among the refugee and host communities.

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

While food and water are much needed for the refugees in Northern Uganda, fuel conflicts are unavoidable in the phase of the global climatic threat. Sources of raw materials and production machines are needed for the refugees to make more innovations for sustainable livelihood. Green charcoal has high potential to sustain livelihood through cleaner cooking fuel, environmental protection, food production, eco-friendly innovations, and job creation. Green charcoal may lead to peaceful co-existence between refugee and host communities since they are able to co-exist by sharing the practical experiences of producing alternative cooking fuel which can provide business opportunities. Availability of financing alone without readiness of the green charcoal producers is not sufficient in the production of alternative cooking fuel. While financing and training are essential components of green

charcoal production, it is not sufficient on its own. Therefore the study suggests that Readiness and perception of green charcoal uptake should involve a combination of capacity building, support from political leaders, local knowledge, strong institutional frameworks, stakeholder engagement, leadership, and monitoring and evaluation of the activity until such a kick-off stage. Without these, even well-funded opportunities can struggle to achieve their intended outcomes.

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Factors Contributing to Recidivism among Prisoners: A Case Study of Hawassa Correctional Center, Southern Ethiopia



Tomas Tsegaye

Abstract Nowadays, the problem of recidivism is highly intensified in most Ethiopian prisons. It disrupts the social order and creates fear and insecurity in society. However, factors of recidivism are not adequately understood in Ethiopia. Thus, this study examined the factors that revolve around the prison settings, with particular emphasis on prison inmates at the Hawassa correctional center. To conduct the study, a mixed research approach was employed. The quantitative data were collected from 80 recidivists selected through comprehensive sampling. Also, qualitative data were gathered from 15 purposely selected participants using key informant interviews and semi-structured interviews. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques while the qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The study results showed factors that contribute to recidivism encompass mistreatment by prison staff, ineffective services, overcrowding, lack of inmate classification system, inmates' subculture, and lack of support upon release. Based on the findings, the researcher recommends the following issues. First, the government of Ethiopia should incorporate the issue of recidivism and social reintegration of offenders in its current criminal policy. Second, the prison management should introduce offender-oriented treatment programs and work with community groups, faith-based institutions, and individuals (volunteers) to assist released prisoners. Finally, non-governmental organizations should work on prison services and support upon release.

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1 Introduction

Recidivism, in its general sense, refers to those activities and behaviors that are against the law and are acted by an already convicted offender (Zara and Farrington 2016). The concept of recidivism has, over time, been known by different terminologies. It encompasses rearrest, reconviction, reoffending, and reincarceration, among others (Oruta 2016). Worldwide, recidivism is one of the most essential concepts in the criminal justice system and it is a major problem faced by all countries (Forkuor 2017). Despite various intervention strategies, the number of prisoners' reimprisonment has increased across all nations in the world, with its negative consequences on individuals, as well as on the social and economic life of the community (Akporaro 2019). The United States of America (USA), for example, has the highest recidivism rate in the world, with over 76.6% of released prisoners are reoffending and returning to prison (Flores 2018). In African context, South Africa has the highest recidivism rate (74%) followed by Kenya (47%) in the continent (Wambugu 2014; Khamba 2017).

Similar to other countries, Ethiopia is not free from the problem of recidivism. Actually, the main purpose of rehabilitation or prison services is to reform the offender's behavior and prevent them from committing further crimes in Ethiopia. However, Goche and Hayelom (2018) and Eskalehu (2019) demonstrated that, nowadays, the problem of recidivism is highly intensified in most Ethiopian prisons. According to UNODC (2018), "If prisoners re-offend after discharge, there are costs related to policing and adjudicating these new offenses plus the costs of administering new sanctions. There are far less easily quantifiable or indirect costs to society, such as those borne by the victims of these crimes, those related with lost economic and community capacity, or through ex-prisoners relying on social services instead of contributing to society." Thus, knowledge about the risk factors for recidivism is very important to develop preventive strategies and effective interventions. Hence, this study attempts to examine factors contributing to recidivism at Hawassa Correctional Center in Southern Ethiopia.

2 Review of Related Literature

Prison rehabilitation aims at modifying the behavior of the offenders and reintegrating them into society as productive members (Darkwa 2018). However, the effectiveness of rehabilitation has been seriously questioned by different researchers. Studies show that the atmosphere in which the rehabilitation programs are carried out is not conducive to reform. This is because inmates feel harassed and exploited in prison, which in turn gives them a negative attitude toward the work they engage in the correction programs. Such ineffective rehabilitation systems hinder the successful reentry of the offenders into the community; consequently, they revert to their criminal behavior (Komu 2017). In support of this argument, Lekalakala's

(2016) study in South Africa showed that offenders tend to reoffend due to the ineffectiveness of the rehabilitation programs, which turn the inmates out of the prison without any job skills and unreformed.

Moreover, other studies show that overcrowded inmates cannot successfully be rehabilitated; instead, it gives the chance to interact with all kinds of offenders, to share their experiences and strategies related to illegal activities. Thus, after they are discharged, they become at high risk of reoffending and reincarceration (Darkwa 2018; Komu 2017). According to Antwi (2015), there is a new prisonization existing within prison walls. He mentioned that offenders import criminal values and attitudes from their subculture groups, which are developed in prison together with sociodemographic characteristics and criminal career variables, such as the length of the sentence and criminal record. This may increase the likelihood of recidivistic behavior upon discharge. Likewise, Inmate Subculture theorists assume that individuals become criminal by learning the criminal values of the groups to which they belong. In conforming to their own group standards, they break the law of the dominant culture (Burke 2009; Glory 2009).

Darkwa (2018) indicates that overcrowding, along with limited infrastructure in the Ghana prison, is the major challenge faced by prison officers in rehabilitating and reforming offenders. He stated that due to overcrowding, the prison officers could not manage every activity of the inmates. So, it allows the inmates to form groups and share their criminal experience and methods of committing a crime, which leads to more serious crimes after discharge. This statement confirms the Differential Association Theory of Edwin Sutherland, which explains recidivistic behavior as learned in interaction with others, particularly with anti-criminal individuals. It claims that individuals associated with anti-criminal persons are more likely to learn and adopt criminal values and behaviors. Therefore, a person who has been imprisoned in prison learns many techniques from his intimate groups, so after discharge, he may try to commit a crime again using more innovative techniques (See 2004; Piquero 2016).

Other studies showed that a lack of interventions during the transition of the offenders back into the community tends to become obstacles to a crime-free lifestyle. The concept of the transition of offenders back into the community is called offender reentry which refers to the process of leaving a prison or a jail and returning to society (Heyns 2011).

According to Griffiths et al. (2007), assistance or interventions (i.e., material, psychological, and social support) are very important upon offenders' release in order to reduce the levels of recidivism. These interventions represent a wide array of efforts sponsored by the justice system, in collaboration with community agencies and organizations. In the absence of these programs at the time of prisoners' release, they may face many obstacles, ranging from meeting basic survival needs such as shelter and employment (Wodahl 2006; Griffiths et al. 2007; Heyns 2011). Therefore, assistance-based transition programs are very significant for ex-offenders. Furthermore, reintegration assistance is not only necessary for the sake of the offenders, but even more importantly for the safety of the community, the benefit of potential future victims, and ultimately for the socioeconomic development of countries (UNODC 2012).

In the Ethiopian context, few studies have tried to consider the issue of recidivism. For example, a study conducted by Goche and Hayelom (2018) in North East Ethiopia correctional centers indicates that the major factors that contribute to recidivism comprise economic problems, family and psychological problems. However, the authors did not emphasize institutional (correctional) factors that contribute to recidivism. Another study on youth recidivism was conducted by Eskalehu (2019) in the Bahir Dar Correctional Administration. The study used a qualitative research method solely. His findings demonstrate that youth recidivism is caused by individual-related issues, household difficulties, and socioeconomic issues. But, he has given little attention to factors that revolve around the prison settings. Hence, to address this gap, this study aims to investigate the issue of recidivism by focusing particularly on inmates at Hawassa Correctional Center in Southern Ethiopia.

2.1 Legal Frameworks and Prison Conditions of Ethiopia

The purpose of this section is to show the legal and prison conditions of Ethiopia. Before the seventeenth century, the Ethiopian penal system was mainly based on diverse customary practices. However, gradually, the penal system in Ethiopia shifted from retribution and deterrence to reformation and rehabilitation (Glory 2009).

The new Criminal Code of FDRE (2004), art 87 states that the penalties and measures shall always be with respect due to human dignity. Besides, Article 5 of the Federal Prison Commission Establishment Proclamation (2003) states that the objective of the commission is to provide correction and rehabilitation services for the prisoners to enable them to achieve attitudinal and behavioral reforms and become law-abiding, peaceful, and productive citizens.

According to Eden (2018), there are six federal prisons, 120 local prisons, and many unofficial detention centers in Ethiopia. As she cited, most of these prisons and pretrial detention centers are harsh and sometimes life-threatening for the inmates. Other studies also indicated that depression among prisoners in Ethiopia is high due to the punitive prison conditions (Teresa et al. 2017). The US Department of Human Rights report (2016) confirmed that prisoners are mistreated by the prison guards, and they were also experiencing mental health problems due to solitary confinement, overcrowding, and lack of adequate healthcare facilities and services.

Furthermore, most prisons in Ethiopia are overcrowded (Eden 2018). However, the vital issue is the effect of overcrowding on the prisoners. In most Ethiopian prisons, there is no separation among prisoners (based on age and offense type). As a result, the hardened criminals influence the minor criminals (Glory 2009; Fitsum 2018). Moreover, Glory (2009) discussed that prisoners may have been working for several years in one of the prison workshops, but they were not paid for their labor, though legally entitled to get a certain percentage out of the sales of the goods they

had produced. Therefore, at the time of release, prisoners may not have enough money for their meals and transport to reach their destination. Finally, it contributes to reoffending. In general, based on the aforementioned information, it is important to note that the prison conditions in Ethiopia are relatively harsh and it has an influence on the prisoners.

3 Methods and Materials

3.1 Description of the Study Area

The study was conducted at Hawassa Correctional Center (HCC), which is located in Hawassa city. Hawassa city is a city in Ethiopia, on the shores of Lake Awasa in the Great Rift Valley. HCC was established in 1970. The institution aims at making the prisoners capable of entering society after imprisonment and making them productive forces for the betterment of their lives, family, society, and country in general. The organizational structures of Hawassa Correctional Center have four main subdivisions, namely, Prison officials and Security sector, Basic needs sector, Reform Development sector, and Finance sector. Altogether work for reforming and rehabilitating prisoners.

The correctional facility houses both male and female inmates in separate living quarters. During this study, the Hawassa Correctional Center was holding 1762 prisoners (1724 males and 38 females). Of the total prisoners, 1094 are convicted prisoners (1082 males and 12 females) and 668 are awaiting trial (642 males and 26 females). Out of the total convicted prisoners, 788 inmates are petty criminals (783 male, 5 female) and 306 inmates are serious criminals (299 male, 7 female). Out of the total convicted prisoners, 18 inmates are lifelong prisoners (18 male, 0 female). In fact, there are many different correctional centers in Ethiopia; Hawassa Correctional Center was chosen because its location was convenient for the researcher based on its proximity to the issue.

3.2 Research Design

A cross-sectional study design was employed in this study. A Cross-sectional design seeks information from a sample at a single point in time (Bernard 2006; Leavy 2017). Similarly, this study is aimed at collecting data at one point in time and accomplishing the study rather than showing the patterns of change that might be witnessed over time. To achieve its objectives, this study employed a mixed research approach. Mixed methods research is an approach to an inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, on the assumption that integrating the two forms of data can

provide a good understanding of the research problem (Creswell 2003). The logic behind employing a mixed research approach in this study was based on the assumption that combining methods and empirical materials can help to overcome the weakness or intrinsic biases and the problems that come from a single approach (Yeraswork 2010).

3.3 Methods of Data Collection

3.3.1 Survey Method

During the actual data collection of this study, the average number of convicted prisoners in Hawassa Correctional Center was 1094 (1082 males and 12 females). Out of the total convicted prisoners, the number of recidivists available on the prison record was 80, which was the target population of the study. Accordingly, the study employed a comprehensive sampling technique (using the census of the recidivists (80). The reason for employing the comprehensive sampling technique is based on the assumption that selecting all recidivists makes the study more representative in showing the nature of subjects and the size is also found manageable. To differentiate the recidivists from non-recidivist inmates, the researcher used the recidivist's data from the correctional record.

3.3.2 Key Informant Interview (KII)

In this study, key informants are knowledgeable individuals who can best explain the issues under this study; they were selected by using a purposive sampling technique, especially psychologists, sociologists, and correctional officials. The rationale for selecting informants by using the purposive sampling technique is that it allows the researcher to select participants who are in the best position to help the researcher to address the research purpose and questions (Leavy 2017). The researcher used this method to conduct the treatment of the offenders, the reintegration of the offenders, and the general prison conditions. The interviews were administered orally (face to face) and were recorded by using handwritten notes by the researcher. All the interviews were conducted in the Amharic language and were translated word-for-word into English. The average duration of the interview was 40 minutes. Generally, five key informants were contacted, including 3 prison officers, 1 psychologist, and 1 sociologist.

3.3.3 Individual Interviews

The study employed semi-structured interviews to gather information from the recidivists about the factors that force them to recidivate. The reason for choosing a semi-structured interview is that it gives the chance of seeking clarification and explanations, and it allows the researcher to have control over the line of questioning depending on what needs to be known (Creswell 2003). The researcher employed a purposive sampling technique to recruit participants for semi-structured interviews. Particularly, recidivists who have had many imprisonment times (more than two times) were selected with the assumption that they would better explain their prison experience and reintegration challenges they faced upon their release; this helps the researcher to adequately address the objective of the study. The researcher accessed the participants by contacting the prison registrar officer. Ten recidivists were selected for the study. The interviews were administered orally and recorded using handwritten notes by the researcher. Accordingly, the shortest interview lasted 20 minutes, and the longest interview lasted 40 minutes.

3.4 Method of Data Analysis

Following the process of data collection, the researcher analyzed the data by using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the data by using frequency, percentage, and tables. On the other hand, the qualitative data obtained from informants were analyzed using thematic analysis. Finally, the researcher integrated and interpreted the overall results in detail.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

In conducting this study, first, the purpose of the research was communicated to the participants by the researcher. Before starting the interview, verbal informed consent was obtained from each participant. As well, the researcher was told to withdraw from the study at any time if they feel unpleasant. In addition to that, to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, the researcher did not mention identifiable information such as name or any identification of participants, instead the researcher used pseudonyms and code numbers.

4 Results

4.1 Background Information of the Respondents

As Table 1 portrays, 32 (40%) of the respondents were categorized under the age group of 21–30 years. This was followed by the age groups of 31–40 and below 20 years, which comprised 20 (25%) and 16 (20%), respectively. 41–50 and 51–60 year age groups comprised 8(10%) and 4(5%), respectively. Moreover, the study was designed to gather data from both male and female recidivists. However, the study findings show that all of the recidivists who are reported in the prison recidivist list are male. Accordingly, the sex distribution of the recidivists that participated in the study was 100% male. With regard to the education level of the recidivists, according to Table 1, 30 (37.5%) recidivists were those who completed grades 5–8 (second cycle), followed by grades 9–10 (high school), which comprises 16 (20%). Those respondents who had completed first cycle education (1–4)

Table 1 Background information of the respondents

Items (variables)	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age group of respondents	Below 20	16	20
	21–30	32	40
	31–40	20	25
	41–50	8	10
	51–60	4	5
	Total	80	100
Sex of the respondents	Male	80	100
	Female	0	0
	Total	80	100
Education level of the respondents	1–4 (first cycle)	15	18.8
	5–8 (second cycle)	30	37.5
	9–10 (high school)	16	20
	11–12 (preparatory)	11	13.7
	Diploma	7	8.8
	Degree and above	1	1.2
	Total	80	100
Marital status of the respondents	Married	28	35
	Single	42	52.5
	Divorced	10	12.5
	Total	80	100
Religious affiliation of the respondents	Orthodox	26	32.3
	Muslim	9	11.3
	Protestant	40	50
	Catholic	5	6.3
	Total	80	100

Source: Own survey data 2021

comprised 15 (18.8%), and preparatory (11–12) comprised 11 (13.7%). Of the total respondents, fewer portions 7 (8.8%) and 1 (1.2%) were diploma and degree holders, respectively. Regarding marital status, 42 (52.5%) of the recidivists were single and 28 (35%) were married; the remaining 10 (12.5%) were divorced. In terms of religious affiliation, 40 (50%) of respondents were Protestants, 26 (32.3%) were Orthodox Christians, 9 (11.3%) were Muslims, and 5 (6.3%) were Catholics.

4.2 Factors Contributing to Recidivism in Hawassa Prison

Normally, many factors give rise to recidivism in Ethiopian prisons. The current study sought to investigate the factors that revolve around the prison settings; accordingly, the major factors found by this study are presented in four subsections: mistreatment by prison staff and ineffective services, overcrowding and lack of inmate classification system, the inmate subculture, and lack of assistance upon release.

4.2.1 Mistreatment by Prison Staff and Ineffective Services

As indicated in Table 2, the majority of the respondents 71 (88.8%) indicated that the treatment given by the prison staff was hostile during their previous imprisonment, but only 9 (11.3%) of the respondents responded that the treatment from the prison staff was receptive during their previous prison period. Besides, 55 (68.8%) of the respondents encountered violence during their previous imprisonment, while the remaining 25 (31.3%) of the respondents did not experience violence in their previous imprisonment. Regarding the types of violence, the data collected from recidivists through interviews revealed that they were insulted and tortured by prison officers and police. Also, they mentioned that due to the harsh treatment given by the prison staff during their previous imprisonment, they were exposed to anxiety, depression, and hopelessness.

One recidivist explained his previous prison life as follows:

Table 2 Treatment of offenders by the prison staff in Hawassa Correctional Center

Items (variables)	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Treatment by the prison staff in previous prison life	Hostile	71	88.8
	Receptive	9	11.3
	Total	80	100
Violence	Yes	55	68.8
	No	25	31.3
	Total	80	100

Source: Own survey data 2021

> My previous prison life did not educate me; instead, it was a source of anxiety, segregation, and hatred [የባለፈው የእስር ቤት ቆይታዬ ለኔ አስተማር ሳይሆን ጭንቀት የበዛበት፣ማግለልና ጥላቻ የሞላበት ነበር]. I was tortured, stigmatized, and abused especially by the police. So, my previous prison life made me cruel and promoted me to commit more crimes.

This data clearly shows that hostile treatment of the prison's staff results in aggressive behavior; consequently, this aggressive behavior leads to reoffending upon release. Besides, it was found that rehabilitation system in the prison is ineffective.

A sociologist who works in the institution explained that,

> There is no such detailed treatment which base on the offender's need and risk factors. This has been so due to the shortage of professionals. We are few while the number of prisoners is large and thus it is difficult to give them appropriate treatment.

In general, based on the above findings, it can be noted that mistreatment by prison's staff and inadequate rehabilitation services in the prison put the offenders at high risk of reoffending upon release. This is because inmates leave the prison without adequate skills and are unreformed. Moreover, it was revealed that due to a large number of prisoners with few staff, the prison failed to perform its primary role in reforming the criminals. Usually, the offenders are simply adjusted to the rehabilitation programs without consideration of their needs and risk factors. As a result, they may not be fully rehabilitated. If they are not fully rehabilitated they are more likely to reoffend after discharge.

4.2.2 Overcrowding and Lack of Inmate Classification System

One of the biggest problems in Ethiopian prisons is overcrowding. Overcrowding not only hinders the effectiveness of rehabilitation but also hardens the offender and thus it leads to committing further crimes since it leads to prison contamination and interaction between different kinds of offenders. For the most part, if there is no separation between offenders based on their type of offense and ages, the correctional institution may serve as a place for teaching and learning criminal behavior. The findings of this study in Table 3 show that 71 (88.8%) of the respondents faced the overcrowding problem in their previous prison life; only 9 (11.3%) of the respondents responded that they were not faced by the problem of overcrowding in their previous prison life. Moreover, the data collected from informants revealed that:

Table 3 The condition of overcrowding in Hawassa Correctional Center

Items(variables)	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
In your previous prison life did you face an overcrowding problem in the prison?	Yes	71	88.8
	No	9	11.3
	Total	80	100

Source: Own survey data, 2021

> Due to overcrowding, I faced many problems such as a shortage of space for sleeping, exposure to various infectious diseases, and depression. These and other bad previous prison conditions exposed me to commit more crime (recidivist).

One of the correctional officers stated that:

> Especially, before COVID-19, we had a large number of prisoners, nearly 3000. We housed them in distinct accommodations based on their sex and there was no such clear classification between offenders based on their offense due to overpopulation.

This finding clearly suggests that overcrowded prisons hardened the offenders in committing more crimes instead of getting reformed. This has been so, first of all, because the offenders were exposed to different problems, such as a shortage of sleeping space, various infectious diseases, and depression. Second, due to overcrowding, the offenders of different types of offences were mixed together. This mixing of offenders without proper classification based on the types of offense they committed hardens the petty offenders or first-time offenders. When the petty offenders and serious criminals are mixed together, they get a chance to exchange ideas about criminal activities and teach each other about better techniques of committing crimes. Moreover, due to overcrowding, prisoners develop subcultures in the prison.

4.2.3 The Inmate Subculture

One of the respondents revealed the following:

> Sharing experience is a culture here, do you know! When an individual joins the prison for the first time, he is first asked to share his experience. He will be asked questions like, "what type of crime have you committed"? If the individual committed the hard offense, he was congratulated with comments such as, "You are really a man" [የእውነት አንተ ወንድ ነህ],… You know, it is hard to express, but the thing is, there is sodomy, substance abuse and many evil things among the prisoners. So, when one joins the prison, he/she learns many bad things (recidivist).

Based on this data, it is important to note that there is an inmate subculture in the prison, like homosexuality and substance abuse in opposition to the mainstream culture.

Moreover, one of the treatment staff asserted that:

> There are recidivists who are familiarized with the prison environment; they commit crimes frequently even within a month after being discharged and they return here. …they have their own shared traits based on their criminal history. They teach newcomers and integrate them with their behavior. After their discharge, they join a gang and robbery groups; these groups are formed firstly here in the prison.

Based on the key informant, it was revealed that the inmates' subcultures, like gang groups in the prison, lead the offenders to commit more crimes once they are released because offenders learn advanced criminal techniques from their gang members. Therefore, interactions between different kinds of offenders result in the formation of subcultures in the prison in opposition to the mainstream culture. This subculture influences offenders negatively and after discharge, it puts them at high risk of reoffending and reincarceration.

4.2.4 Lack of Assistance upon Release

The purpose of imprisoning an offender is to reform him/her and to help him/her abide by the law. However, it has been proven that imprisonment is not enough at all in addressing the offender's behavior. Therefore, additional support/assistance from prison institutes or other criminal justice systems, in collaboration with community agencies and charity organizations upon their return to the community, is very important (UNODC 2018).

Accordingly, in this study, the researcher tried to ask the respondents about the issue of getting support after being released. The findings in Table 4 show that 64 (80%) of respondents reported that they did not get any guidance from faith-based institutions during their previous prison release. On the contrary, 16 (20%) of respondents reported that through their previous prison release, they got guidance from faith-based organizations. Furthermore, 68 (85%) of respondents reported that through their previous prison release, they did not get any support from NGOs. In contrast, 12(15%) of respondents reported that during their previous prison release, they got support from NGOs. This information shows that offenders lacked support or that the support was inadequate upon their release. Besides, most semi-structured interview participants also cited that they did not get any assistance from the prison institute upon their discharge. Also, one key informant points out that: "Due to lack of budget, there is no transitional assistance; we release offenders simply after they finish their sentence time."

In general, from the above qualitative and quantitative data, the researcher realizes that offenders lacked support/guidance from the prison institute in collaboration with faith-based institutions and charity organizations upon their discharge. Religious institutions have a great power to shape individuals. If there were motivation and help from religious institutions, the offenders could easily develop contacts with the community and take responsibility for their lives. But the finding shows that religious or faith-based institutions did not appear to play a significant role in the lives of ex-offenders. Moreover, the finding indicates that there is no adequate aftercare service and proper intervention to connect the offenders with the community by correctional institutions and charity organizations. As a result, offenders are exposed to problems like homelessness, unemployment, and others. These problems enhance the inmate's likelihood of reoffending.

Table 4 Lack of support upon offender's release from the Hawassa Correctional Center

Items (variables)	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Guidance from faith-based institutions	Yes	16	20
	No	64	80
	Total	80	100
Support from NGOs	Yes	12	15
	No	68	85
	Total	80	100

Source: Own survey data 2021

5 Discussion and Conclusion

Even if the main goal of rehabilitation is to change offenders' behavior and to prevent future offending behaviors through correctional programs, there are a growing number of debates about the effectiveness of prisons in reducing reoffending. For example, Fitsum (2018) mentioned that Hawassa Correctional facility failed to fulfill its primary function of correction due to the inadequacy of treatment personnel, absence of treatment personnel in managerial positions, underfunding of rehabilitation programs, weak inmate classification system, and the inmate subculture. Similarly, the current study found that there are many shortcomings of the Hawassa Correctional Institution in rehabilitating the offenders and these shortcomings are found as factors that would enhance the likelihood of an offender committing another crime.

The finding of the present study statistically indicates that 88. 8% of recidivists were treated in a hostile manner by the prison staff during their previous prison time and 68.8% of recidivists experienced violence during their previous imprisonment. Regarding the types of violence, the data collected from recidivists through interviews revealed that they were insulted, tortured, and stigmatized by prison officers and the police.

In contrast to this finding, Art 87 of the Criminal Code of FDRE (2004) forbids such treatment by stating that the penalties and measures shall always be with respect due to human dignity. Hill (2011), in his study, concludes that correctional programs based on coercion inside the prisons enable the offenders to commit other crimes because they see themselves as criminals and only associate themselves with ideas that go against the criminal justice system. Similarly, according to Antwi's (2015) study, 24% of ex-offenders in Ghana recidivate due to the penal system largely emphasizes custody, deterrence, and retribution rather than rehabilitation.

Therefore, a relationship characterized by hostility and violence can result in aggressive behavior and increase the likelihood of reoffending. Moreover, stigmatizing the offender as a criminal and punishing them in deterrence and retribution cannot change the behavior of the offender. So, in order to rehabilitate offenders effectively, first, we have to address the factors that cause offenders to break the law and treat them according to their needs. UNODC (2018) stated that rehabilitation programs are most effective when they are based on a full diagnostic and individual assessment of the offender's situation. Therefore, it can be suggested that preventing recidivism requires active prison interventions based on an understanding of offenders' special needs and the factors that place them at risk.

Another finding of the study was overcrowding and its influence on the offenders. The study found that most recidivists (88.8%) faced overcrowding in their previous prison life. As a result of overcrowding, offenders encounter various problems such as a shortage of sleeping space, exposure to various infectious diseases, and depression. Moreover, overcrowding affects the ability of prison staff to offer meaningful rehabilitation programs for the prisoners. Fitsum (2018) argued that when

there is a large number of inmates with a few staff, it is difficult to handle tasks effectively. As a result, offenders leave prison without adequate rehabilitation.

In addition to this fact, the qualitative part of the present study found that due to overcrowding, inmates are mixed in the prison. If someone breaks the law and is found guilty of the crime, the person should be punished, but putting a young person in prison with adults and serious offenders is incorrect. This is because they might learn how to become a serious criminal. The findings of the study clearly show that there is no proper classification between young offenders and adult serious offenders in the institution. This mixing of offenders without proper classification based on the types of offense they committed hardens the young and petty offenders because they learn better techniques of committing crimes. This fact confirms Edwin H. Sutherland's differential association theory, which claims that individuals associated with anti-criminal persons are more likely to learn and adopt criminal values and behaviors. So, it is important to advocate that prison experience, basically without separation between offenders in terms of their offense, age, and risk factors, may enhance the likelihood of reoffending. The Federal Negarit Gazeta No. 47 or "Treatment of Federal Prisoners Council of Ministers Regulations No. 138/2007", article 5 states that:

> 5 (1) Separate premises shall be allocated for male and female prisoners; 5(2) prisoners on death roll shall be separately accommodated from other prisoners, 5(3) To the extent that circumstances allow: a) juvenile prisoners under the age of 18 shall have separate accommodations; b) persons detained upon judicial remand shall have separate accommodations from convicted prisoners; c) prisoners with records of serious crimes, recidivists and indecent prisoners shall have separate accommodations from other prisoners; 5(4) To facilitate the social rehabilitation of prisoners, they shall be categorized on the basis of their similarities and differences a be given different work assignments.

Exceptions to the sub-article 1, in Hawassa Correctional Center, prisoners were imprisoned together without separate accommodation on the basis of age, offenses, and risk factors. If there is no separation between the criminals based on the abovementioned issues, prisoners get a chance to exchange ideas about criminal activities and teach each other about better techniques for committing crimes. Moreover, it increases the development of subcultures in the prison. Consequently, they return to the community without being reformed. This finding confirms the Inmate Subculture Theory, which states that the formation of subcultures in prisons, like gang groups, facial tattooing groups, and homosexuality, makes inmates themselves recidivist and habitual offenders. Therefore, regarding the classification of the offenders, the researcher advocates that, as written on paper in article form, if the prison institute should put it on the ground or in a practical manner, the probability of individuals who will commit a further crime would be reduced.

Furthermore, aftercare service is very important for the successful reintegration of the offenders into the community (UNODC 2018; Simasiku 2018). However, the findings of this study show that most of the recidivists did not get any support and guidance from prison institutes, faith-based institutions, and NGOs in adjusting them into the

community. As discussed earlier, most offenders are confronted by a range of social, economic, and personal challenges upon their release. Moreover, incarceration itself has its own effect upon the offenders; for instance, offenders may lose their livelihood, personal belongings, and social networks. Therefore, follow-up supervision and assistance after release are very important. However, it was observed that there is no effort to connect the inmates with the outside community upon their release.

In general, the study found institutional shortcomings in rehabilitating the offenders as factors that enhance the likelihood of an offender committing further crime. The institutional factors include hostile treatment, overcrowding, lack of an inmate classification system, and the absence of assistance/support from the prison institute in collaboration with faith-based and charity organizations. Overcrowding, along with the absence of classification (in terms of age, offense, and risk factors) among offenders, hardens the offenders to commit further crimes because it enables them to share their criminal experiences and to learn new criminal techniques.

Besides, the treatment given by the prison staff is also harsh, along with violence such as isolation and torture. These are unethical and unaccountable treatment practices and they should be replaced by interventions that are based on the principles of ethical procedures and evidence-based programs. In addition, coordinated linkages and support systems for inmates at the time of discharge from prison are very important for their successful reintegration. However, it was observed that there was no effort to enhance inmates' connection with the outside community upon their release. Hence, the researcher recommends that, as much as possible, the correction center should identify and classify the offenders based on their ages, offense, needs, and risk factors. The study also recommends that the correction management should introduce offender-oriented treatment programs and develop adequate treatment personnel, such as sociologists, social workers, psychologists, and vocational trainers. It is also recommended that non-governmental organizations should work jointly with the government, especially with the police and justice system, to alleviate the negative perception of the community toward criminals.

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Gender, Peace, and Development

Gender—and issues of intersectionality among gender, race, and class, on the one hand, and gender, peace, and development, on the other—are often treated as specialized "topics." Here, we also view them as a foundational lens for understanding how violence and inequality are produced, reproduced, and resisted. Gender analysis is, therefore, a crucial path to understanding peace and development at all levels, from families, schools, and local economies to health systems, social norms, and the political economy of conflict.

We then return to African contexts where indigenous communication strategies are mobilized to address domestic violence, demonstrating the potential of culturally resonant approaches to strengthening norms and protections. Two chapters examine the gendered costs of exclusionary insecurity, the impact of COVID-19 in South Sudan, and contested perceptions of female homosexuality in Tanzania. Finally, we consider the material and institutional conditions of care, including barriers to early antenatal and postnatal health services.

Again, these chapters demonstrate the advantages of epistemic diversity in our inquiries. Gender justice is not peripheral but rather one of the most revealing aspects of peace and development, a significant insight that these Afrocentric case studies bring to our conceptual table.

Insights into a Women's Vocational Training Project in Afghanistan



Margit Stein and Daniela Steenkamp

Abstract In this chapter, we discuss a vocational training project for women in the field of post-literacy and tailoring in the north of Afghanistan. The goal of the project is to educate and empower women to earn their own living and therefore gain a more independent and autonomous status within their families and communities. The lack of access to education, to paid work, and the lack of integration of Afghan women into the political system can be seen as structural violence that makes women powerless. Thus, empowering women in Afghanistan first means providing them with access to education and paid work. The education offered must be based on the living environments and resources of Afghan women and be geared to their living environments. With the help of low-threshold educational opportunities, such as the project presented here, women can build up resources and social networks. These, in turn, can have an empowering effect at the social group level, because networking creates additional usable resources, which are essential for achieving their goals.

1 Introduction and Theoretical Background

The concept of empowerment was mainly formulated by the US-American social scientists Solomon (1976) and Rappaport (1981). Empowerment, historically linked to the civil rights movement in the USA, feminist movements, and the disability rights movement, is an emancipatory guiding concept of social work that aims to strengthen the autonomy, self-determination, and influence of people who are

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socially excluded (Blank 2018, p. 227). Through empowerment, people should become aware of their abilities, develop their own strengths in a targeted manner, and learn to use their resources in order to lead a self-determined life (Herriger 2006, p. 20).

The approach of empowerment focuses on the overarching goal of increasing the autonomy of people—in our project especially of women—and therefore enabling them to get more independency for themselves and their families, communities, and society as a whole. Empowerment is thus an important element in increasing the democratization of societies, as people could act more as active and responsible citizens.

However, empowerment must not only be approached on the individual psychological level, but also on the social (group-related), institutional, and community-related levels theoretically, conceptually, strategically, and methodically, and must be interlinked in order to be effective (Blank 2018, p. 328). At the individual level, it is about resource diagnostics, i.e. a close look at all available and supportable resources of people. Resources, also understood as potentials, abilities, or sources of strength, can be understood as personal and environmental means that help to satisfy basic needs as well as to cope with and process tasks and demands, to secure psychological integrity, to find identity, to control, as well as to a comprehensive biopsychosocial well-being (Herriger 2006, p. 3).

With a view to the internal and external resources and the embedding of people, social networks are now specifically sought or newly established at the group-related, institutional, and community levels. The concept of network is complex. Roughly speaking, we can distinguish between primary lifeworld networks, i.e. networks of relationships that are naturally formed and lived out in personal ties, and secondary lifeworld networks, such as associations or self-help groups, and tertiary, highly organized networks, i.e. professional and institutionalized networks that are specifically designed (Gögercin 2022, p. 23). The crucial point with regard to empowerment is that networks bundle and multiply resources. They have a socially integrative and protective effect, particularly at the individual and group level, because they mobilize help in the form of immaterial and material support for the individual member, have an identity-building effect, relieve, buffer, and confirm, and at the same time also serve to convey feelings and build trust (Gögercin 2022, p. 23). Empowerment is based on the assumption that the establishment and further development of lifeworld networks leads to more usable resources and thus to greater self-empowerment.

Viewed in this multidimensional way, empowerment follows the overarching intellectual logic that empowerment can only succeed if resources are specifically promoted in an interplay, people's resilience is strengthened and structural as well as internal power blockages are overcome through targeted networking (Blank 2018, p. 334).

This comprehensive approach is inspired by Kabeer (2005), who argued that empowerment must cover three interrelated levels: the level of agency in the sense of being able to make one's own decisions, the level of resources in the sense of resource availability, and finally the level of achievements, i.e. the potential that

people have at their disposal to lead a self-determined life (Kabeer 2005, p. 14). Fleschenberg (2009, p. 79) pointed out that, in Afghanistan, women have to operate in a difficult political and societal environment with a very limited space of agency. In the empowerment concept, therefore, the analysis and thematization of discriminatory structural conditions are combined with coping, i.e. individual coping strategies and the political focus on access to justice and participation of excluded population groups (Herriger 2006, p. 13; Walter 2017, p. 82).

Kabeer concludes that, with regard to the empowerment of underprivileged women, three resources as minimum standards should be given special attention: (1) Access to education, (2) access to paid work, and (3) political representation (Kabeer 2005, p. 16).

Empowerment and education prove to be the most important components of democratization in several studies, e.g. by Glaeser (2007), Sanborn and Clayton (2014), and Aléman and Kim (2015). Individual empowerment leads to the empowerment of society as a whole. Overall, the great role of women in the further empowerment, development, and democratization of society is also evident in these studies. For example, the links and correlations between education and democratization were especially high when women had equal access to education (Sanborn and Clayton 2014). Therefore, within this project, the focus of education and empowerment is led on women, who are extremely marginalized and discriminated against in Afghanistan.

If we look at the situation of women in Afghanistan with regard to access to education and access to paid work, the enormous extent of the exclusion of women in Afghanistan quickly becomes clear, which has once again massively intensified after the Taliban took power again in 2021. According to UN WOMEN (2022, p. 3), girls in Afghanistan are excluded from school education.

As of April 2022, 80% of secondary school girls (850,000 out of 1.1 million in 2021) were prevented from attending classes. Another problem is the very high illiteracy rate. For example, UNESCO (2021) points out that: "…*even though in the past 10 years the literacy rate increased from 32 percent in 2011 to 43 percent in 2018 (female 29.81 percent and male: 55.48 percent), there is a long way to go. Afghanistan's illiterate population (age 15 and above) has been estimated at 12 million (7.2 million female, 4.8 million male) from a total population of 39.6 million people. While many factors contribute to this situation, a key barrier to greater progress is the continuous underfunding of the literacy sub-sector. In addition, literacy and adult learning and education in Afghanistan has not been sufficiently integrated in sector-wide policy and governance and attracts an inadequate proportion of the education budget.*"

Unemployment is also hitting women hard. By 2020, women accounted for 18.8% of the labour force (compared to 81.2% for men), already a 28% decline (compared to a 12% decline for men) (UN WOMEN 2022, p. 3). The low participation of women in the labour market has been visible and documented for decades.

In 2020, women made up 18.8% of the employment sector (compared with 81.2% for men).This may have already decreased by as much as 28% (compared with a 12% decrease for men) (UN WOMEN 2022, p. 3). Evidence shows extremely low levels of economic activity by women in Afghanistan, including in urban areas, and much of it in various forms of self-employment (Kabeer et al. 2011, p. 10).

We see these developments as consequences of violence. In Afghanistan, women are exposed to high levels of direct as well as structural and cultural violence. While direct violence can be attributed to a specific perpetrator like for example the husband, structural violence is inherent in the political and social structures of societies like for example in the patriarchal system (Galtung 1969). Structural violence is more difficult to address than direct violence, as structural violence is often supported by an oppressive and discriminating culture, *"that can be used to legitimize violence in its direct or structural form"* (Galtung 1990, p. 291). Concerning the typology of violence of the "Theory of structural and cultural violence" of Galtung the survival needs, the well-being needs, the identity needs, and the freedom needs of women are threatened and violated in Afghanistan (Galtung 1990, p. 272). For example, women within Afghanistan under the Taliban regime are neither allowed to earn their own money (threatening of survival needs), nor do they get adequate medical treatment (threatening of well-being needs), are represented in the political system (threatening of identity needs) or have the right to live for themselves without male authority (threatening of freedom needs).

Due to a strict code of conduct, educational restrictions and bans, and enormous pressure on civil society organizations, women have become virtually invisible in Afghan society: *"Women no longer have any right over their own bodies in Afghanistan and are made invisible. This is what is happening in Afghanistan right now: the complete disappearance of women."* (Nabil 2022).

From this, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The lack of access to education and paid work and the lack of integration in the political system of women in Afghanistan can be seen as structural violence, which disempowers women
- Empowering women in Afghanistan means providing them with access to education and paid work
- With the help of basic education programmes like our project, women can build networks. These can have an empowering effect on the social group level, because networking creates additional usable resources that are essential for achieving their goals.
- Basic education programs like our project encompass fundamental changes, "concerning women's sense of identity and self-worth; their willingness and ability to question their subordinate status; their ability to make strategic life choices, including the renegotiation or rejection of inequality in their personal relationships and finally, their ability to participate on equal terms with men in reshaping the society in which they live." (Kabeer et al. 2011, p. 5).
- The educational offers must be based on the existing living environments and resources of Afghan women and be geared to their living environments.

2 Methodological-Didactical Aspect of the Project's Approach for Empowering Women in Afghanistan

The goal of the project is the empowerment of women in Afghanistan. The project strives to enhance their personal autonomy and independence as their professional opportunities in order to make their role more visible in the families, the regional and local communities and society as a whole. This empowerment is a direct counter to the widespread violence against women. The aim of the project is to educate and empower them to earn their own living and gain therefore a more independent and autonomous status within their families and communities.

The didactic-methodological basis for the education of women within the project "Empowering women in Afghanistan" were the approaches of Paulo Freire (2013), which he set out in his fundamental book "Pedagogy of Autonomy." The educational work takes up the lifeworld of the participants. For example, issues of children's health or the corona pandemic situation are addressed in thematic units. Another example is that the religious reality of women's lives is also part of the project. For example, the five pillars of Islam or women's rights and children's rights within Islam are addressed in the thematic units in which literacy is taught. This picks up on the realities of life, but also allays the fears that "Western propaganda" would be practiced in the context of further education. The contents taught are adapted to local cultural conditions. The female students were also allowed to choose the topics, which are of special interest to them. The aim of this adaptation is to (re)construct social truths so that their implementation is not alien to one's own context. According to Paulo Freire, the learners are guided from naïve everyday knowledge to more well-founded knowledge. The approach is situated between classical school teaching and professional or everyday life. The approach is not only a technique to quickly build up important content and competences, but also to build awareness (Freire 2013) and therefore enable people to act as active citizens within their societies.

3 The Project "Empowering Women in Afghanistan"

Within the project, women aged 15–43 years were trained as tailors over a period of 12 months and were made literate at the same time. In addition, the girls and young women received their own sewing machines and scissors, which could enable them to build up their own livelihood after the training. By this, these sustainable developmental goals were addressed:

1. Zero hunger: After the women are qualified in handicrafts and can express themselves through writing and are thus able to work as tailors, they no longer have to suffer from hunger thanks to their income and are thus freed from the essential food shortage;

2. Quality education: The sustainable and professional training in a recognized profession as well as basic communication techniques will enable the women to be present on the labour market and thus earn a living through education;
3. Gender equality: Through proper training as a self-employed dressmaker, the women are supported to act more as autonomous and active persons and therefore empowered to make their own decisions and act independent of male authority.

From September 2020 to September 2021, "Afghanistan Schulen e.V.," in cooperation with OASE ("Organization for Afghan Support of Education"), implemented the project "Empowering Women in Afghanistan" through vocational training in Mazar-i-Sharif. Fifteen young women were taught the craft of tailoring with the aim of building an economic livelihood. Other skills the women needed (reading, writing, math) and health education were also part of the training. The original plan of the "Afghan Women's Association" was to implement the project and train 30 young women (aged 18–35) over a period of 12 months as tailors and at the same time provide them with literacy training. However, the agency originally planned cooperation with the "Afghan Women's Association" had to be cancelled due to a bomb attack. Fortunately, thanks to the good cooperation with Mrs. Susan Amini, a former student of the University of Vechta and chairperson of "Hope for Children," a new cooperation partner with a lot of experience in local educational projects could be found: "Afghanistan Schulen e.V." After the Ministry for Science and Culture of Lower Saxony (MWK) approved the project and provided funding, it could be implemented in Mazar-i-Sharif. But due to the restrictions imposed by Corona only from September 2020 on and had to be stopped due to the Taliban oppression. The project initiators Prof. Stein (University of Vechta) and Prof. Steenkamp (DHBW Villingen-Schwenningen, formerly University of Vechta) accompanied the development of the project and were in regular contact with the project management.

The project was further complicated by the Covid-19 pandemic situation and the end of the project in August 2021 coincided with the Taliban coming to power, which subsequently led to a quick termination of the project. One teacher migrated to Pakistan, and the local project manager was in the meantime in Taliban custody. Thus, an evaluation of the project was no longer possible. Nevertheless, the continuation of the project and the achievement of the goals of quality education and gender equality can be comprehensively documented, as the local project coordinator stressed it:

> We are therefore very grateful to our project partners that they succeeded in imparting knowledge to the participants. These have learned tailoring, reading, writing and arithmetic and can earn money with their new skills. However, this is extremely difficult now, as some of the clients have no money for new clothes. People have lost their jobs and have no income. It is just a matter of survival at this time. Nevertheless, the new skills are very important; the women can sew clothes for family members and thus save on expenses. (Letter from Mrs. Flader, 'Afghanistan Schulen e.V.' dated 13.10.21)

At the beginning of the project, a building was rented; three teachers, a security guard, and an assistant were hired. The selection interviews with the women took place in August and September 2020:

> We bought 15 sewing machines, rented a house for the sewing centre and visited all 15 students which were named by the head of the community. Of those 15 students, three of them were not suitable for these courses (one was already a tailor, a second one was very old and sick and the third one herself said that she cannot attend). So by talking to the head of the community, we replaced these three women with other three and visited their homes and had interviews with them.

After setting up and starting the classes, the women besides learning to make clothes gradually built up also skills in reading, writing and arithmetic: Every day sewing and embroidery was taught for 3 h and the students were learning reading and writing in Dari and numeracy for 1 h. An excerpt from the project manager's report at the beginning of February 2021 documents the success:

> Students sewed dresses seemed better if I compare it with the previous months and their hand writes are also improving. They decorate their class by their hand write texts, which are really motivational for our project as well.

In March 2021, a showroom was opened where the women exhibited their self-made goods. The women also planted the outside area in front of the building with greenery. The lessons on health topics such as pregnancy complications or children's diseases also aroused great interest among the women. In April 2021, the project manager reported increasing success in handicrafts and mathematics:

> Our students' sewing works are improving more and more. They are sewing different dresses for them and their families these days. Their sewing lesson is on cutting and sewing different sleeves. Mrs…. said that in the New Year, they will have some more orders from outside the centre […]. While in literacy class, their lesson in Dari is on page 97 (five pillars of Islam) Miss. … use a fantastic method for delivering the lessons in a good way to the students, she used to take spelling check-up exams every week and the result is very good. At mathematics their lesson is at reading and writing the numbers from 3000 up to 9999, at religious subject their lesson focuses on women's rights in Islam.

In May 2022, the project manager reported successes in reading and writing, as well as a lot of interest in health-related lessons, which was also related to the massive problems caused by Covid-19:

> The students in literacy class are familiar with reading and writing now. Their lessons in Dari subject is on page 125 (The Children's Rights). We provided the Health Care Lecture by Dr. … for Sewing-Center students. The main topic, which presented was abortion in women and its side effects. The cases of abortion and prevention Covid-19 vaccination included some other discussions about complications during pregnancy and Diarrhea in children […]. I have to say that students are really interested in each seminar we provide for them, and they by themselves choose the topic they want to have information about for the next seminar.

In the time that followed, the focus was always on dealing with Covid-19, and in late June and July 2021, the training operation was still running "normally." In September 2021, we received the following message from the project manager on site:

> From 13th of August 2021 on till now […] we cannot go to the work, and it hurts so much to see we are at the same situation we were 20 years ago. It seems we are loosing all the values we earned during these long years. We struggled all these 20 years to get the rights we lost during Taliban era 1996 until 2000, but now all women lost these values and rights again. In my last email I expressed all my feelings how bad I am feeling these days just being at home and being far from my job and society, for the women that their careers means a lot to them. Now it is hard to tolerate this situation over here. Every day we are hearing and watching different cases and scenarios from Taliban in the city; the sound of using guns is still annoying us, this morning one of my relatives who is at 6th class at school came to our house; she was telling that Taliban were warning their school every day; even today they took a girl with them. When I asked her 'Do you go to school today?', she said no, my mother doesn't let me go because of these cases happening at schools. As Ms. Tamana said that Taliban start putting their strikes at schools' girls and teachers about Hijab, they want to cover women with a black hijab including all face, hand and foots. In regard to the empowering women project I am in touch with them, some of the students escaped from their place due to this unfair situation, also our literacy teacher Mrs…. migrated to Pakistan, and she will not come back to Afghanistan according to our last contact. Because there are all women working at the center and no man is involved in this project, we decided to start the center today 13th of September and there were eight students present in the class. Students said during a telephone contact I had with them that Taliban came to their mosque many times and announced about their rules. They ordered all women to wear hijab and cover their face, they said not to wear white socks because the white color is the color of their flag, and they will punish persons who wear white socks. They also said that Taliban will start the house-to-house check-up by soon.

4 Survey Results and Final Thoughts

After the project, the women were interviewed with the help of an OASE employee. The study included the project participants who replied to a quantitative and qualitative questionnaire in written form. They were filled out in their mother tongue and then were additionally translated. Twelve out of 15 women participated; the response rate was 80%. The average age was 24 years. The women's low level of schooling was striking. On average, they had attended school for 2.6 years, although there was a wide variation here. Four women stated that they had taken lessons from a mullah.

With the help of the training project, an increase in competence was achieved in the areas of reading/post-literacy, writing, math and sewing. For example, 5 out of 12 women said that the course had helped them excellently to sew professionally, and four women said they had learned to sew very well. Three out of 12 women saw excellent progress in reading, 4 women saw very good progress. Six out of 12 women said they had learned to do math excellently, and two other women rated their progress as very good.

The results of the qualitative survey were particularly revealing with regard to the women's involvement in social networks and their view of their everyday lives and the situation of women in Afghanistan. Eight out of 12 women (66.6%) emphasized the particular importance of their primary networks, i.e., the primary family (father, mother, siblings). The importance of friends was rated much lower, with 2

out of 12 women (16.6%) citing friends. In contrast, the role of classmates and teachers in the education project was seen as much more important. Six out of 12 women (50%) indicated classmates and teachers as important social resources.

The women's everyday life is strongly influenced by religion. All 12 women stated that they pray every day. Housework and cooking are also very important. Nine out of 12 women (75%) are involved in this several times a day. It is also remarkable that 8 out of 12 women (66.6%) reported watching TV every day. Agricultural activities such as feeding cows and taking care of the house/domestic environment were also mentioned. Looking at relevant educational topics, the women showed a particular interest in health-related aspects such as blood poverty, pregnancy, nutrition, skin diseases, and domestic and religious topics.

In response to the open-ended question as to which topics were currently of concern to women in Afghanistan, the lack of literacy among women, poverty, and women's rights, in particular protection against violence and dress codes, were named. One woman said that female knowledge is not appreciated in Afghan society. The need for sports studios for women, more opportunities for beauty care (cosmetics, hair care), and more artistic expression was also mentioned.

These survey results impressively show the deprivations women face in a patriarchal society, which Kabeer et al. (2011, p. 8) structurally described as a *"marked gender division of roles and responsibility."*

To sum up the results of the project, one could state that despite the adverse conditions, 15 women were able to learn the craft of tailoring, developed or built up their reading, writing, and math skills and received further training, especially on women's health issues and women's and children's rights. Thus, essential project goals have been achieved.

In view of the political developments, it remains uncertain whether the structural conditions for women in Afghanistan in the coming years will allow them to sustainably build on the skills developed in the project for leading independent lives. The decades-long exclusion of women in Afghanistan has had massive consequences. At the end of the project, one participant wrote: *"I have learned to write my name."* There still seems to be a long way to go for gender equality in Afghanistan.

5 Impressions from the Project

Photographs were taken continuously during the project. The project participants were visibly proud of the progress they made and the pieces of clothing they created (Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6).



Fig. 1 Photograph of the selection interviews with the women (Source: Author)



Fig. 2 Photograph of the workshop for training as a seamstress (Source: Author)



Fig. 3 Photograph of a finished product (Source: Author)



Fig. 4 Photograph of the showroom (Source: Author)



Fig. 5 Photograph of the reading session (Source: Author)



Fig. 6 Photograph of the learning session (Source: Author)

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Crisis Within a Crisis: Gendered Impacts of COVID-19 in South Sudan and Policy Implications for Resilience and Recovery



Angelina Mattijo Bazugba

Abstract The policy measures introduced following the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic have dramatically disrupted the daily livelihood of low-income female-headed households. Most of them are less-educated, self-employed or employed in informal sectors without social protection or any kind of insurance. As care givers and head of households, the majority are involved in hand-to-mouth businesses, own fewer assets and live in densely populated areas which puts them at high-risk of exposure to the COVID-19 infection. Literature indicates that social distancing and stay at home policies can contribute to flattening of the curve of infections and reduce pressure on health systems. Yet, such measures are less productive in the absence of alternative sources of income and livelihood. Women and girls are disproportionately affected due to increased burden of unpaid work, gender-based violence, food insecurity, poverty and economic hardship. While there is inadequate health services and densely populated households, COVID-19 has increased water usages by 50 percent. I argue that understanding the gender-differentiated impacts of disease outbreak is fundamental to creating effective and equitable policies and interventions that will leave no one behind. The research calls for clear policies on economic recovery and food distribution, behavioral change, information sharing and continuous inclusion of women in planning and decision-making structures to ensure that their concerns are effectively integrated in the implementation and monitoring of the COVID-19 prevention and response measures.

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1 Introduction

The emergence of the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has not only caused panic across the globe but has resulted in massive utilization of global expert networks and partnerships for laboratory, infection prevention and control, clinical management, and mathematical modelling projecting the infection frontier (Kimatu 2020; Glassman et al. 2020) WHO has also continued to work with networks of researchers and other experts to coordinate global work on surveillance, epidemiology, modelling, diagnostics, clinical care and treatment, and other ways to identify, manage, and limit onward transmission of the disease (WHO 2019, 2020). Correspondingly, the social and economic predicaments of the COVID-19 pandemic have called for unprecedented measures to be taken by local and national governments including social distancing, restriction of the movement and curfew at night hours, border closures, the confinement of entire cities, regions, and countries, as well as the temporary closure of formal and informal economic activities, etc. Such significant measures can dramatically flatten the curve of infections and reduce pressure on health facilities if there is adequate number of hospital beds, ventilators, and other health care facilities. In South Sudan, like other African countries, the Pandemic has served as a wake-up call and an opportunity to improve weak infrastructures, health facilities, transition of the education system to e-learning, and improvement of data and statistical capacity in relation to health and civil registration (Tiitmamer and Awolich 2020). While such measures are vital, the pandemic's global outreach has already widened inequalities within and between countries, worsened already existing fragilities, and restricted employment and investment prospects (ILO 2020). For South Sudan, which has been in cycles of conflict and economic hardship, the emergence of COVID-19 is likely to have increased inequalities between men and women and boys and girls.

By December 20, 2021, the Republic of South Sudan had confirmed 13,831 cases out of which 12,614 cases recovered (ROSS- MOH 2021). With the frail health system and very informal and vulnerable economy, the COVID-19, conclusively, has imposed heavy human, financial, economic, and social costs. Although prevention measures previously adopted by the government had been relaxed with increased flattening of the curve, the emergency of COVID-19 has significantly impacted citizens' lives, disrupted socio-economic development activities and the implementation of the peace agreement. Consequently, there is increased poverty, street begging, armed robberies, social devastation, and non-compliance and negligence of COVID-19 policies and guidelines. The initial studies conducted by the University of Juba and UNDP (UNDP 2020) revealed that households were under significant strain due to loss of income. Specifically, women and youth who are mainly involved in informal sectors or self-employed were devastated as a result of lockdown. The closure of businesses had also triggered price hikes for food, medicines, essential household commodities, and public transport fare. This paper seeks to explore two major questions: What is the differential impact of COVID-19 upon women and men? What resilience and recovery measures can be put in place to

support the marginalized groups to bounce back? Thus, the objectives of the research were to identify the gender and socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with a particular focus on the unique needs, capacities, vulnerabilities, and opportunities for women, girls, men, and boys; identify the gender responsive interventions in place and provide recommendations that will contribute to policy and programmatic service delivery and recovery across sectors.

The first part of this paper has introduced the study, key questions, and research objectives. It goes on providing the socio economic and health context of South Sudan, followed by gender dimensions of COVID-19 pandemic, and the justification for conducting a study. Part II provides the methodology, while Part III presents the results and discussion on the vulnerability factors in the South Sudanese context. The last section concludes with policy implications and recommendations.

2 South Sudan Socio-Economic Development and Health Context

South Sudan continues to encounter a serious humanitarian crisis due to the cumulative effects of years of conflict, which has destroyed people's livelihoods. Extreme levels of acute food insecurity persist across the country and nearly more than 6 million (about half of the population) are facing crisis-level food insecurity, with 1.4 million children under 5 years expected to be acutely malnourished in 2021 (World Bank 2020). Almost 4 million people remain displaced by the humanitarian crisis, with nearly 1.6 million people displaced internally and some 2.2 million refugees in six neighboring countries. Women and children continue to be the most affected. In 2020, communities were hit hard by the triple shock of intensified conflict and subnational violence, a second consecutive year of major flooding, and the impacts of COVID-19, exacerbating an already dire humanitarian situation. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic intensified a burden to the country with continuing pockets of conflict and fragility, recurrent naturally and human-induced systemic shocks and stress, weak institutions, and economic instability (WIPC and MGCSW 2020; UNFPA 2021).[7] Following the independence in July 2011, the country fell back into conflict in 2013 and 2016, respectively, which culminated with the signing of Peace Agreement (R-ARCSS) in September 2018.

Poverty is endemic and widespread with at least 80% of the 13.3 million population living below the poverty line (National Bureau of Statistics 2010). Women, in particular female headed households make up to 51.6% of the poor (World Bank 2020). With an economic annual growth rate of 3.2% by 2018/2019 and total fertility rate of 7, the population is predominantly young with the age group under 30 years accounting for about 75%.[1] With a high level of illiteracy, 73% for men and 84% for women, the unemployment rate in South Sudan remained unchanged at

[1] National Bureau of Statistics, World Bank projections (2019–2021);

11.50% since 2016 (UNOCHA 2016/2017).[2] Those in non-wage employment in the agriculture sector account for 61% of the employed. Only a minority of workers enjoy formal salaried employment (13%) or employment in the tertiary sector (19%).[3] Poverty levels are expected to remain extremely high, with about 82% of the population in South Sudan below the USD1.90 poverty line (2011 purchasing power parity).[4] The insecurity situation and the decline in global oil prices since 2016 negatively affected the economy, leading to high (50%) youth and women unemployment. The next section explains the gender dimensions of COVID-19 pandemic more broadly, but with specific experiences from South Sudan.

3 The Gendered Dimensions of COVID-19 Pandemic

Globally, women make up 70% of the workers in health and other social sectors susceptible to COVID-19 outbreak including hospitals, tourism, air transport, entertainment, cleaning, and domestic services. This means that the global pandemic risks an increase in socio-economic inequalities and exposure to the virus from infected patients and the related socio-economic consequences. The evidence from past epidemics shows that gender-based inequalities affects both women's and men's health, economic status, security, and safety in different ways.[5] Although statistics, for example, show that more men than women are affected by COVID-19, if the family is infected, it is the women who will play the double role of caring for men, children, elderly, and themselves. Not only does this increase their vulnerability, but it also increases the burden of unpaid care and household chores in which women do 2.5 times more than men do (ILO 2018). With the outbreak of COVID-19 in South Sudan, the lockdown measures have resulted in the disruption of community activities, social gatherings (meetings, burials, funerals, and weddings), and general and tertiary education. Since the country was amidst restoring peace and tranquility, absence of such activities has not only slowed down the social cohesion and reconciliation programs, but has stirred up insecurity, bitterness, rampant attacks, and rebellion as a consequence of economic hardship among communities. There is an increased need for home-based care of patients and children

[2] http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/southsudan/overview; http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/south-sudan-population/; http://countrymeters.info/en/South_Sudan; https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/south-sudan

[3] See for example Guarcello S., Lyon F. and Rosati (2011) Labour market in South Sudan Country Report December 2011, Understanding Children's Work (UCW) Programme, See labour market in South Sudan; http://www.ucw-project.org/attachment/30052016798Labour_market_in_South_Sudan.pdf

[4] The World Bank. South Sudan Country Overview. Oct. 16, 2019. Available from https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/southsudan/overview13. ILO 2019 in HOR 2019 UNDP. http://hdr.undp.org/en/indicators/43006

[5] See UNDP COVID-19 Response, Gender offer for gender equitable response and recovery.

following the school closures, making women run the risk of losing their jobs and get less paid than before. It aggravates gender gap in employment as women are predominantly employed in informal sectors, which are largely on part-time basis or few working hours.

The COVID-19 crisis has aggravated the sufferings of people in South Sudan who were already negatively impacted by the civil conflicts (Akpe 2020). While it is difficult to assess the toll of the pandemic or determine the costs of health services and the scope of the coverage, given limited testing capacity and the size of population that is still outside in refugee camps or in IDP centers, statistics from the Ministry of Health stated earlier has indicated the current status (ROSS- MoH 2021). The pandemic has disrupted movement within and outside the country and thus negatively impacted the economic activities most of which were depending on in-country and cross-border supply of food produces, and goods and services. The limited availability has resulted in hiking of prices, constrained access to basic services including the health and education system, access to justice, humanitarian operations due to temporary suspension of activities and delays in the supply chains (Cone 2019).

South Sudan like other low- and middle-income countries increasingly recognizes the pivotal importance of addressing gender equality and has been mainstreamed at various levels including the Peace Agreement (R-ARCSS) in an effort to contribute to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. In spite of that, women remain underrepresented across all sectors, and are disadvantaged in terms of access to healthcare and economic resources. Currently, one primary health center serves an average of 50,000 people. Only 40% of nutrition treatment centers have access to safe water, a gap that puts more vulnerable people, particularly women, boys, and girls, at risk of malnutrition and disease. The life expectancy at birth for both sexes is 56.3 years. Despite improvements in some health outcomes, the majority of women (87%) deliver their babies at home. Only about one in five childbirths involves a skilled health care worker (UNFPA 2020) Family planning uptake is low (contraceptive prevalence rate is 4.5% for all methods and 1.7% for modern methods).[6]

There are also considerable gender differentials in terms of gender rights, access to human rights, and access to justice. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. Women, girls, and children make up the majority of IDPs and are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance.[7] Although the mean HIV prevalence rate was 3% in 2012, statistics show that 56.9% new HIV/AIDS infections is amongst adolescent and youth aged 10–34 years with women and girls constituting 64% of the most affected group (UN Women 2020). This rate is expected to increase due to the low levels of awareness on HIV/AIDS and prevailing high-risk behaviors such as multiple concurrent sexual partners,

[6] See South Sudan health data.

[7] See South Sudan Gender Analysis: A snapshot situation analysis of the differential impact of the humanitarian crisis on women, girls, men and boys in South Sudan - South Sudan | ReliefWeb

polygamy, non-use of condoms, and other factors such as low school enrolment and poverty.[8]

Correspondingly, gender inequality and Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) are widespread and mostly intensified by cultural norms and insecurity caused by interstate and intra communal conflicts. The 2019 GBV Information Management System data analysis indicates that 54% of the reported incidents were perpetrated by intimate partners.[9] If cases of intimate partner violence (IPV) were pervasive before the emergence of COVID-19, it is anticipated that there will be an increased trend of similar cases with self-isolation and other stay-at-home measures. UNFPA South Sudan report (2020) shows an increase in the reported incidents of physical assault in the first 3 months of 2020 following the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic.[10] In comparison to the reports of the same period in 2019, there is an increase of 8% Sexual and Gender Based Violence cases in 2020. Specifically, those in abusive relationships are disproportionately affected due to the time spent in close contact with the abusers. It is also anticipated that at this time, women would also have less contact with the family members and friends who, under normal circumstances, would be able to provide support and protection in the face of any violence.

Sexual exploitation and abuse, especially among girls forced to be out of school due to dowry and COVID-19 is also anticipated to increase during the lockdown in view of the past practices. There remains high rate of teenage pregnancies (300/1000 for girls aged 15–19), attributable to high rate of child marriage in which 40% of girls are married off under 18 years. With the closure of schools, cases of forced marriages and rape have been reported to be on the increase.[11] Still, most remain underreported due to inadequate information on referral pathway, fear of revenge from perpetrators, stigma surrounding sexual violence, and possible HIV/AIDS transmissions. The existing vulnerabilities of women and girls are anticipated to further multiply and pre-dispose them to serious implications that go beyond the COVID-19 time.

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[8] Information available from: http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2018/june/south-sudan-raising-the-profile-of-hiv-in-humanitarian-contexts

[9] UNFPA (2021). Humanitarian Action 2021 Overview Available from https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/PAGES-UNFPA_HAO2021_Report_Updated_6_Dec.pdf Accessed 12/09/2021

[10] See also UNFPA (2020) Safety elusive for women in South Sudan's protection sites amid pandemic. Available from https://www.friendsofunfpa.org/safety-elusive-for-women-in-south-sudans-protection-sites-amid-pandemic/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwi7yCBhDJARIsAMWFScP6FnCYM_C2gVkZP5AMlY9koZatUnElcoNyvbOPsDpkgbIDybnaVQsaAiUTEALw_wcB

[11] Unknown Gunmen Rape 125 Women in South Sudan: Aid Agency," Reuters, November 30, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southsudan-violence/unknown-gunmen-rape-125-women-in-south-sudan-aid-agency-idUSKCN1NZ24D; "Statement on the Situation in Bentiu, South Sudan," OCHA, UNICEF, and UNFPA, December 3, 2018, https://www.unfpa.org/press/statement-situation-bentiu-south-sudan; Nick Cumming-Bruce, "Sexual Violence on the Rise in South Sudan, U.N. Says," The New York Times, February 15, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/15/world/africa/south-sudan-rape-sexual-violence.html

In terms of water, sanitation, and health (WASH) facilities, long distance to schools, and extra burden from domestic chores especially for adolescent girls, result in high school dropout rate. A large part of the South Sudan population is semi-nomadic and this prevents them from attending formal schooling. With the emergency of COVID-19, the water use per household and in business places is likely to have increased hence. Due to economic hardship, basic hygiene and menstruation items could be unlikely prioritized thus, putting most women and girls in a disadvantaged position.

4 Why Gender and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in South Sudan?

While it can be argued that the COVID-19 pandemic has presented an opportunity for the countries in the region to self-examine their fiscal, economic-policy priorities and build health sectors, the COVID-19 irrefutably, has imposed heavy human, financial, economic, and social costs. The pandemic has impacted South Sudanese citizens' lives, disrupted socio-economic development activities, and implementation of the peace agreement (Mayai 2020). Consequently, there is increased poverty, street begging, armed robberies, social devastation, and non-compliance and negligence of COVID-19 policies and guidelines. Overall, households are under significant strain due to loss of income especially as the majority of those employed in informal sectors were sent home or lost their jobs. For female heads of households, the lack of alternative livelihood opportunities aggravated their families' sufferings and poverty.

Moreover, the closure of businesses also triggered price hikes for food, medicines, essential household commodities, and public transport fares and increased crime rate and insecurity at night. Even though the University of Juba and UNDP (2020) study revealed that 68% of the population were aware of the disease, absence of alternative sources of livelihood suggest that it would be difficult for women to observe the regulations and therefore becoming vulnerable to the disease. Women, being the majority and the primary caregivers at home for sick and wounded, to the elderly and children especially after school closures, as well as front liners in hospital, hospitality industry and in markets/informal sectors, are the most predisposed to COVID-19 and other infectious diseases than their male counterparts. At the same time, family care roles/child-rearing responsibilities undercut opportunities and time available for women to engage in livelihoods and employment options (UN 2020). It is within that context that research was carried out to get an in-depth understanding of the gendered impact of COVID 19 pandemic upon women and girls.

5 Materials and Methods

The research employed both qualitative and quantitative methods involving household survey technique developed and used by the South Sudan National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). All state capitals, border towns and one administrative area were involved. Each town was stratified into blocks or administrative units in accordance with the NBS sampling frame. Then, three enumeration areas (EA) were randomly selected, in which 50 households were drawn to make a sample of 150 households and 50 businesses. Face to face interviews using semi-structured questionnaires were held with five key informants from government departments and non-governmental institutions (including the Ministries of Health; Water and Irrigation; Interior; Humanitarian and Disaster Management; Gender, Child and Social Welfare; Agriculture; Industry and the Chamber of Commerce; and key organizations responsible for relief services including WHO and World Food Program (WFP)). The selection was based on their significant roles and services the agencies provide in the communities (Kothari et al. 2005). The study included a rapid market survey to assess the supply chains and existing prices of food items, cooking energy, and the transport fares, which had significantly increased during the lockdown. A total of 1050 respondents and business owners were involved in the study. A data collection tool, KoboCollect, was used to support the CAPI/Tablets online questionnaire administration. The data were then subjected to descriptive statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

6 Results of Gender Analysis and Policy Implications

To understand the gendered impact of COVID-19, the following section analyses the demographic features, education, social status, occupation of respondents, coping strategies, and consequences.

7 Demographic Features

Of the interviewed population, 57% of the household heads were between 25 and 44 years old while 81% of the households aged less than 25 years were female. Few respondents (5%) are more than 64 years old. While WHO (2020) reports indicate that elderly persons are more susceptible to COVID-19 infection, the risk of succumbing to disease increases among young people in the presence of underlying conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS whose prevalence rate is 3%.[17] Statistics show that 56.9% of new HIV/AIDS infection is amongst adolescent and youth aged 10–34 years of which women and girls

constitute 64% of the most affected group. Almost 100% of the female heads of household under 25 years were either single, divorced, separated, or widow (Fig. 1).

More women (74%) compared to men (26%) had no basic school education or dropped out of school. Higher rates of illiteracy were observed in the northern states like Northern Bahr el Ghazal state, Lakes state, and Upper Nile compared to the Equatoria region bordering Kenya and Uganda (Fig. 2). Whereas, the school enrollment rate is almost the same for girls and boys, findings indicate that the drop-out rate is higher among girls due to negative customs and practices that include child marriages, early pregnancies, and economic hardship.[18] As a consequence, the

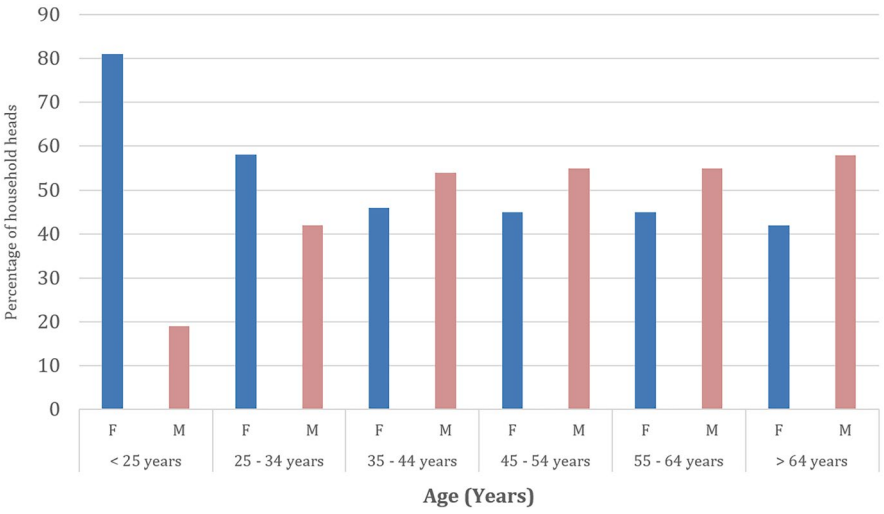


Fig. 1 Distribution of households by gender and age. Source: Developed for this research

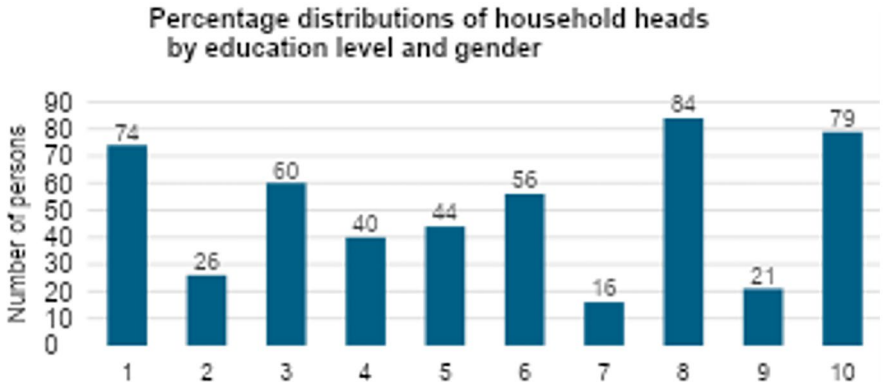


Fig. 2 Percentage distributions of household heads by education level and gender

number of girls enrolled in secondary schools, technical/vocational institutes, and University continues to be low. For instance, Akec (2021) found that there are 38,746 students enrolled in 14 institutions of higher education, of whom females constitute 26%.[19] In the field of STEM, there were only 3000 (24%) females out of 13,000 students enrolled. High illiteracy level among women increases their exposure and risk to COVID-19 infections due to limited knowledge and ability to access and synthesize information. Although information has been disseminated through mobile networks, radio, TV, and posters, translation of radio programs and TV messages to local languages is vital to reach out more women and girls. This is because 32% of household heads do not own mobile phones and out of these 61% are females.

The study shows that 53% of the households were headed by female and there was increased care burden and economic downturn in response to policy measures established. Women make up the majority of care providers in health and social sectors. The increased brunt of unpaid care work is in line with findings from ILO (2018) that shows globally, women perform 76.2% of total hours of unpaid care work, more than three times as much as men.[20] With the outbreak of COVID-19, the need to care for patients at home and care for children following the closure of schools and learning institutions have increased the burden on women and girls. For example, while not all diseases are associated with COVID-19, the study found that two out of every five households visited had at least one sick person over the past 2 weeks. As part of preventive measures, most hospitals do not admit patients unless otherwise the person is in critical condition. Even though women and men have different exposure to COVID-19, they are at high risk of contracting COVID-19 due to their roles as primary care givers, nurses, housekeepers, waitress, cleaners, and food vendors. Specifically, those involved in domestic care, government and private hospitals, and clinics face higher likelihood of exposure to coronavirus and fatigue due to long working hours with minimal pay or delayed salaries.

8 The Gendered Impact of COVID-19 on Education (Fig. 3)

Following the closure of learning institutions in March 2020, many pupils and students found themselves at homes, contrary to their parents' expectations. The country was caught by surprise and unprepared to embark on online teaching. Neither could parents keep their children engaged with learning activities. In the absence of improved technology and affordable internet services, most students particularly boys were idle at home with more time spent on playing, watching TV, or visiting their friends. Girls in particular (100 percent) were supporting their families with household chores, cooking, and caring for the young ones, while others supported family businesses and income generating activities. Only 17% of the children were found studying, out of which 15% were girls and 85% were boys. Proportionately more boys were found to be idle at home. The ministry of education could have developed programs to be taught through media, social media, or online to keep pupils engaged.

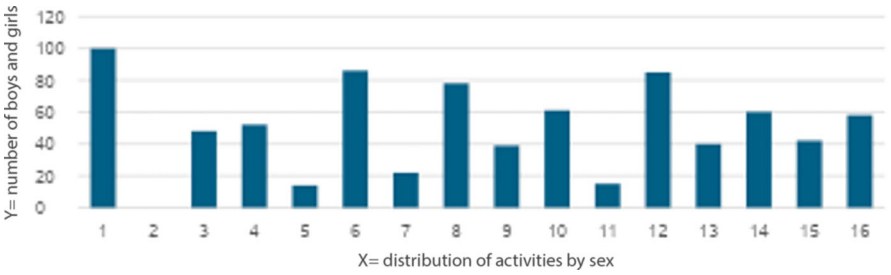


Fig. 3 Distribution of boys and girls (Source: author)

9 Poverty and Inadequate Access to Basic Health Services

Prolonged conflict and climatic shocks in South Sudan have increased the rate of unemployment, dependency, and poverty from 51% in 2009 to 82% in 2016 (Mawejje et al. 2020; Interaction 2020).[12] Most households are densely populated with an average number of 10 and 5 persons per households in urban and rural areas, respectively. In the Protection of Civilians sites (POCs) in Juba, Bentiu, and Malakal, the number of internally displaced persons sharing tents were more than what was observed in the urban setting. On average, women heads of households have limited ownership and inadequate housing space compared to men heads of households. Some of them live in poor structures with shared facilities that might expose them to infections. Maintaining social distance in densely populated/crowded households, temporary shelters, or home with poor housing infrastructures remains a daunting task as sharing of public spaces and facilities like living room, kitchen, bathrooms, and bedrooms is a common practice. The absence of quarantine centers, home care, and treatment of patients increases care burden to women and girls most of whom have inadequate skills on prevention and handling patients with COVID-19 disease.

Generally, 98.77% of respondents are aware of the COVID-19 pandemic and had been encouraged to seek medical assistance in case of any symptoms. Yet, over 16.8% of the households involved in the study had at least one sick person 2 weeks before the study, but could not visit a clinic or go to the hospital due to lack of money (70.4%), negligence (17%), fear of contracting COVID-19 while in the hospital (5.7%), lack of transport (2.5%), no functioning health facilities (1.3%), and other reasons (3.1%). In Nzara and Wanjok, the towns with active cross border businesses had the highest number of sick persons (40%) who did not visit any health facilities. Inability to seek medical attention could potentially undercut the ability to detect and identify cases of COVID-19 in time resulting in increased community

[12] For impact of conflict on Economics see also https://blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/how-conflict-and-economic-crises-exacerbate-poverty-in-southsudan

transmission. Indeed, the absence of resources may hamper their ability to seek medical attention or pay for medical bills. Financial constraints, delays in vaccine transportation, and delivery were reported to interrupt service delivery to women/mothers and children.

10 The Distribution of Household Heads by Gender and the Hours Spent at Home Per Day During Official Working Hours

No attention been paid to the Ministry of Health's guidelines that include staying at home (Fig. 4), social distancing, and wearing of masks. Seemingly, the stay at home preventative measure is less observed by most families whose work is from "hand to mouth" particularly in the absence of an alternative source of livelihood. The majority (35%) can stay home for 6–8 h of which women make 60%. While it can be argued that going out is critical for sustenance of families whose main sources of livelihood were affected by COVID-19 measures, support and information on prevention and response ought to be provided to reduce risk of disease and community transmission.

11 Perception, Norms, and Practices Against Spread of COVID-19

Difficult living conditions, prevalence of certain myths and beliefs were found to limit the containment measures and application of MOH guidelines and regulations. Over 67% of the households approved preventive measures taken by the government, but the rest had different opinions about the disease. The majority of respondents interviewed said that the COVID-19 is a global pandemic, some said it is a

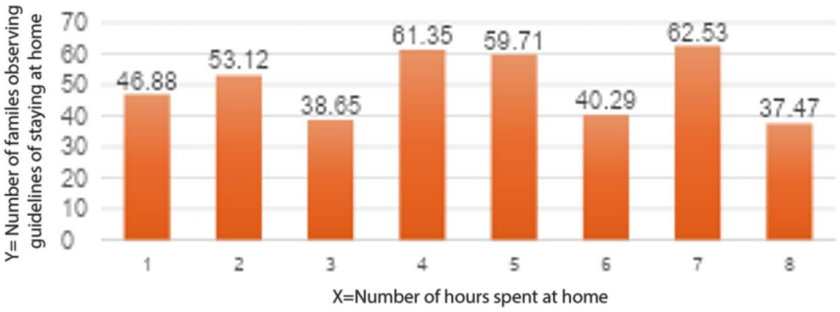


Fig. 4 Stay home numbers by gender (Source: Author)

foreign disease, while others stated that such disease cannot exist in South Sudan because of higher temperature, see Fig. 5.

Meanwhile there are numerous social norms and practices that might contribute to the spread of COVID-19. These include the group gathering by the road side while playing cards (largely among men), handshake habit, overcrowded homes due to high dependence, gathering in tea places, churches, communal eating habits, gathering for marriage, funeral or watching sports and games, spitting, hugging, churches or religious groups gatherings, kissing, and skepticism about existence of COVID-19 disease. Figure 6 shows the distribution of households by social norms and practices that could encourage the spread of COVID-19.

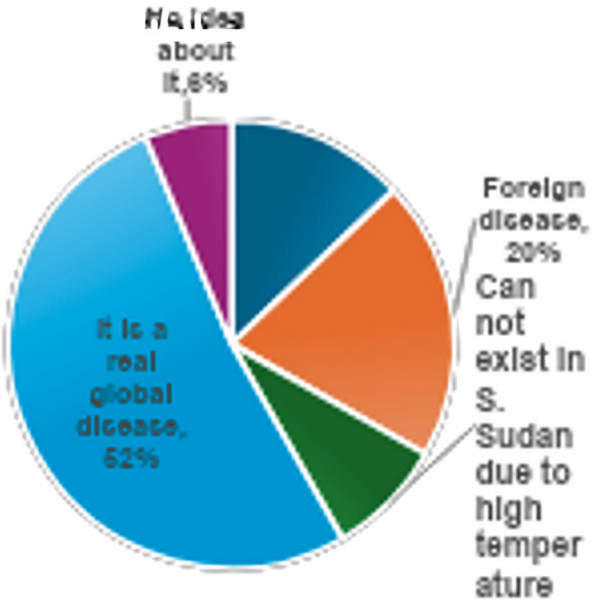


Fig. 5 Household perceptions on COVID-19 (Source: Author)

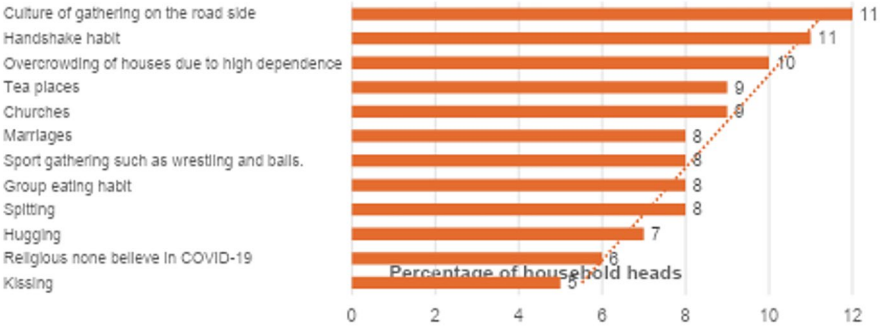


Fig. 6 Distribution of households by types of social norms and practices (Source: Author)

12 Access to and Control of Resources and Alternative Sources of Income

Although women have been doing petty businesses, the lockdown measures have allowed them to venture into more micro enterprises to sustain their families. About 69% of women are operating in the market and along the roadsides by vending fruits, vegetables, porridge, tea, and take away food. The tea selling business is on a daily basis despite the announcement of COVID-19 measures. In the absence of salary payment for government workers, the burden of caring for households has almost shifted to women. About 92% of them are the main source of livelihood, thus making it almost impossible to stop their petty businesses. Such situation has been reported elsewhere (Glassman et al. 2020) and in other African countries for instance, Angola, Ethiopia, and Zambia, where there is already an increase in inflation by at least 5%, mainly due to disruptions in the supply of food and energy, the bulk of which are imported (Monga 2020; Iroulo and Boateng 2020).

In border towns and across borders, women were found selling vegetables, while the majority of men (99%) illegally cross borders to sell consumable goods such as sugar, sorghum, onions, oil, garlic, and salt. The cross-border restrictions have increased prices of basic food commodities, limited movement, and separated families whose children were studying in the neighboring countries. Moreover, the illegal border crossing without testing for COVID-19 puts the women at risk of contracting the virus (Mayai 2020).

In terms of ownership of resources, findings indicate that about 83% of female-headed households do not own assets like buildings, shops, or other businesses, which they can use as collateral. Control and ownership of assets is a condition employed by financial institutions to lend women the money. Only, 60% of the respondents live in their own houses, 26.31% live in rented houses and the rest live in either Protection of Civilians, IDP, or in Refugee camps.

13 Increased Income Insecurity and Dependency

The economic instability, retrenchment, closure of big businesses, and some formal employment including schools and non-governmental organizations, have affected more than 52% of households. This is similar to most parts of the African continent, where the pandemic has triggered expansionary fiscal spending, doubling the already wide fiscal deficits, and its economic consequences have triggered expansionary fiscal policy responses across all categories of economies (UNDP 2020).

Most men, who are the main breadwinners, and female headed households, whose living conditions were already worse due to prolonged conflict, have continued to experience suffering due to reduced household income per day to less than USD 1.70 (World Bank 2020). Findings further indicate that about 36% of the households have a monthly income of less than 5000 SSP; and the majority (61%)

of those families are headed by female. This amount is significantly low compared to the current cost of living and consumer prices.[13] The average daily expenditure per household in South Sudan is 979.00 SSP, an equivalent of 1.60 USD. Since the average number of persons in the household in South Sudan is eight, it suggests that each individual lives on 38 cents per day. This figure is significantly low compared to the international poverty line of USD $1.90 per day purchasing power parity poverty line and is in line with what the National Bureau of Statistics and World Bank (2020) estimates indicating that 82% of the population lives below $1.90 per day. To cope with life, most households have embarked on small income generating activities which too were impacted negatively by the stay at home and partial lockdown policies announced in April 2020; or sought more than one informal job and a few (42%) sought relief assistance or support from relatives and friends.

14 Deteriorating Food Security for Vulnerable and Single-Headed Families

The COVID-19 and the difficult economic situation have increased the number of people who are unable to afford regular meals, a single meal, or a balanced diet. To understand the magnitude of the problem, the survey explored the household needs, food items, water, cooking energy, and access to market. Findings indicate that there is food insecurity among women, which increases with age. Unlike older women, young women can venture into multiple income generating activities (ILO 2020; Women Enabled 2020; UNOCHA 2019). In male headed households, men had a role of searching and bringing food home, while women and girls prepared and cooked the food. In case of food aid, women are responsible in collecting but distribution and decision-making on the usage is done by men who sometime sell the food in the market at higher prices. While it can be argued that the intention is to get money to meet other family obligations, the practice undercut the number of meals and nutrients uptake among women and children. Of the household reached, 53% afforded one meal per day between February and April 2020 while only 26% afforded two to three meals. Shortage of food and poor nutrition can easily predispose them to the COVID-19 infection. This finding is in line with UNOCHA (2020) showing that about half of the population was food insecure prior to the emergence of COVID-19. States in dire need of food Aid include Northern and Western Bahr el Ghazal, Upper Nile state and Western Equatoria. Only 33% of households had food reserves that can last from 2 to 4 weeks. The extended lockdown might be detrimental and harmful particularly for children and women who are lactating.

[13] The amount of SSP 5000 as of April 5, 2021 is equivalent to USD $ 8.2 by using the black market exchange rate of $1 = 610SSP.

15 Inadequate Water, Sanitation, and Safety

The emergence of COVID-19 has increased the water usage by 50% making a household of eight persons use at least 240 L of water per day. Water is used for frequently washing hands, clothes, drinking, and cooking. Still the problem of availability and access to clean and safe water perseveres. More than 72% of households in the urban areas use water from water tanks, donkey carriers, and boreholes. Specifically, in Juba Municipality, households depend on mobile water tanks (water tankers) as their main source of water supply. With increased usage and fuel, prices of water have also increased from 300 to 700 SSP per drum of 250 L. With exceptional to Wau town where men and boys deliver water by using donkey carters, the burden of searching and fetching water is upon women and girls who also fetch water from boreholes or line up in long queues.

Women and girls use about 80% of the household water (an average of 48 L per person) for bathing, washing clothes, cleaning of utensils, cooking, and drinking while men and boys use 20% of the household water (an average of 12 L) per person each day, for bathing, washing clothes, and drinking. At the household level, women control the usage of water for domestic purposes, while men and local authorities control the water points and bore holes. There is increased cost of living as a result of increased prices of fuel, water, and government taxes. Subsequently, care of patients, general hygiene including women's menstrual hygiene is affected. In rural areas and in the PoC, over 85% of the respondents claimed that some water points, toilets, and bathing facilities design and locations are less accessible, secured and unsafe for girls, women, and people living with disability. Walking long distances and lining up in long queues are likely to encounter sexual and gender-based violence as they become an easy target for sexual harassment particularly during late or night hours.

16 Information Dissemination and Knowledge Gap

Generally, information about the COVID-19 prevention and response has been disseminated widely. Findings show that over 70% of the population has received information about COVID-19, which was shared through mobile networks, radio, TV, and posters. These medium of communication were effective but timely, accurate, and simplified messages on the disease are needed. Absence of information implies that women will remain ill prepared and inexperienced to join the campaign. Understanding the gender-differentiated impacts of disease outbreak is fundamental for creating effective, equitable policies and intervention mechanisms that will leave no one behind. Since social norms are already underplaying women's presence in decision-making roles as well as from information channels, it is unlikely that the majority of women have adequate access to internet and advanced technology globally. This has a direct impact on women's ability to get informed, adapt to the COVID-19 crisis, and take part in economic recovery programs as noted elsewhere by UN Women (2020) (MGCSW 2013; MoH and NBS 2010).

17 Increased Unemployment and Gender-Based Violence

With increased responsibility of health care workers, only few women have been able to maintain their jobs. The unpaid care work constitutes the main barrier to women's participation in labor markets and is a key determinant of the lower quality of their employment compared to men. As noted elsewhere by ILO (2020), lack of employment and economic hardship can increase dependency, transactional sex, and poverty, which tend to disempower and subject women to sexual violence. For example, cases of sexual violence and vulnerability of women in South Sudan have been reported by UNFPA (2021) to be on the rise. The prolonged closure of schools has created idleness and child pregnancies among girls. Cases of gender-based violence and the weak support available to survivors before and during the lockdown period have been documented (UNDP 2020, WIPC and MGCSW 2020). This is in line with other countries in which statistics indicate that 90% of the recently reported cases of violence are related to the epidemic.[14]

Findings from the study underline existence of fear and anxiety from the extended quarantine, as well as the economic strain put on many families, which may have significantly contributed to the increased violence and abuse. There remains an enabling environment in which women and girls are generally viewed as commodities. Such violence stem from the objectification of women and girls, which is deeply entrenched in the customs and culture of South Sudan society: the local political economy of "bride price." Forced and underage marriages continue to be a hallmark of society, with more than 50% of girls married before the age of 18.[15] This view of women and girls has also contributed to the development of a society in which violence against women is permeating and accountability is missing. Decades of conflict has intensified the already glaring gender inequalities and risks for women and girls. Yet, a culture of silence and limited reporting endure despite the existence of special protection units, one stop centers, and mobile courts for survivors seeking formal justice instead of traditional courts.[16]

[14] See UNMISS, Survivors of Sexual Violence in South Sudan Struggle to Access Health Care, 19 May 2020, https://unmiss.unmissions.org/survivors-sexual-violence-south-sudan-struggle-access-health-care

[15] See also: Luedke, "The Commodification of Women and Girls in South Sudan; South Sudan," Girls Not Brides, https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/south-sudan/; UNFPA and MGCSW -Joint Statement Call for action to end gender-based violence and impunity for GBV perpetrators in South Sudan (July 2020).

[16] MGCSW (2017) Progress report on the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 on Women Peace and Security in East and Southern Africa: South Sudan Country Report, July 2017 and WIPC (2020) validation workshop report on what South Sudan has achieved after 20 years of implementation of the UNSCR 1325 (2000) globally. Prepared by WIPC and Q&A Consultancy Firm, presented on November 26, 2020 at Quality hotel, Juba.

18 Lack of Gender Disaggregated Data

While the Ministry of Health has been providing data of men and women who have tested positive as well as those who have recovered, there is still a gap of gender-disaggregated information about the crisis and its health impacts, hampering appropriate interventions as they are designed based on assumptions rather than reality. Equally, it is yet to be established how many people are experiencing psychological effect or are traumatized as a result risk associated with home-based care and treatment of patients; and the economic impact of discontinuing working in the informal sector as a result of increased care work during the pandemic.

19 Risk and Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic emerged at a critical point in time when South Sudan was implementing the revitalized peace agreement (R-ARCSS). While progress has been achieved in terms of formation of national and state governments, the lockdown and deviation of resources to humanitarian and relief work has dramatically slowed down the dissemination of R-ARCSS and implementation of other chapters, constrain women's movements, trade, and functioning of markets, leading to significant spillover effects. A relapse to conflict would reverse the gains made in economy recovery, exacerbate the macroeconomic policies and the humanitarian situation and increase domestic violence (UNOCHA 2020, World Bank 2020). South Sudan heavily relies on the oil sector which accounts for about 97% of total exports of goods and services, and 45% of nominal gross domestic product. There is a need to urgently invest in Agriculture and collect non-oil revenues, which is more reliable. There is also fear of revenge/reprisals, the inevitable stigma associated with being known as a survivor of SGBV or COVID-19. Sensitization and more studies in this area are needed in order to assess the magnitude and support systems needed for survivors of domestic violence especially during the lockdown period.

20 Conclusion and Recommendations

The analysis has underlined the differential impact of COVID-19 upon women and men in terms of lifestyle or health behavior, exposure, and effects of COVID-19, and socio-economic and development activities. Overall, there has been significant inflation, which includes increase in food and basic energy prices. Equally, exchange rates have fluctuated widely during the pandemic as the country is dependent on exports for internal use and revenue, and the exchange rate regimes in place. The increase in COVID-19 related health expenses, absence of unemployment benefits,

and tax cuts have affected the young economy, which was already impacted by the internal conflict. Such economic changes have a differential impact on women and men, and since most women are employed in informal sectors, their socio-economic and productive fabrics sustaining societies are declining with time. Not only has the situation caused frustration, but has affected businesses and caused psychological problems. From the study, findings suggest that men are more likely to die of the virus than women, owing ostensibly to the biological and lifestyle factors such as smoking, drinking alcohol, and other outdoor engagements that limit their time to stay at home. On the contrary, women spend more time at home because of their various roles and positions in the society as care givers, nurses, heads of households, and domestic workers. Women fall predominantly in the self-employed/informal sectors. They have fewer assets, limited access to information and control, and ownership of resources, and few alternative livelihood opportunities. Where houses are densely populated, women and girls are at risk of contracting the disease. In the absence of reliable sources of livelihoods, the general public is reluctant to observe the COVID-19 preparedness and response measures. In the light of the above analysis, the study recommends the following priorities:

- Strict measures and testing should be undertaken at the border points. Although trans-border infections have been largely contained, the country remains at risk given the porous borders between all surrounding countries.
- Provide subsidies and control of sky rocketing prices: The increase in prices of goods and services have left households vulnerable and exposed without any safety net. Urgent support in terms of food distribution and relief is needed.
- The government and partners should strengthen referral pathways and one stop centers for prevention and response of gender-based violence (GBV) to improve reporting and access of services to the survivors of domestic violence;
- Facilitate the development of immediate community-based action plans for prevention and response to COVID-19. Women should be included in decision-making processes;
- Relax lockdown measures and enforce the use of protective gears and provision of financial support to small entrepreneurs to facilitate economic stabilization and recovery;
- Undertake mass testing and community awareness campaigns to transform behavioral changes.

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Heterosexuals' Perceptions and Attitudes Toward Female Homosexuality in Tanzania: Qualitative Findings from Women Who Have Sex with Women in Dar-es-Salaam City



Switbert R. Kamazima

Abstract Until a decade or so ago, the general public demonstrated negative perceptions and attitudes toward homosexuality and homosexuals: gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. However, there is empirical evidence that from the 1970s, the public has progressively embraced positive attitudes ranging from tolerance to greater acceptance. Unfortunately, much of the data available on this issue come from the US and Europe. Little is known from the developing world and Tanzania, in particular. This knowledge is critical because public perceptions and attitudes influence the formation of multifaceted policies and legislative frameworks that address and impact the health and wellbeing of LGBT people. We conducted a cross-sectional descriptive formative study in the Dar-es-Salaam region, Tanzania. Among other objectives, we aimed to understand the general public's perceptions and attitudes toward female homosexuality and factors that influence the perspectives they hold. Findings showed that majority of the general public hold negative perceptions and attitudes toward female homosexuality that adversely impact women's health and wellbeing. Homophobia, religious beliefs, socio-cultural constructs, heteronormality, and criminalization by national laws and the Constitution greatly informed public's constructs of female homosexuality in this country. I recommend for larger ethnographic and multidisciplinary (longitudinal/cohort) studies, and nationally representative samples among women who have sex with women (WSW) and other homosexual subgroups. The goal is to establish an empirical database of predictors and time trends of public perceptions and attitudes toward WSW and other sexually-defined minority groups that influence rise in acceptance. In addition, data would facilitate improving healthcare professionals' ability to diagnose, treat, control, and prevent illnesses among WSW and other sexually-defined minority groups in the Tanzania context.

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1 Introduction

Universally, the general public has negative perceptions and attitudes toward sexual minority populations: lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender (LGBT) and the women who have sex with women (WSW) (en.wikipedia.org 2022b; Kremer 2014; Human Rights Watch/PEMA Kenya 2015) that negatively impact them. On daily basis, the LGBT/WSW face discrimination, rejection, abandonment, rape, sexual and physical abuse, stigma, segregation, homophobic and attitudinal harassment, discrimination, and homonegative attitudes (Drake 2013; Lin et al. 2021). In South Africa, for example, WSW and lesbian are frequently raped ("corrective rape") or killed by (heterosexual) men as a corrective measure (e.wikipedia.org 2022). Along the Kenya coast, community members attack LGBT/WSW and threaten attacking activists and burning down centers that work for the LGBT (en.wikipedia.org 2022a; KNCHR 2012; Human Rights Watch/PEMA Kenya 2015). Studies have reported that WSW are denied healthcare services (that they need most) due to their sexual orientations (Cloete et al. 2011).

Above all, homosexuality is illegal in many countries in the world, and in African countries in particular (Ouma 2014; Kamazima et al. 2021a, b). Consequently, the illegal status of homosexuality in this part of the globe explains, in part, why there is limited literature on homosexuality and more so on the public's perceptions and attitudes toward minority populations (Bowman 1979). Where data are available are from the developed world compared to the African countries. In Tanzania, however, researchers have conducted studies focusing on men who have sex with men (MSM) in the context of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) (Moen et al. 2012, Anderson et al. 2015, Magesa and Leshabari 2017, Mgopa et al. 2017, Ishungisa et al. 2020, Mbita et al. 2022) and with women who engage in sex work or female sex workers (FSWs) (Kamazima 1995; MoHSW/NACP 2012; Kamazima and Kazaura 2012) but remain silent on WSW's existence, health, and wellbeing (Kamazima et al. 2021a, b). In this paper, therefore, I present data from the first study on this public health issue in Tanzania intended to fill the existing gap in knowledge about public perceptions and attitudes toward female homosexuality: the reported general public's perceptions and attitudes toward women who have sex with women (WSW) in Tanzania and their implications to the WSW's health and wellbeing.

2 Materials and Methods

2.1 Study Design and Setting

Researchers conducted a cross-sectional descriptive formative study in Ilala, Kinondoni, and Ubungo districts of the Dar-es-Salaam region, Tanzania between January and February 2021. The researchers purposely selected Dar-es-Salaam region because it is the largest commercial city in Tanzania, hosting people from

diverse backgrounds, lifestyles and presenting wide range of sexual behaviors and practices. Dar-es-Salaam region, therefore, allowed access to the study participants.

2.2 Study Participants

Researchers used snowball method to recruit WSW aged 18 and above, had stayed in Dar-es-Salaam for 6 months or more, have had sexual/physical attraction to other women, and had engaged in same-sex sex in the past year. Researchers used purposeful sampling method to recruit community leaders, community members, and underground-operating NGOs' Managers supporting sexually-defined minority groups assumed knowledgeable of female same-sex sexual activities in their areas. All potential WSW contacted, willingly accepted to participate in this study.

2.3 Methods

Researchers used four qualitative methods: FGDs with WSW; IDIs with WSW and community leaders/members; observation and documentation of WSW's life stories on motives, historical perspectives, and same-sex sex experiences. The four methods enabled the researchers to understand, recognize, and appreciate female same-sex sexual behaviors and practices from the WSW's perspective. Researchers interacted with study participants in Swahili, the national and common language in the study area. The average duration of the FGDs and IDIs was 1.5 h. However, as participants had interest in this study, some FGDs and IDIs took longer time, up to 2 h. With participants' permission, all FGDs, IDIs, and life stories were audio recorded.

Twelve WSW participated in each of the two FGD; each conducted by the three research assistants (RAs). The RAs conducted FGDs in all-WSW supporting NGOs or in places perceived convenient to the WSW invited to participate in the group discussions. The recorder took short notes on emerging key issues to supplement recorded information.

Female same-sex is illegal in Tanzania making discussion around it sensitive that individuals would hesitate talking about openly. Researchers used IDIs to gather personal information created within and outside the WSW's-defined world: eight WSW; three with community leaders, one with a male community member, and three with WSW-supporting NGOs' Managers. The researchers conducted initial interviews with three leaders of WSW's organizations supporting all-WSW groups (Moen et al. 2012; Kamazima et al. 2021a, b). Through these initial interviews, researchers were able to identify FGDs participants. Researchers interviewed three supporting NGOs' Managers three times each to clarify on issues that emerged from IDIs, FGDs, and observations.

Researchers conducted observations to learn what life feels like for an "insider" while remaining, inevitably, "outsiders." The researchers recorded observation as much detailed as possible. Researchers used data from observations to: facilitate developing positive relationships (rapport) among researchers and key informants, stakeholders, and gatekeepers, whose assistance and approval were needed for this study; identifying and gaining access to potential study participants; improving the IDI and FGD guides and facilitating the interpretation of data collected through discussions and interviews, thus, ensuring study trustworthiness.

We collected life-stories of three WSW: one transgender man on hormonal treatment, one tomboy and Manager of NGO supporting WSW; and one WSW engaging in sex work with both men and women. Life stories allow the researcher to explore a person's micro-historical experiences within a macro-historical framework to understand an individual's current attitudes and behaviors and how they may have been influenced by initial decisions made at another time and in another place (Kamazima et al. 2021a, b). Data from life stories enabled capturing personal experiences in the WSW's-defined and external worlds.

2.4 Research Assistants' Selection, Training, and Roles in the Study

Researchers selected and trained three female RAs to assist in some aspects of this study: data collection and transcribing recorded interviews. The RAs held first degrees in social sciences and experienced field researchers. Researchers trained the RAs for 5 days to orient them on the objectives and procedures for this study. In addition, the RAs were made aware of the vulnerability of WSW and exposed to proper interaction and interviewing procedures.

The RAs transcribed recorded IDIs, FGDs, and life stories verbatim. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) five-step procedure: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes, and presenting the results; where open systematic coding of data in the participants' language and combining emerging emic concepts with preconceived theoretical constructs. Nvivo 12 version computer software was used to aid data analysis process.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Researchers obtained research clearance for the study protocol from Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) Institutional Review Board (IRB). District Administrative Secretaries (DAS) granted permission to collect data

needed in their respective areas. Street authorities, managers of NGOs/institutions caring for WSW granted permission to conduct the study in their respective areas and institutions. The process of interacting with the study participants had no harm to them and we kept their story telling for only needed information.

Female same-sex sexual behaviors and practices are illegal in Tanzania. So, study participants provided oral consent. Researchers anticipated chances of encountering cases of traumatized (potential) WSW, their relatives, or fellow WSW. Researchers, therefore, arranged with the WSW activist organizations and healthcare providers to provide appropriate assistance. Researchers compensated study participants with TShs, 10,000 [Appr. $4] for transport fare (to and from interview places) and for time spent during the interviews.

3 Results

3.1 Characteristics of Study Participants

A total of 39 individuals participated in this study: 24 in FGDs; 8 WSW in IDI, 3 community leaders in IDIs, 1 community member in IDI, and 3 in IDIs with WSW's organizations. The participants' age ranged between 26 and 60 years. The WSW were currently single with majority never married and a few were divorcees. Their education levels ranged from Primary Education complete to First University Degree. Of the 36 WSW interviewed, only one reported never having had sex with a man.

During the IDIs and FGDs, we asked our study participants a question: What are the daily life experiences of WSW in this country? We further probed on the general public's and the families' reactions to female same sex behaviors and practices and how they affect their health and wellbeing. Analysis of the WSW and community leaders'/members' narratives provided the following categories of public's perceptions and attitudes toward WSW: the general perceptions; Public's/community reactions toward WSW; Family reactions toward female same-sex-oriented members; WSW's experiences with rape; WSW's experiences with stigma, rejection, and discrimination; WSW's experiences with law enforcement machinery: the police; and the Legal status of female same-sex sexual behaviors and practices in Tanzania.

3.2 General Perceptions

Explaining daily life experience, a participant aged 28, never married, a female sex worker (FSW) with O-level education, running a males' salon and playing a female role in same sex relationship, reported:

> I live and enjoy my life like other citizens … I dress and present myself a woman … No one could suspect I practice same-sex sex … None of my family members has an idea of my sexual behaviors … However, the tomboys, the transmen and transwomen, face challenges from the community … Some of them are raped, beaten and stigmatized … Some are evacuated from houses or rooms they rent … Some face discrimination at workplaces, at home and at worshiping places (IDI_E, 28 years, 2021).

Another participant aged 29, never married and exclusively having sex with women revealed that: *"Some of our colleagues are well educated with qualifications and some hold positions in the public or private sectors … However, others never get employed due to their sexual orientations … Whenever they do get such opportunities, they are required to dress like females, which pushes them off"* (IDI_D, 29 years, 2021).

3.3 Public's/Community Reactions Towards WSW

Discussing how the community treats the WSW, a participant aged 35, divorced, a female sex worker and started engaging in same sex at the age of 19, explained as follows,

> You know, we [WSW] are the same as other women in this country and our daily life is similar to that of straight women … However, the problem arises when community members recognize that you are engaging in same-sex sexual behaviors and practices … They bull you when walking on the streets … For example, I comfortably lived in Magomeni [Kinondoni district] area for about five years … When the landlord and neighbors knew I engage in same sex they started pointing a figure at me … The youth and adults on that street looked at me in a manner that devalue me … Some would directly confront me threatening to beat or rape me … It reached a point I couldn't handle such harassments … I decided moving to Sinza [Kinondoni district] (IDI_B, 35 years, 2021).

Another participant aged 46, never married, a mother of two children, identifying a tomboy and started engaging in same sex at the age of 19, pointed out:

> Our society is divided with regard to us [WSW] ranging from those who accept us, those who tolerate us to those who criminalize us … Majority of community members do not accept our sexual behaviors and practices... They wonder why should women engage in same-sex sex … They believe we are cursed... They have no idea that we were created to be who we are and what we want to be … It [same sex] is common and accepted in Europe, Uganda and South Africa … In Dar [Dar-es-Salaam] there are places like Kinondoni, Oyster Bay, Masaki and Magomeni where same-sex sexual behaviors and practices are common and are either accepted or tolerated … Not in Mbagala, Tandika [Temeke district] and other similar areas of the [Dar-es-Salaam] city where same-sex [sexual behaviors] is still considers a taboo and immoral … In those areas, people will ridicule you, gossip about you at every corner you pass … In fact, you will be treated in a mockery way …You know, same-sex sex, be it women having sex with women or SMS, is illegal in Tanzania … It [same-sex sex] is a criminal offence in our country (IDI_G, 46 years, 2021).

Discussing how the public perceives WSW, a participant aged 26, a transman and a university graduate reported, *"Almost all religious leaders are against our behaviors and practices … They believe [same-sex sex] is devilish and bad luck to our*

families … Majority say we should get fiancés and then marry and nurture our [nuclear and extended] families" (IDI_F, 26 years, 2021).

Reporting on WSW's evacuation from houses or rooms they rent due to their sexual orientations, a participant aged 46, never married, a mother of two children and has sex with men, stated,

> As I told you, I am living with my family, so I have no such experience … However, I know my friends [WSW] who have been chased out of the house they rented when the land-lords knew they were lesbians … You know, when they rent a house or rooms, they are accepted as sisters or a mother and her daughter … As days pass on, they demonstrate lesbian-like behaviors which, irritate the landlords and the neighbors leading to their evacuation … However, there are some of them [WSW] who are living amicably with their landlords and the neighbors (IDI_G, 46 years, 2021).

3.4 Family Reactions Toward Female Same-Sex-Oriented Members

The participants were asked if their families knew they engage in same-sex sex. A participant aged 32, never married, mother of one kid and has sex with men, for example, reported, *"None of my family members know I engage in same-sex sex practices"* (IDI_B, 35 years, 2021). Another participant aged 46, never married, a mother of two children and has sex with men, reported, *"Aaaaah, [laughter] … None of my family members knows that I engage in same-sex sex … All they know is that I enjoy having females' company … So, even if I 'import' [bring a female partner at home] they can't be suspicious and no one would come to my room to check what is going on between us … So, I am safe that way"* (IDI_G, 46 years, 2021). A Street Leader interviewed in Kinondoni observed, *"Yes, when some parents learn their child is a lesbian, they become angry and may reject that child even expel or chase her from their homes"* (IDI_K, 60 years, 2021).

3.5 WSW's Experiences with Rape

We probed if participants have ever experienced rape. One participant said, *"Personally, I have never experienced rape although, I have never been threatened to be raped… However, it happened to my closest friend."* Regarding rape experiences among WSW, a participant aged 26, a transman and a university graduate reported, *"I have never experienced rape harassments … However, I know one tomboy [transman] who was recently raped by a gang of men who claimed punishing her for her same sex behaviors and practices … They call it … I don't know, correct rape"* (IDI_F, 26 years, 2021). Another participant aged 46, never married, a mother of two children and has sex with men, said, *"I have never been raped or rape a woman … I have no experience with rape among us [WSW] … However, I have*

heard such cases of a man raping a kid or a woman on a TV [television] and radio" (IDI_G, 46 years, 2021).

3.6 WSW's Experiences with Stigma, Rejection, and Discrimination

A participant aged 32, never married, mother of one kid and has sex with men, reported, *"Stigmatization exists among community members … Once they recognize you are a lesbian or a sex worker you can't be elected a member of the Street Committees"* (IDI_H, 32 years, 2021). A participant aged 35, divorced, and an FSW reported, *"It happened that I was evacuated from the house I rented in Sinza three years ago because the landlord recognized I am a lesbian and 'najiuza' [FSW] … Otherwise, I have never experienced any problem at work and worship places"* (IDI_B, 35 years, 2021).

Discussing stigma, rejection, and discrimination by the family and religious domain, the same participant stated,

> Majority of parents become furious to children born feminine but pretend to act as men [presentation, clothes and haircuts] … Some families reject and neglect such children, which adversely affects them physically, psychologically and morally … Some of the neglected children run away [from the families] to live on the streets … Some religious elders do not allow a female-looking person wearing a trouser and a shirt or a T-shirt to enter the Church … If you are lucky, they will give you a piece of cloth [*kitenge* or *khanga]*to wrap around the hips so as to look modesty to get into the worship place... Some women and girls presenting in that fashion are sometimes summon you to the Church Leaders' Committee, where they would be prohibited from coming to that Church or punished as per the committee's discretion (IDI_F, 26 years, 2021).

Reporting on stigmatization at work places, the same participant informed us the following:

> I am employed... I conduct business online dealing with customers in Zambia, Zanzibar and Malawi … My customers recognize, I am a man … They never stigmatize me at all … However, I have a friend, a transwoman, who worked for Vodacom Company … The authorities terminated her employment contract when they knew she was a trans [transwoman] … It is due to this reason that some of our colleagues with qualification never bother to apply for formal employment … They are either self-employed or engage in sex work for their survival" (IDI_F, 26 years, 2021).

A Street leader interviewed in Kinondoni reported, "*I don't think anybody can stigmatize them [WSW] as we cannot prove that they engage in same sex behaviors and practices … I have heard that unproperly dressed women are restricted entering worshiping places and government offices*" (IDI_K, 60 years, 2021). Another Street Leader interviewed in Kinondoni reported, *"These women [WSW] are stigmatized because their sexual behaviors and practices are un-African, unwarranted in our society and illegal by constitution"* (IDI_L, 32 years, 2021).

3.7 Experiences with Law Enforcement Machinery: The Police

We asked our participants on their (and their colleagues') experience with the law reinforcement machinery, the police, in particular. A participant aged 46, never married, a mother of two children, and sells sex to men, expressed oneself thus:

> I have never heard of a case where the police harassed us [WSW] … You know, there is no way the police would, beyond reasonable doubts, rule out that the two women sitting close to each other are lovers … All I know, is that the police hunt and harass the MSM and female sex workers [FSWs] on the streets or in brothels… We [WSW] have sex with our partners at our homes, the partners' residences or lodges and guest houses … It all depends on the couples' desired comfort, income, and status … No police would follow us at such places (IDI_G, 46 years, 2021).

Reporting on experiences with the police, a participant aged 26, a transman and a university graduate, informed us: *"I have never had a problem with the police … However, women dressed like men are restricted from accessing some government offices, the Immigration Offices, for example, where the guards send them back to get a piece of cloth [khanga or kitenge], failure of which, she will be denied services she needs"* (IDI_F, 26 years, 2021).

3.8 Participants' Perceptions of Female Same-Sex Legal Status

During the IDIs and FGDs, we asked our study participants to share their perceptions of female same-sex legal status in the country. All of the study participants, WSW and members of the community, knew that female same-sex sex is illegal and punishable by law in Tanzania. For example, a participant aged 26, never married, started engaging in same-sex in 2012 and a university graduate, reported, *"WSW are found in every region in Tanzania … However, female same-sex sex is illegal in this country … Thus, female same-sex behaviors and practices are conducted in secrecy and in private places known among themselves"* (IDI, F, 26 years, 2021). Emphasizing on the same point, the same participant added, *"There are advocacy groups for women's rights [including sexual rights] that have empowered us to come out and express our sexual feelings … However, these activities are conducted underground because female same-sex sex is illegal in this country"* (IDI, F, 26 years, 2021).

A Christian Religious leader interviewed in Ubungo district observed, *"There are few women who have sex with women in Dar-es-Salaam … However, female same-sex sex is illegal in this country … The women, therefore, practise female same-sex sexual behaviors in secrecy which, makes it difficult to estimate their numbers"* (IDI, H, 43 years, 2021). A participant in a FGD reported, *"The number of women having sex with women in Dar-es-Salaam has increased … You know, female same-sex sex is illegal in Tanzania … WSW operate underground … However,*

nowadays those who used to camouflage under their religions or family status are now surfacing to express and defend their sexual feelings and rights" (FGD_1, 2021).

3.9 Reported Implications of Female Same-Sex Illegal Status to the WSW's Health and Wellbeing

A participant aged 35, started engaging in same-sex at the age of 19, divorced and engages in sex work, had this to say;

> As you may be aware, our [Tanzania] government banned importing lubricants … As a result, we use what is available for us … We use vaseline jelly to avoid bruises from fingering or genital-genital rubbing … However, our doctor told us that the jelly is harmful to delicate membranes in the vagina … We plead the [Tanzania] government to lift the ban on lubricants importation for our safety (IDI, B, 35 years, 2021).

A participant aged 35, divorced, started engaging in same sex behaviors and practices at the age of 19 and engages in sex work, stated, *"As I told you, the [Tanzania] government banned importing lubricants some years ago … As a result, we use petroleum jelly, especially Vaseline jelly or cooking oil … We plead the government to lift this ban"* (IDI, B, 35 years, 2021). A participant in the FGD with WSW narrated the following:

> We know there are condoms for the fingers and the tongue that we would like to use whenever we have sex … However, they [protective gears] are so expensive and are not available in this country … You may remember, a few years back the [Tanzania] government banned importation of lubricants claiming their availability could fuel homosexual behaviors and practices among the citizenry … As a result, we have unprotected sex (FGD_1, 2021).

4 Discussion

4.1 Public Perceptions and Attitudes Toward Homosexuality

Studies indicate that in countries where homosexuality is illegal (Burn 2000; Izugbara et al. 2020; Kamazima et al. 2021a, b; Women's Initiatives Supporting Group 2022), the public holds and demonstrates negative perceptions and attitudes toward homosexuality and the homosexuals (MSM and WSW or lesbians). Consequently, hatred, discrimination, threats, rejection, violence, verbal insults, abandonment, rape, sexual and physical abuse, stigma, segregation, and police roundups characterize the LGBT's life (Becker & Todd 2015; Izugbara et al. 2020; Kamazima et al. 2021a, b). Feng et al. (2012) observed that homosexuals in Asia were highly marginalized and stigmatized. A study among college student, for instance, showed that "a homosexual male would be looked down since he is lowering his social ranking by being more feminine (Bowman 1979), and that a female

might not be "punished" for acting in an opposite gender role because the male role is considered superior" (Wong et al. 1999). In another study with a similar population, Burn (2000) showed that male students commonly used anti-gay language toward male homosexuality. However, students who knew a gay or lesbian individual exhibited positive perceptions and attitudes toward homosexuals. In another study, Kim et al. (1998) reported students knowledgeable of homosexuals' lifestyles had a positive perceptions and attitudes toward gays and lesbians. Herek (1988) study showed that heterosexual males from societies that emphasize the importance of heterosexuality being linked to masculinity, were more anti-gay hostile compared to their counterparts.

Hacker (1971) and Thio (1978) observed that "homosexuals feel that the root of their problem lies in social attitudes toward them." A study seeking opinion on "sexual relations between two adults of the same-sex" among African Americans (172) and American Whites (1203) reported that 88% and 80%, respectively, indicated homosexual relations were "almost always wrong" or "always wrong" (Alston 1974). Levitt and Klassen (1974) reported that the Institute for Sex Research's (1970) National Survey of 3018 American adults showed high levels of negative attitudes toward homosexuality where 70.2% responded sex acts were "always wrong" between "two persons of the same sex even when they love each other"; and public cynicism of homosexuals in positions of public responsibility was prevalent. Similarly, in the same study, "50% of the respondents agreed that homosexuality as a corruption of society can cause a civilization's down-fall and 55% at least somewhat in agreement that homosexuality is no problem in and of itself."

In a study conducted in New Zealand (Bowman 1979), over three-quarters of the sample reported willing to regard homosexuals as "ordinary people" and to accord them a "right" to their homosexuality. Over half agreed that homosexuality is a "natural sexual variation" in humans; and over 46% agreed that "people are homosexual because they want to be." In addition, on the one hand, male homosexuals were perceived being more effeminate in attitude, posture, dress, and more emotional and sensitive than heterosexual men. On the other hand, perception of lesbians was "both clear and uniformly negative; seen being "tough," aggressive, "butch," and "masculine" (in a disparaging sense) in temperament and behavior." In the same study, respondents reported willing to allow homosexuals to work in some occupations like: Armed Forces (87%); Members of Parliament, (835); Social Workers (76%); Teachers (74%); and Clergy and Police (70%). Objections were made to homosexuals being in positions of public responsibilities involving moral leadership and where high levels of contact with children would occur.

However, a study in the US (Levitt and Klassen 1974) reported that less than one-third of American respondents were willing homosexuals to serve as judges, teachers, clergy, doctors, or government officials. In a study in Three Asian Cities, Feng et al. (2012) reported that although homosexuality was thought normal and or accepted, adolescents and young adults studied mainly hold a negative perception of homosexuality. Magesa and Leshabari (2017) reported lack of confidentiality, fear of stigma and discrimination, shame and mistreatment at the health facilities,

and fear of the healthcare worker's reaction after they disclosed their sexual orientation to them are the main factors limiting MSM's access and utilization of healthcare in Tanzania. In June 2020, 60% of the respondents reported that discrimination against LGBT exists in Britain (Ipsos MORI 2020). A study conducted in Taiwan (Lin et al. 2021) showed that the general population had lower acceptance to homosexuality.

Negative public attitudes and perceptions toward homosexuality and homosexual (LGBT persons in most of African countries have roots in interwoven factors: homophobia, religious beliefs, socio-cultural constructs, and criminalization by national laws and the constitution (en.wickpedia.com, 2022b; Smith et al. 2014). Negative public perceptions and attitudes toward homosexuality and discrimination against homosexual individuals, for example, are common in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania (Kamazima et al. 2021a, b). Same-sex relationships are punishable in Uganda; and same-sex marriage is a crime punishable on conviction by life imprisonment. The law punishes heterosexuals engaged in oral sex, anal sex, and masturbation. In 2014, the government tried to impose the death penalty on those found guilty of being homosexual, because homosexuality is perceived "un-African" and, therefore, "non-Ugandan." However, the controversial law was later repealed (Kimani and Musa 2022).

According to en.wikipedia.org (2022), LGBT persons in Kenya face legal challenges. Religious, political leaders, and members of the community "condemn homosexuality and transgender identity as public signs of decadence, disease, and immorality." Sodomy is a felony per Section 162 of the Kenyan Penal Code, punishable by 14 years' imprisonment, and any sexual practices between males are a felony under section 165 of the same statute, punishable by 5 years' imprisonment. The state does not recognize any relationships between persons of the same-sex; and same-sex sex is banned under the Kenyan Constitution. However, there are no explicit protections against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. In addition, adoption is prohibited for homosexual people (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) 2012).

The Tanzania Constitutions (Mainland and Zanzibar) do not recognize same-sex relationships. Thus, same-sex relationships or couples have no recognition on Tanzania Mainland (The Tanzania Penal Code of 1945 as revised by the *Sexual Offences Special Provisions Act 1998*) and Zanzibar (The Zanzibar Penal Code of 1934 as amended in 2004). Homosexuality in Tanzania is a social taboo recognized as "non-Tanzanian" and "un-African" culture (Kimani and Musa 2022, Ghoshal 2020). Similarly, same-sex sexual acts (even in private and consensual) are criminal offences, punishable with life imprisonment. The law also punishes heterosexuals who engage in oral sex, anal sex, and masturbation. Same-sex behaviors and practices, therefore, are crimes punishable on conviction by life imprisonment (Nyanyuki 2018, BBC News_Swahili 2019). Consequently, discrimination, violence, threats, and persecutions are normal for LGBT individuals making it a matter of survival to keep their homosexuality hidden and rarely reported on (Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) 2018, BBC News_Swahili 2019). All of the participants in the formative study with WSW in Dar-es-Salaam

were aware that their same-sex behaviors and practices are illegal in this country and if known (to law reinforcing machinery) could be arrested, prosecuted, and penalized as per the Tanzania Constitutions and anti-homosexuality laws (Kamazima et al. 2021a, b).

4.2 Implications of Negative Public Perceptions and Attitudes to Homosexuality and Homosexuals

Empirical data available (Lax and Phillips 2009, for example) prove that public attitudes influence the formation of multifaceted policies and legislative frameworks that address and impact the health and wellbeing of LGBT people. That is, the politics and the legal contexts influence the dominant public discourse and regulate violent behavior and discriminatory treatment toward homosexuals and their behaviors and practices (Williams 2014). In part, this fact explains why there are limited studies and (public) health interventions targeting sexually defined minority groups in the developing world, and more so in countries where homosexuality is strictly illegal (Ouma 2014; Kamazima et al. 2021a, b). Like other studies on this issue (Lax and Phillips 2009), our formative study findings indicated that negative public attitudes toward homosexuality have adverse impact to their heath, health seeking behaviors, and utilization of healthcare services available (Saronga et al. 2021a, b). For instance, all participants in our formative study were aware of how the illegal status of female same-sex activities in the country impacts their health and wellbeing directly and indirectly. The WSW interviewed, for example, were aware that the Tanzania government banned community organizations from importing and distributing lubricants and other same-sex products in the country. As a result, WSW are forced to have unprotected sex, or use substances or products, which puts them at high risk of contracting HIV, STIs, and vaginal infections (Kamazima et al. 2021a, b, Saronga et al. 2021a, b).

Similarly, the WSW interviewed observed the transgender men face harsh treatment and disrespect whenever they seek healthcare services at (public) health facilities. The healthcare providers often do not keep their information confidential, "lecture" them on the immorality of their same-sex behaviors and practices instead of providing them with required health services. Consequently, WSW who could afford paying for health services opt visiting private facilities. Those who cannot turn to self-medication and other alternatives perceived efficacious at that time. The implication is that WSW demonstrate poor utilization of healthcare services (Mbishi et al. 2021), which limits health professionals' ability to diagnose, treat, control, and prevent illnesses among this group (Kamazima et al. 2021a, b, Mbishi et al. 2021, Hughes and Evans 2003).

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

Like in many African countries, sexually defined minority persons in Tanzania face varied challenges rooted in interwoven factors: homophobia, religious beliefs, socio-cultural constructs, and criminalization by national laws and the constitution. Homosexuality in Tanzania is a socially taboo subject recognized as "un-African" culture. Same-sex sexual acts (even in private and consensual) are criminal offences, punishable with life imprisonment. Negative public attitudes and perceptions reflected in WSW's narratives captured in this study, coupled with anti-homosexuality policies and laws toward homosexual behaviors and practices in the country, have detrimental consequences to the groups' health and wellbeing. More explicitly, negative public attitudes and homosexual restrictive policies, laws, and bylaws limit (public) health research and interventions among homosexuals' subgroups. To fill this gap, I recommend for larger ethnographic and multidisciplinary (longitudinal/cohort) studies, and nationally representative samples among WSW and other homosexuals' subgroups. The goal is to establish empirical database on predictors and time trends of public perceptions and attitudes toward WSW and other socially minority groups that influence rise in acceptance and facilitate improving healthcare professionals' ability to diagnose, treat, control, and prevent illnesses among WSW and other sexually defined minority groups in the Tanzania context.

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Barriers to Early Antenatal and Postnatal Care Utilization Among Women in Dodoma Region, Tanzania: A Qualitative Cross-Sectional Study



Agatha Fabian

Abstract Antenatal care (ANC) is routine care for pregnant women provided between conception and the onset of labor. ANC aims to monitor pregnant women regularly to identify and control the risk factors early. The postnatal period (PNC) covers the period of the first six weeks after birth and it is a critical period for the health and survival of a mother and her newborn. The objective of this study was to assess perceived barriers to ANC and PNC services utilization among women of reproductive age in the Dodoma Region. The study employed a cross-sectional design using qualitative methods. An interviewer's guide and checklist were used for data collection. Content analysis was used to analyze the data. The study shows that low male participation in maternity issues, long distance to the health facility, decision-making power in the family, traditional beliefs and practices in the community, and perceived quality of health services in the health facilities were among the barriers to ANC and PNC service utilization. It is suggested that there is a need for healthcare providers to enhance health education for women and their spouses about the importance of early attendance for ANC and PNC service utilization.

Abbreviations

ANC	Antenatal Care
FANC	Focused Antenatal Care
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
TDHS	Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey
TDHS-MIS	Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey-Malaria Indicator Survey
MoHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

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MoHCDEC	Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children
MSD	Medical Stores Department
PNC	Postnatal Care
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases

1 Background

Antenatal care (ANC) is care provided by skilled healthcare professionals to pregnant women to ensure the best health conditions for both the mother and the baby during pregnancy (WHO 2016). ANC provides an entry point for women in the healthcare system. It plays an important role in reducing maternal mortality and in providing pregnant women with a broad range of health promotion and preventive health services (AbouZahr and Wardlaw 2003; Vogel et al. 2013). ANC aims to monitor pregnant women regularly during their pregnancies so that the risk factors can be identified and controlled as early as possible. It also provides an important opportunity to help pregnant women and their families to best prepare for childbirth, as well as inform them about pregnancy-related complications and the advantages of skilled delivery care at health facilities (Awusi et al. 2009; Edward 2011; Magoma et al. 2013). Information provided by healthcare providers is important for the successful management of pregnancies and the subsequent well-being of the children (Babalola and Fatusi 2009; Agus and Horiuchi 2012).

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommended that all women with uncomplicated pregnancies should make at least four ANC visits to access focused ANC (FANC) services that have shown improved maternal outcomes. The integration of services in the FANC model was intended to address some of the barriers to the utilization of ANC services in low-income countries (AbouZahr and Wardlaw 2003). During ANC visits, women are counseled on topics such as birth preparedness, danger signs of pregnancy, family planning, nutrition, and exclusive breastfeeding. The WHO also recommends that women should receive intermittent preventive treatment for malaria, iron and folic acid tablets, anti-worm drugs, tetanus-toxoid immunization, and insecticide-treated bed nets during prenatal visits. Moreover, during ANC visits, women can be tested for Human-Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) as an entry point for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) services in HIV-endemic countries (AbouZahr and Wardlaw 2003). Moreover, during ANC, pregnant women will be empowered with knowledge about obstetric danger signs as essential strategies for timely obstetric care (Pembe et al. 2009). The life of the mother and the newborn baby can be served if complications during pregnancy and childbirth are attended to in a timely manner.

The timing of the initiation of the first ANC visit is important for ensuring optimal care and health outcomes for a mother and her newborn baby. Therefore, Tanzania, through the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) implemented the FANC program adapted from the WHO guideline in 2002. The proposed

timing is the first visit takes place within the first trimester (ideally between 8 and 12 gestation weeks). Services provided during this visit include confirmation of pregnancy and calculation of the expected date of delivery. The health care provider will have the opportunity to classify a pregnant woman as either attending the focused ANC or needing specialized care.

Pregnant women will be screened and treated for infection, receive preventive measures, and develop a birth plan. The second visit is between the 24th and 26th gestation weeks when pregnant women will have the opportunity to be assessed for maternal and fetal well-being, rule out pregnancy-induced hypertension and anemia. Other preventive services and a review of the birth plan initiated in the first visit will be provided during this visit. The third visit is at 32 gestation weeks, where pregnant women are assessed on the same components as in the second visit with the addition of the assessment for multiple pregnancies. The fourth visit is between the 36th and 38th gestation weeks, where pregnant women are assessed for maternal and fetal well-being, screened for pregnancy-induced hypertension, anemia, twin pregnancy, and malpresentation, and receive preventive services and birth plan review services (Lincetto et al. 2010; WHO 2007; MOHSW 2002).

The postnatal period is the time between the delivery of the placenta and 42 days (6 weeks) following the delivery (WHO 2010). This is a critical period during which effective care for the mother and newborn child's health is needed to ensure the survival of both (Lawn et al. 2006). WHO guidelines for PNC recommend that, after an uncomplicated vaginal delivery at the health facility, healthy mothers and newborns should receive PNC service for at least 24 h after birth. Again, if delivery was at home, the first postnatal visit should be as early as possible within 24 h of delivery. Three additional PNC contacts for mothers and newborns are scheduled on day 3; between days 7 and 14; and 42 days after birth (WHO and Jhiego 2015). In Tanzania, the MoHSW recommended women receive immediate care and a first PNC check-up within 24 h after birth. Again, women should make three follow-up PNC care visits scheduled within 7 days, 28 days, and 42 days after delivery (Plan 2014). During PNC visits, women had an opportunity to receive information on healthy practices that are key to maternal and child health and survival, including exclusive breastfeeding, proper nutrition during breastfeeding, counseling on breast care, and advice on the care of the newborn (Ugboaja 2013).

Other important services offered during the postnatal period include family planning services, immunization, hygiene and sanitation, and prevention of infections including Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). The care given in the postpartum period helps the healthcare providers to timely detect and manage complications that may occur following delivery (Wudineh et al. 2018). Likewise, during the postnatal period, healthcare providers have an opportunity to provide care to newborn babies. Health services offered include check-ups for danger signs such as a history of convulsions, poor feeding, fast breathing, severe chest in-drawing, pyrexia, or hypothermia, no spontaneous movement, any jaundice in the first 24 h of life, and yellow palms and soles at any age (WHO 2015). It has been shown that if PNC services are provided appropriately within the recommended time can prevent the majority of maternal morbidity and

mortality (WHO 2010). The world's Sustainable Development Goal (target 3.1) aimed to reduce the maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 (United Nations 2015).

2 Statement of the Problem

The current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize that no one should be left behind, but the majority of women in developing countries are still not utilizing maternal health services adequately (Alam et al. 2015). It has been shown that in Africa, 69% of pregnant women make at least one ANC visit during pregnancy (Lincetto et al. 2010). Although almost all (98%) pregnant women in Tanzania make at least one antenatal visit during pregnancy (TDHS 2015-2016 n.d.), only 51% of them accomplish the recommended four or more ANC visits despite the reduced number of ANC visits in the FANC model. Again, the prevalence of early ANC initiation in Tanzania is very low (22.9%), making pregnant women unable to complete the recommended four ANC visits (Moshi 2021; TDHS 2015-2016 n.d.). Early antenatal care booking is very crucial as they provide early detection, management, and prevention of problems that may occur during pregnancy.

Although there is a high rate of death among postnatal mothers and neonates, especially in the first two days post-delivery, utilization of postnatal services is inadequately utilized. It has been reported that less than 30% of women in low-income countries received PNC immediately after childbirth (Magoma et al., 2010). In Tanzania, studies have shown that only 52% of women received postnatal check-ups within 42 days after delivery. For those who received PNC services, only 34% of women are examined within 48 h after delivery, although most maternal deaths occur during this period (Magoma et al. 2013; TDHS 2015-2016 n.d.). In Dodoma region, 52% of women utilize PNC services within 42 days after delivery and only 46% were examined within 48 h after delivery, hence increased risk for maternal morbidity and mortality. Understanding the barriers to ANC and PNC services utilization is important in designing strategies to address reproductive and child health (RCH)-related problems. Therefore, this study aimed to explore barriers to the utilization of ANC and PNC services among women of reproductive age in the Dodoma region.

3 Methods

3.1 Study Setting

The study was conducted in the Dodoma Region, which is the capital city of Tanzania. The region has seven districts, which are Mpwapwa, Kondoa, Chemba, Chamwino Kongwa, Bahi, and Dodoma Municipality. Geographically, the region is located in the central part of Tanzania between 4° and 7° S and 35° and 37° E with

an area of about 41,311 km^2. The 2012 National Population Census estimated that the Region had about 2,083,588 people (NBS 2012). The Average Annual Inter censual Growth Rate is 2.1% and the population density is 50 people per km$^{2.}$ The percentage of women of reproductive age is 44.1% of the total female population in the Dodoma Region (NBS 2012).

Regarding health facilities, the Dodoma region has 15 hospitals, 41 health centers, 367 dispensaries, 17 clinics, and 43 health laboratories. A total of 356 health facilities are government-owned while 128 are private. All government health facilities provide maternity care services. In all government health facilities, free-of-charge maternal health services are provided daily. However, in remote areas with no health facilities, the outreach programs are carried out on a monthly basis. Therefore, this study was conducted in four districts of the Dodoma region, namely, Dodoma Urban, Kondoa, Kongwa, and Chamwino.

Concerning economic activities, agriculture is the mainstay of the people in the Dodoma Region. About 90% of the population is engaged in agricultural production, which is predominantly for subsistence. Livestock keeping is also dominant, whereas agro-pastoralism takes the larger part, followed by pure-pastoralism. Fishing is another economic activity that is practiced at the subsistence level due to insufficient water bodies and low technology thus compromising its productivity. However, most women are employed in primary activities such as agriculture, livestock keeping, petty trade, gardening, weaving (handcraft), tailoring, and vendor trade, while men are mainly engaged in formal employment and large businesses. As a result, women remain economically and socially marginalized. Women's socioeconomic status impacts their ability to utilize maternal health care services.

4 Design and Participants

A cross-sectional study design was employed using a qualitative study approach. The target population was women who had given birth within one year before the study, their spouses, and community leaders.

5 Study Site and Participants' Selection

Dodoma Municipality was selected purposively because it is an urban district with people of different backgrounds. Three other districts were selected randomly, namely, Kondoa, Chamwino, and Kongwa. Two wards were randomly selected from each of the four selected districts and obtained eight wards. Again, one village/street was selected randomly from each of the eight wards, making a total of eight villages/streets. From each of the eight selected villages/streets, all households with women who had children below one year of age and their spouses were eligible for the study.

A purposive sampling technique was used to obtain study participants for in-depth interviews (IDIs) and a total of eight IDIs were conducted with community leaders. In addition, a total of eight focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted (four with women and four with men).

6 Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected using FGD and IDI guides with open-ended questions developed in English and translated into Kiswahili. Two research assistants (RAs) (one male and one female), experienced in qualitative research and fluent in Kiswahili, the national language, were involved in data collection. Both RAs underwent training for two days before data collection to familiarize themselves with data collection tools. The field data collection was conducted from January to June 2015. During the data collection process, a principal investigator (PI) moderated the FGDs while a RA operated the tape recorder and took notes. However, each FGD and IDI was conducted in a quiet place either in the village/ward office or under a tree. The average time for FGDs and IDIs was between 60 and 90 min.

The tape-recorded FGD and IDI interviews were transcribed in Kiswahili before data analysis. Then the translation of the transcript from Kiswahili to English was performed by the research team. Each translated transcript was compared with the hand-written field notes. After proofreading and making corrections, the transcribed documents in Microsoft Word were then exported to QSR (NVivo 9.0 software) for coding and processing. Thematic content analysis was used, which involves coding data according to key themes arising from the data. Initial coding was conducted by the PI and a draft code document was shared with the research team for comments. The code document had a range of themes including male participation in maternity health issues; distance from home to the health facility; decision-making power in the family, and traditional beliefs and practices in the community hindering early utilization of maternal services in the study area. Triangulation of different sources of data from FGDs, IDIs, and field notes, and synthesizing data across respondent groups were used to validate the data. The key phrases and expressions made by the participants were retained to support the presentation of the results.

7 Results

The study aimed to explore barriers to early ANC and PNC services utilization among women of reproductive age. During the analysis, five major themes emerged, including male participation in maternity health issues, decision-making power in the family, distance to the health facility, traditional practices in the community, and perceived quality of services at health facilities

(a) *Male Participation in Maternity Health Issues*

Findings from this study showed that the majority of men were not participating in maternal health issues. It was reported that most of them do escort their wives during their first antenatal visit to have HIV testing. It was also noted that men escort their wives to the RCH clinic just because of a bylaw that requires them to accompany their wives and have HIV tests together. Some men reported that they accompany their wives to the RCH clinic if, and only if, they are unwell during pregnancy. A female participant in the FGD, for example, explained *"There is a bylaw that requires our husbands to escort us to the RCH clinic on the first visit so that we test for HIV together … They thus escort us to the clinic on the first visit only … Very few of them do so on the subsequent visits"* (A female participant_ FGD, District 'C').

During FGD with men, one participant expressed, *"We do not escort our wives to the clinics all the time when they are pregnant... We do escort them during the first [ANC] visit only because there is a bylaw that requires us to accompany them to have HIV-test together"* (A Male participant_ FGD, District 'A'). During an IDI, a female healthcare provider confirmed there is low male participation in maternal health activities, explaining *"In this area, very few men accompany their wives to the RCH clinic … They escort them during the first ANC only... This is because of a bylaw which requires them to accompany their wives and has HIV-test"* (A female, Healthcare Provider_ IDI, District 'A')

> Findings from this study also demonstrated that some men do not accompany their wives to the RCH clinic even for HIV &AIDs screening because they believe only the wife should test. That is, their wives' results reflect their status too! For example, a female participant during FGD narrated, "*Our healthcare workers require us to be accompanied by our husbands whenever we visit the clinic... However; our husbands refuse to do so … My husband, for example, once told me 'Doesn't the nurse know that you are my wife? … HIV-testing … your test results will tell my status too'"* (A female participant_ FGD, District 'C'). This study also noted that other men do not participate in maternal health activities just because they have many responsibilities; they are the family breadwinners. They reported that going to the RCH clinic is time-wasting unless a wife has a health problem. During FGD with the males, one participant narrated, *"You know, men have many responsibilities … We are the family breadwinners … Why should we waste time escorting them every time they visit the clinic if they don't have a health problem?"* (A male participant _FGD, District 'D').

(b) *Decision-Making Power in the Family*

During FGDs and IDIs, it was reported that decision-making power in the family is among the barriers to early ANC and PNC services utilization. Participants reported that some women were unable to initiate the ANC clinic as early as recommended due to a lack of permission from their spouses due to jealousy. For example, a female participant during FGD narrated "*My husband allowed me to go to the clinic after five months when a nurse could examine the abdomen and assess the pregnancy progress"* (A female participant _FGD, District 'C'). Another participant in the same FGD reported that it is not common for women to initiate ANC early in the first trimester if they have no health problems. Even if the mother experiences any problem, she has to seek permission from her husband to attend the ANC clinic.

A female participant, for instance, narrated, *"It is not common for us to go to the clinic early unless we experience health problems... Whenever this happens, a wife can ask permission from her husband to go to the clinic for check-up and treatment*" (A female participant _ FGD, District 'C').

A hamlet leader interviewed, reported that in the study area women had no decision concerning their health during pregnancy due to spouses' low knowledge about the importance of early initiation of ANC visits, stating, "*In this area, the majority of men do not allow their wives to start ANC early before distension of abdomen is visible... They prefer pregnancy to 'age' six to seven months before they allow them [their wives] to start ANC...This is because of jealousy and low knowledge on the importance of early maternal service utilization*" (A Community Leader_IDI, District 'A'). During FGD with male participants, it was also reported that males do not allow their wives to attend ANC early, as they prefer their wives to initiate their first ANC at the seventh month when distension of the abdomen is visible. For example, one male participant narrated, "*I did not allow my wife to go to the clinic early when she was pregnant... I allowed her to visit the clinic at the sixth month when pregnancy was visible"* (A male participant, FGD, District 'A').

(c) *Long Distances to the Health Facility*

Findings from this study also showed that long distances to health facilities were among the barriers limiting women from utilizing ANC and PNC services, especially for those who delivered at home. Participants reported that after delivery, mothers' bodies become weak and, therefore, they could not walk the long distance to the health facility for a checkup. One female participant narrated, "*We stay very far to the health facility… So, it could be so tiring walking that distance to attend PNC clinic while one has not fully recovered from childbirth process.*" (A female participant _FGDs, District 'A').A community leader interviewed in District 'A' reported, "*We don't have a health facility in this ward which forces women to walk long distances seeking health services... As a result, it is difficult for women to walk to distant facilities for PNC check-ups"* (A Community Leader, IDI _District 'A').

Other participants also reported a shortage of primary health facilities (dispensaries and health centers) in the study area forcing women to seek health services from the district hospital, which is very far from the study area. For example, a female participant in the FGD from district 'C' narrated, *"We don't have a dispensary in our village... We have to go to the district hospital for healthcare … The district hospital is far from here, which discourages some mothers from seeking healthcare services from this facility [District Hospital]"* (A female participant_FGD, District 'C').

A Community Leader interviewed in District 'A' explained the same challenge of women walking long distances seeking maternal health services due to the limited number of health facilities in the community as it was explained as follows "*There are many villages in this district that have no hospitals [dispensaries or health centers] … Mothers have to seek services from distant facilities, which limits many mothers from utilizing maternal health services*" (Community leader _ IDI, District 'A'). On the other hand, a healthcare provider interviewed reported that

many villages in the study area have no dispensaries, and therefore, women receive maternal health services during outreach services which are conducted once a month or they have to go to the district hospital; saying, "*We don't have a dispensary in this village... Women have to go to the district hospital to access health services which are very far from the village or should wait until the outreach services day"* (A healthcare provider, IDI _District 'C').

It was also observed in this study that some women did not attend PNC services, especially in the hard-to-reach areas, because the outreach clinic was not conducted every month, which also led to delays in the vaccination of children. For example, a woman from District 'A' had this to say*, "In this area, women do not attend PNC regularly because outreach clinic is not conducted every month... Thus, children do not get vaccinations on time"* (A female participant in FGDs_ District 'A'). Another participant also reported that the outreach clinic was not effectively conducted since they combined four hamlets in a meeting. This caused congestion and long waiting times for health services, hence limiting women from utilizing maternal health services regularly. This was narrated as follows "*We do not have a dispensary in our community and therefore nurses from the district are conducting one outreach clinic in four hamlets which causes congestion... Sometimes they do not come every month causing children and women unable to follow vaccination services as scheduled... The government should build a dispensary in each village to solve this problem."* (A community leader _IDI_ district 'C').

(d) *Traditional Practices in the Community*

Findings from this study showed that traditional practices in the community are also among the barriers that limit women from utilizing ANC and PNC services. It was found that in some places in the study area, residents continue embracing traditional practices prohibiting women and their newborn babies from going outside the home until the babies' umbilical cord stump falls off. Participants also reported that newborn babies are not allowed to be carried or touched by other people aside from the mother or a traditional birth attendant (TBA) due to the fear of people with evil eyes and bad spirits who could harm them. During the FGD with women, one participant elaborated, "*It is our custom in this community that after childbirth the newborn should not be touched by any other people than her mother until the baby's umbilical cord stump falls off."* (A female participant FGD, District 'D').

A male participant in the FGD also reported, *"It is common in this community that a mother and her baby should not go outside the house before the baby's umbilical cord falls off to avoid people with evil eyes and bad spirits which can harm a baby*" (A male participant _ FGD, District 'A'). Other participants also shared their beliefs concerning the postnatal period. They reported that the postnatal period is a time for a mother to rest so that she can recover from body weakness that resulted from the childbirth process. For example, a female participant in the FGD in District 'C' narrated, "*After delivery, our bodies become weak and we need to have a rest to recover from the childbirth process"* (A female participant _FGD, District 'C'). Other participants also believed that if a woman had a normal delivery and has no health problems, she does not need to attend the PNC clinic for a check-up. A male

participant in the FGD reported, "*There is no need of going to the health facility for a checkup if a woman delivered normally and has no health problem*." (A male participant _FGDs, District 'B').

(e) *Perceived Quality of Services at Health Facilities*

In this study, we also explored how the perceived quality of services offered at the health facilities influences mothers' utilization of maternal health services. Findings demonstrated that long waiting times, shortage of health workers, and inadequate knowledge and skills among some healthcare workers were among the reported factors hindering women from the utilization of maternal health services. The shortage of health workers was found to be a challenge in many health facilities in the study area. As a result, available staff was overloaded, leading to long waiting times and patient/client crowding, hence limiting some mothers from utilizing maternal health services available at the health facilities. A community leader interviewed in District 'A', for example, explained, "*Health workers are trying to help pregnant women and other people in the community but the big problem is that they are a few of them... For example, at our Health Centre, we have only one doctor [Clinical Officer] and few nurses……. This situation can compromise their ability to provide quality healthcare services to their clients on time" (*A Community Leader, IDI_ District 'A').

Healthcare providers interviewed also reported the challenge of the shortage of healthcare providers in the study area leading to overworking of few available staff in the health facilities. For example, a healthcare provider in District "C', reported, "*We have a scarcity of qualified healthcare workers at many of the health facilities in this district, which results in overloading of staff available due to handling many responsibilities some of which are out of their training and specialization … In turn, this situation causes our patients/clients to spend more time at the health facilities, which is somehow frustrating"* (Healthcare Provider_IDI, District 'C'). Women participating in the FGD also complained about taking a long time at the health facility waiting for health services due to the insufficient number of healthcare workers, hence limiting them from utilizing maternal healthcare services in the study area. Again, participants suggested that the government increase the number of health workers in the community to ensure women and other people receive quality and timely health services, hence increasing health service utilization. This was reported by one participant as follows, "*There are few nurses and doctors [Clinical Officers] at our hospital [Health Centre] compared to the number of patients they attend daily… That's why we take a long time to receive services... The government could help us increase the number of healthcare workers so that we get good healthcare services on time"* (A woman _FGD, District 'B'). Another woman in District 'A' stated, *"The government could increase nurses and doctors to work in our health facility because there are very few, causing people to take a long time to receive health services"* (A woman in FGD, District 'A').

Apart from the shortage of healthcare workers, the study participants doubted some healthcare providers' competencies and experience a challenge facing many health facilities in the study area. The perceived causes of this challenge reported

were the lack of refresher courses, ineffective mentoring and coaching during supervision visits, and the retirement of many experienced nurses. Discussing this challenge, a healthcare provider interviewed in District 'D' argued that, "*Some healthcare workers, the newly employed staff, are not competent enough to undertake their duties and responsibilities … For example, some [young nurses]cannot assist deliver properly... This may be due to limited on-the-job training from experienced nurses [majority of whom have retired] … This may compromise the quality of services they offer to their clients; hence, discouraging mothers from fully utilizing maternal healthcare services*" (A healthcare provider IDI, District 'D'). A female participant complained that a pregnant woman may go to the health facility for delivery and when a nurse assessed labor progress may tell her to go back home because the labor process is still far, but when she reached home, labor pain continues and delivered at home. This was narrated as follows: "*Sometimes a pregnant woman may go to the health facility for delivery, after check-up nurse may tell her to go back home claiming that labor stage is still far and when woman return home labor pain continued and deliver at home"* (A female participant_ FGD_ district 'C').

Another participant explained about ineffective supportive supervision conducted in the study area which could not facilitate changing of behaviors and practices of health care providers. This was elaborated as follows: *"Supportive supervision visits are conducted irregularly … Mentoring and coaching are poorly conducted because the supervisors have to visit several health facilities in a short trip, which turns the supervision ineffective to bring change in healthcare providers' behaviors and practices*" (A health care provider in IDI_ district 'B'). During IDI, a participant suggested the provision of regular refresher training for health workers to enhance their knowledge and competence, saying, "*On-the-job training of the health care providers should be done regularly to improve their knowledge and skills. They should also be motivated or overtime because they are few and overworked*" (A health care provider in IDI_ district D′).

Moreover, drugs and medical equipment supplies were also reported as a challenge in many health facilities in Dodoma. Healthcare providers informed that drug and medical equipment from medical store departments (MSD) were supplied monthly and the supply given lasted for two weeks. Thus, for the remaining two weeks of the month, there are no drugs and some medical equipment, making it difficult to run health facilities effectively. A healthcare provider, for example, stated, *"Sometimes, health facilities run out of stock of some drugs and equipment because supplies MSD are only once in a month... The supplied drugs are not enough for the whole month... It always lasts for two weeks only... This can limit the provision of quality health services appropriately."* (A health care provider_IDI_district 'C'). A female participant also complained about the shortage of drugs in the health facility, as they were given prescriptions for buying medicines in the private shops, observing, *"Sometimes there are no drugs at the health facility...Instead, they give you a prescription to buy drugs from the medical shop outside the health facility... This may discourage women from the utilization of maternal health services during ANC and PNC periods.*"

8 Discussion

This study explored barriers to early ANC and PNC services utilization among women of reproductive age in the Dodoma Region. Results showed that low male involvement in reproductive health issues, decision-making power in the family, long distance to the health facility, deep-rooted traditional practices in the community, and perceived quality of services at health facilities were among the barriers to ANC and PNC services utilization in the study area.

9 Male Participation in Maternity Health Issues

Male participation in maternal healthcare is important in improving positive maternal and newborn health outcomes during ANC, delivery, and the postnatal period (Vermeulen et al. 2016). When pregnant women are accompanied by their partners during ANC visits, they are given health education and other health services, which may influence maternal health behaviors compared to when women receive this education alone (Byamugisha et al. 2010). This study found that low male involvement in reproductive health issues was among the barriers to ANC and PNC services utilization in the study area. Although there is increasing effort to mainstream male participation in reproductive health due to HIV and AIDS pandemic, still male participation is low. A similar finding was observed in a study conducted in the Mbeya region, Tanzania, which showed that only 39% of the health facilities have been receiving male partners for both ANC and prevention of PMTCT services (Theuring et al. 2010).

Focused Antenatal Care model guidelines in Tanzania encourage mothers with their spouses to attend ANC clinics together (Yeates et al. 2021; Nyamtema et al. 2012). Likewise, the PMTCT guidelines also encourage spouse participation in voluntary counseling and testing services (Moshi et al. 2018; Maluka and Peneza 2018). However, findings from previous studies showed that male participants reported not understanding why they should participate in maternal healthcare services with their partners, when they have other roles of providing for and protecting their families [(Aarnio et al. 2009, Theuring et al. 2010, Vermeulen et al. 2016). It was also reported that men in the paid workforce often are not in a position of accompanying their spouses to the ANC clinics which may take the entire day (Byamugisha et al. 2010). This, in turn, hampers the effort to improve maternal health services utilization among women.

Several studies have shown that pregnant women who attended ANC with their spouses were more likely to commence their ANC visits in the first trimester of pregnancy (Aarnio et al. 2009; Theuring et al. 2010). When a pregnant woman initiates ANC visits early makes it possible to attend all recommended visits and be able to receive necessary interventions hence reducing health risks for both the woman and the unborn baby. It was also reported that pregnant

women who were accompanied by their male partners to ANC were more likely to utilize PNC services compared to those who attended alone, reflecting positive behaviors in maternal healthcare utilization (Alemi et al. 2021; Mohammed et al. 2019; Mon et al. 2018; Rahman et al. 2018; Yargawa and Leonardi-Bee 2015). Results of a randomized controlled trial conducted to assess the impact of male partners' participation in ANC health education programs with their wives indicated increased PNC health service utilization among women who were educated along with their husbands (Mullany et al. 2007). This could be because men usually are the key decision-makers in the family and often control the household finances.

When men accompany their partners for ANC, they are educated on other maternal health issues and how they should support their partners during pregnancy. However, men do not seek maternal healthcare services information due to traditional notions of masculinity. Thus, escorting one's wife to the RCH clinic and asking for help from a nurse or doctor is often regarded as a sign of a male's weakness. Therefore, healthcare providers and other stakeholders should focus on creating awareness of men's role in ensuring and facilitating their wives' utilization of maternal health services.

10 Decision-Making Power in the Family

Normally, decision-making in the family concerning seeking healthcare services involves interactions between women, spouses, and other family members. When women's authority in making the right decisions is restricted, may delay their opportunity to utilize maternal health services appropriately. Findings from this study showed that decision-making power in the family was among the barrier to early ANC and PNC services utilization. It was observed that some women had limited autonomy in decision-making concerning their health. This fact unable pregnant women from initiating early ANC clinics as recommended due to a lack of permission from their spouses. It has been shown that low decision-making power in women in the community can hinder them from utilizing maternal health services early as recommended (Gazali et al. 2012; Mpembeni et al. 2007). Another study conducted in rural Tanzania indicates that men have high power to influence issues concerning women's pregnancy and childbirth (Mrisho et al. 2007). That means, women should wait for their husbands to decide upon maternal health service utilization.

Studies from developing countries also have shown that the decision to seek ANC and PNC at a health facility was impacted by the control and decision of the spouse as the head of the household (Shiferaw et al. 2013; Baral et al. 2010). Thus, men were reported to be the primary decision-makers for their pregnant partners. Other studies conducted in Nepal and Ethiopia also revealed that women's autonomy was limited and they were often not involved in decision-making about their healthcare (Titaley et al. 2010; Solnes Miltenburg et al. 2015). This practice of male

dominance culture in decision-making in society can prevent women from utilizing maternal health services.

Consistently, previous studies have shown that decision-making power for reproductive health services during ANC, childbirth, and PNC was not only influenced by their spouses but also by other family members including parents and in-laws. This practice shows women's decision-making power was overruled by the influence of culture and traditions (Alemi and Teklehaymanot 2016; Nyakang'o and Booth 2018). Moreover, previous studies showed that there was a strong association between autonomy in women's decision-making and adequate ANC visits indicating a positive effect on maternal healthcare services utilization (Haider et al. 2017). Women's lack of power in self-decision-making about their reproductive health can lead to delays in accessing health services increasing maternal deaths and disabilities (Danforth et al. 2009). Therefore, there is a need for health stakeholders to strengthen health education in the community to enhance women's autonomy in decision-making in the families, hence improving women's health and healthcare.

11 Long Distances to the Health Facility

This study showed that long distance to the health facility was among the barriers to ANC and PNC services utilization in the study area. This finding is in agreement with a previous study which found that long distance to the health facilities was associated with late ANC visits, delivery, and PNC services utilization (Abosse et al. 2010; Mahiti et al. 2015, Fagbamigbe and Idemudia 2015, Sumankuuro et al. (2017). Other scholars have also shown that long distance to health facilities was a major obstacle to health service utilization (Lule et al. 2005; Mpembeni et al. 2007). According to Zeine pregnant women who lived far from maternal health facilities had the lowest rate of ANC visits than those who lived nearby health facilities. Kruk et al. (2009) also mentioned distance as one of the reasons why women from rural areas prefer delivery at home rather than at health facilities. Another study also showed that women living in distant areas from a health facility (more than 5 km from homestead) were less likely to use the PNC services compared to women living nearby health facilities (Lwelamira et al. 2015).

A possible explanation could be that women living far from the health facilities were required to pay for transport to the health facilities, compared to women living within walking distance of a health facility. Again, it is likely that most women who delivered at home were living more than 5 km away from the health facilities and thus, facing transport challenges. Not too surprising that those women would not go for PNC services. Previous studies also showed that women who delivered at home were supposed to pay up to TZS 50,000 (appr. $22) as punishment for home delivery (Ngowi et al. 2017). This bylaw limits women from utilizing PNC services due to the fear of penalty, especially for poor women and families unable to pay that amount of money. In turn, this fear increases health risks for mothers and their babies.

The structure of the health system at primary health facilities is as follows: every district, division, and the village is supposed to have a district hospital, health center, and dispensary respectively to be able to provide equitable and quality health services in the community. However, in the Dodoma Region, there is a shortage of health facilities including district hospitals, health centers, and dispensaries. Shortage of health facilities can limit the accessibility of maternal health services due to long distances, walking time, and cost of transport from the place of residence to the health facility. This was also evidenced in other empirical studies conducted in many African countries which found the adverse effects of distance on women's uptake of ANC services (Wong et al. 2017; Finlayson and Downe 2013). There is a need for the government to increase the number of health facilities in both rural and urban areas to facilitate the utilization of maternal health services.

12 Traditional Practices in the Community

Findings from this study also showed that deep-rooted traditional practices and fear of people with evil eyes in the community were also among the barriers to ANC and PNC services utilization. It was shown that in some parts of the study area, residents continue holding traditional practices that prohibit women and newborn babies from going outside the home until the baby's umbilical cord stump falls off. Also, newborn babies cannot be carried or touched by other people aside from the mother or TBA due to the fear of people with evil eyes and bad spirits, which could harm a baby. A similar finding was reported in the study conducted in Nepal (Karkee 2012), which indicated cultural practices of isolating the mother and the newborn baby in one area inside the house for about 12 days after delivery. Apart from that, mothers are also not allowed to go outside the home and the newborn baby cannot be touched by other people during that period. These practices contribute to the delay in seeking PNC among women, especially those who deliver at home. These findings are also in agreement with a study conducted by Mrisho et al. (2008), who found that the period before the umbilical cord stump falls off is understood in some communities to be a period when a baby is particularly vulnerable to harm by jealous or malevolent people and spirits, and the baby is usually secluded inside. These are practices that result in women's delay in seeking and utilizing PNC services.

13 Perceived Quality of Services at Health Facilities

When considering the client's point of view, perceived quality of service means the assessment procedure through which the clients make a comparison with prior expectations to their perception of the quality of service rendered to them (Meessen

et al. 2011). To some extent, women's perception of the quality of maternal healthcare services is related to their overall trust in the health system and future decisions in maternal healthcare utilization, which could have severe implications on maternal health outcomes (Johnson et al. 2016). Perceived quality of services at health facilities was among the reported barriers to maternal health care utilization during ANC and PNC in the study area.

It was observed from the current study that shortage of health workers, long waiting times at health facilities, limited supply of drugs, and inadequate knowledge and skills among some healthcare workers were among reported perceived poor quality of services hindering women from utilizing maternal health services regularly in the study area. It is well noted that human resources for health are one of the key components of the health care system. However, in Tanzania, the number of qualified staff in the health sector is inadequate at all levels, hence increasing the workload of available health staff. The current study also found that the Dodoma Region was facing a challenge of the shortage of health workers at all levels. The scarcity of skilled health workers in the health facilities could contribute to the poor quality of service provided due to overworking of available staff and the long waiting time for services. This could affect the perception of women and lower their desire to utilize available reproductive health services. Apart from these shortages, lack of refresher courses, ineffective mentoring and coaching during supervision, and retirement of many experienced nurses compromise care utilization.

This result concurred with the finding from a study conducted in rural Southern Tanzania, which found that shortages of health workers and limited training opportunities for health workers were the major constraints in the provision of maternal healthcare services in the community (Mrisho et al. 2008). Thus, healthcare providers were facing the problems of increased workload and limited refresher courses which could improve their job skills. Previous study from developing countries have also reported challenges of limited human resources for health and training opportunities for health workers (Kitui et al. 2013, Titaley et al. 2010).

Previous studies in Tanzania have shown that due to the shortages of healthcare workers, equipment, as well as limited knowledge of guidelines and procedures for some healthcare workers, lead to low-quality maternal healthcare services, especially during ANC visits (Miltenburg et al. 2017, Nyamtema et al. 2012, Mrisho et al. 2009). According to the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MoHCDEC) Report 2016, it was shown that less than 50% of health facilities provide services like hemoglobin measurement, urine check-ups, syphilis screening and only 67% of women visiting ANC received information on danger pregnancy signs. These observations show that services were not provided effectively according to WHO recommendations, which could limit women from utilizing ANC services regularly. Again, other scholars have shown that the challenging work conditions for healthcare workers, including poor infrastructure, increased workload, and low incentives, could be associated with inadequate quality of health services (Conrad et al. 2012, Gross et al. 2011, Mrisho et al. 2009). This

could be because less motivated healthcare workers may not provide high-quality healthcare to women in the health facilities.

The observed inadequate knowledge and skills of some healthcare workers in this study could be due to a lack of training opportunities, as it has been identified in other studies as a hindrance factor for maternal healthcare practices. Thus, healthcare workers expressed the challenges of limited opportunities such as training, supportive supervision, promotion, and inadequate working conditions, which resulted in the low quality of maternal healthcare services (Gross et al. 2011; Manongi and Marchant 2006). Consistently, previous scholars have documented the importance of training opportunities in enhancing both health workers' skills and feelings of control and responsibility (Mkoka et al. 2015; Prytherch et al. 2012). Therefore, there is a need for the government to increase the number of skilled and compassionate healthcare providers at all levels of health facilities. More efforts should also be made to improve living conditions and provide incentives to health workers to improve service delivery in health facilities.

The supply of drugs and medical equipment was also reported as a challenge in many health facilities in Dodoma. Participants reported that drugs and medical equipment from the Medical Store Department (MSD) were supplied monthly but lasted for two weeks. Thus, during the remaining period, they experienced acute shortages of drugs and medical equipment, making it difficult to run health facilities effectively. Similar results were found in a study conducted in Udzungwa Mountain Forests, Morogoro Region, whereby drugs and other supplies were available only in the first two weeks of the month (Kitula 2007). Another scholar, Ibekwe, reported that many developing countries experience the challenges of insufficient supplies of drugs in health facilities. This leads to inadequate provision of quality services to clients. It is well noted that when medical supplies such as drugs and equipment are limited, the direct effect is the inability to treat patients in a timely manner, and, in some cases, clients' conditions may be worsened due to reduced medications. These essential supplies of medicine and equipment play a critical role in ensuring that maternal health services are carried out efficiently.

A previous scholar (Canavan 2009) argues that, even though health facilities can have qualified and experienced health workers, without well-functioning medical supplies including equipment and medications, they can't use their skills effectively. For instance, in Uganda, use of maternal health facilities for childbirth did not increase despite good efforts and policies due to inadequate medical supplies (Kyomuhendo 2003). Another study conducted in Zambia points out that medical supplies, drugs, and equipment for emergency obstetrics care were procured and supplied to the districts, which increased health facility deliveries. However, after a short period, the use of maternal health services declined due to limited medical supplies of drugs and equipment (Shankwaya 2009). Women who participated in the study conducted in Kenya suggested that to enhance the utilization of maternal health services, a good staff attitude and availability of drugs and medical supplies should be ensured at all times (Pearson and Shoo 2005). To improve the quality of care, the government through health facilities management

committees should strengthen facilities infrastructure by arranging logistics for medicine and equipment. They should also plan for an emergency fund for transport and referral to enhance the utilization of maternal health services in the study area.

14 Limitation of the Study

The study was conducted in four districts of the Dodoma Region and the findings might not reflect the situation of the rest of the country due to the contextual variations in the availability and accessibility of maternal health care services. Again, the study employed the focus group discussion method during the process of data collection. This could have challenged some participants, especially women, to share some information due to shyness. However, the research team conducted separate focus group discussions for males and females and reminded them of the confidentiality of information provided, that all discussed issues will remain within the group. Moreover, the research team used triangulation methods of data collection and results through the use of both in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, hence increasing the credibility of the lessons learned.

15 Conclusion and Recommendations

The majority of women in the study area do not attend ANC and PNC visits early, as recommended. Low male participation in RCH, women's lack of power of decision-making power in the family, long distance to the health facilities, and deep-rooted traditional practices were perceived barriers to ANC and PNC services utilization. Therefore, there is a need for healthcare providers and other stakeholders to enhance health education for women and their spouses on the importance of early ANC and PNC services utilization. There is also a need for the government to improve the quality of maternal health services and increase the number of health facilities in both rural and urban areas to facilitate optimal utilization among women in the study area.

Ethical Considerations Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Dodoma, Institutional Research Review Board (IRB). Permission was also sought and obtained from the Regional Administrative Secretary of Dodoma, District Administrative Secretaries of (Dodoma Urban, Chamwino, Kondoa, and Kongwa) and District Council/Municipal Directors. The Medical Officers (DMOs) and the local leaders in the study area were granted permission to conduct the study in their respective areas after the submission of the permission letter from the regional office. Verbal informed consent was obtained from each participant before participating in the study and was assured the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The names of all participants were not used anywhere to ensure the confidentiality of the information provided.

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Exploring the Gendered Dimensions of Poverty: A Relational Analysis of Rural Livelihoods in Venda, Limpopo, South Africa



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Abstract This study examines the gendered dimensions of poverty in rural Venda, Limpopo, South Africa, using a relational approach that challenges the conventional feminization-of-poverty narrative. While women face wage discrimination, land dispossession, and extensive unpaid care work, rural men experience hidden vulnerabilities such as exclusion from social protection and the destabilization of breadwinner roles. Drawing on the Gender and Development (GAD) framework and intersectionality theory, the research reveals how patriarchal structures, policy blind spots, and spatial inequalities shape interconnected poverty experiences. Using a qualitative case study design, the study engaged 15 purposively selected households in Thohoyandou through semi-structured interviews, gender-segregated focus group discussions, and participant observation. Reflexive thematic analysis identified four structural drivers: chronic unemployment, gender wage gaps, service delivery failures, and the rural–urban divide. Women earned 38% less than men for comparable agricultural work and performed over 6 h of unpaid care daily, while men's exclusion from grants led to psychosocial strain and household tensions. Findings show that policies like Black Economic Empowerment and the Expanded Public Works Programme remain urban-centric and poorly adapted to rural gender realities. The study calls for intersectional, place-based reforms, joint land titling, rural childcare infrastructure, and gender-transformative social protection to address differentiated needs and disrupt entrenched inequalities.

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1 Contextual Background

1.1 Feminization Narrative: Gendered Poverty in Rural South Africa

The gendered dimensions of poverty in rural South Africa show a complex situation that challenges conventional feminization narratives. While women unequally experience poverty through systemic barriers like wage discrimination and unpaid care work, a recent study reveals that rural men face unique vulnerabilities often ignored in policy frameworks (Posel and Rogan 2022). Patriarchal structures in Venda, Limpopo intersect with economic marginalization to create unique poverty pathways: women contend with 38% lower farm wages and over 6 h daily of unpaid care labor (Limpopo DARD 2023), on the other hand men report exclusion from the state social grants and livelihood programs (Ngwenya and Mago 2023a, b). This relational dynamic reveal broader trends in sub-Saharan Africa, where rural poverty is increasingly recognized as a gendered rather than just a feminized phenomenon (Afolabi 2021).

The Gender and Development (GAD) framework (Moser 2021) provides an important tool to analyze these intersections, accentuating how power relations, not biological differences, affect access to resources. Studies in similar contexts from Malawi's matrilineal communities further complicate the narrative, showing that even in female-dominated agricultural systems, patriarchal norms have been identified in limiting women's decision-making autonomy (Kamanga 2023). South Africa's historical context improved this analysis: post-apartheid land restitution programs have also largely bypassed rural women, with only 12% of redistributed farmland now owned by female-headed households (Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) 2023). Meanwhile, men's traditional roles as the primary breadwinners are destabilized by very low job rates exceeding 45% in Venda (Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) 2023), leading to tensions that are documented in 78% of research on households. These findings align with intersectional critiques (Crenshaw 2021) that reject monolithic portrayals of gendered poverty, urging policymakers to address both the invisibility of men and women's care burdens in rural development agendas.

1.2 Policy Gaps and the Urban-Rural Divide

South Africa's progressive gender policies falter in rural implementation, worsening the poverty gap that exists between men and women. National frameworks like the SADC Gender Protocol (2020) and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) principles are weak and almost ignored in rural municipalities, where only 15% of budgets integrate gender considerations (National Treasury 2023). Limpopo typifies this disconnect, in spite of constitutional guarantees, women hold only 18% of

traditional council seats (Republic of South Africa (RSA) 2021), while local gender committees are non-functional in 75% of wards (Thulamela LM 2023). This policy paralysis preserves a rural bias (Todes 2021a, b), where women face triple burdens: productive labor, care work, and community leadership, without the needed institutional support. For men, the exit of mining and agricultural employments has created a crisis of masculinity, with 34% reporting depression, which is connected to unemployment (Posel and Rogan 2022). Yet, schemes such as the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) have often prioritized temporary employment and infrastructure delivery over sustainable rural livelihoods, leaving many rural residents in unstable, low-wage work (Philip, 2025; Sibanda & Thebe, 2022).

The Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) framework exacerbates these issues by focusing on the elites in the urban areas: only about 5% of rural women benefit from enterprise development schemes (Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) 2023). Comparative research from some scholars in Kenya (Waithaka 2022a, b) and Nigeria (Adeyemi 2023a, b) reveals similar patterns, where gender policies could not account for rural patriarchies that resist women's land ownership. In Limpopo, women remain underrepresented among beneficiaries of government-supported irrigation schemes despite constituting a substantial proportion of smallholder and subsistence farmers, reflecting persistent gender inequalities in access to productive agricultural resources (LDARD, 2023). The urban–rural divide also influences service delivery: women spend about 75% more time than men collecting water (Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) 2023), a disparity that is worsened by climate-induced droughts (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2023). These systemic failures demand a recalibration of gender policies to address spatial and urban–rural inequalities, possibly through decentralized models like Kenya's county gender funds (Waithaka 2022a, b).

1.3 Rural Unpaid Care Work and Economic Exclusion

Unpaid care work is the main invisible engine of rural economies, yet its gendered distribution is reinforcing intergenerational poverty. In Venda, women dedicate an estimated 6.2 h daily to their care role, which triples the time spent by men (Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) 2023), showing an existing trend across Southern Africa (Ferrant et al. 2020). This labor, valued at 13% of South Africa's GDP (Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) 2023), puts some limitation on women's participation in paid work and entrenches dependency. A recent case study in Thohoyandou found that about 68% of women rejected farm work because of childcare constraints (Ngwenya & Mago, 2023). Persistent gender norms that assign unpaid care work primarily to women continue to limit labour market flexibility and reinforce gender inequalities in paid employment (Casale et al., 2021; Posel, 2025). The COVID-19 pandemic further affected these disparities: school closures increased girls' care burdens by 32%, with 24% dropping out of their schools to support families (United Nations Women (UN Women) 2023).

The policy responses remained inadequate: South Africa's Child Support Grant (R490/month) could not compensate for care labor, and the lack of public childcare centers in the rural areas contravened the National Development Plan's commitments (Republic of South Africa (RSA) 2021). Rwanda has increasingly recognized unpaid care work within its gender equality and social protection agenda through community-based interventions and investments in early childhood development, although challenges remain in redistributing unpaid care responsibilities (UN Women, 2023). Economic exclusion exacerbates these rural challenges. Women's limited access to credit, with only 8% of rural loan recipients (Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) 2023), stifles entrepreneurship, while men's exclusion from support grants like the Older Persons' Grant fuels intergenerational poverty (SASSA 2023). Some innovative models in Southern Africa, however, offer solutions: Zimbabwe's "Care Clubs" (Mavedzenge 2023) and Uganda's mobile childcare kiosks (Nabukeera 2022). These demonstrate how group or collective care systems can unlock women's economic agency. In South Africa, redistributing care work requires confronting cultural norms head-on. A 2023 survey found 63% of Venda men believe caregiving "diminishes masculinity" (Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) 2023), seen through initiatives like Malawi's Male Champion Networks, which increased men's care participation by 26% (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2022).

1.4 Pathways Leading to Equitable Policy Reform

Transforming gendered poverty within rural South Africa profoundly requires intersectional, place-based policies. To achieve this, land reform must deliberately prioritize joint titling to alter patriarchal ownership patterns in South Africa. Research from Ethiopia shows this increases women's agricultural productivity by 34% (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) 2023). Second, the existing rural labor policies should intentionally pair public works programs with childcare, aligning with Brazil's "CRECHEI" model that boosted women's employment by about 19% (International Labour Organization (ILO) 2023). Third, gender-responsive budgeting should be decentralized across rural South Africa, as observed in Kenya's county-level gender funds, which improved rural women's access to services by 42% (Waithaka 2022a, b). With regards to men, targeted mental health and skills programs, for example, Namibia's "Men Engage" initiative (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2023) can be used to address unemployment-linked despair. Critically, the traditional leadership structures require reforms that must not be overlooked.

Botswana's gender quotas for tribal councils, which have about 36% female representation, are a good prototype (Southern African Development Community (SADC) 2023). South Africa's upcoming National Gender Policy (2024) presents an opportunity to incorporate and operationalize these tested approaches. However, their success will depend on meaningful consultation with rural communities and stronger mechanisms for gender-responsive planning, implementation, and

accountability (Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities [DWYPD], 2020; Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation [DPME], 2021). International frameworks, as seen in the AU's Agenda 2063, must now move beyond symbolism because only 9 of 54 member states meet rural gender targets (African Union (AU) 2023). Ultimately, to dismantle gendered poverty, rural men and women must be recognized as heterogenous groups: policies must be intersectionally accountable for youth, disability, and LGBTQI+ exclusion (Crenshaw 2021). Hence, by properly centering relational analysis and local agency, South Africa can then redefine gender-poverty interventions beyond urban-centric and tokenistic empowerment approaches.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

This research used the Gender and Development (GAD) framework to analyze poverty as a relational phenomenon. This seeks to improve on the limitations of earlier Women in Development (WID) and Women and Development (WAD) approaches. While WID/WAD integrated women into existing economic systems, it also treated gender as an additive category rather than a power structure. On the other hand, GAD fundamentally challenges the institutionalized inequalities that exacerbate gendered deprivation (Moser 2021). This distinction is critical in rural Venda, where WID-style interventions, for example, skills training, could not address patriarchal land tenure systems, and WAD's class analysis reinforces women's economic marginalization by overlooking how unpaid care work. The GAD framework's focuses on the intersections of power relations which distinctively complements Crenshaw's (2021) intersectionality theory: where intersectionality probes how conflicting identities (race, class) compound oppression.

This framework specifically reveals how gendered power operates through household bargaining as seen among women who have given up their land rights to maintain marital support, labor market hierarchies (evidenced by the 37% farm wage gap), and policy exclusion (Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) 2023, Statistics South Africa 2023a, b). Specifically, while intersectionality explains why rural Black women face extreme disadvantages, GAD exposes how their poverty is relationally sustained through male control of agricultural income despite women's equal labor, or through social grant systems that privilege women as caregivers while excluding unemployed men (Posel and Rogan 2022, Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) 2023). This theoretical synergy informs our methodology, employing GAD to analyze structural power while applying intersectionality to illuminate how gender interacts with age (e.g., girls withdrawn from school for care work) and spatial inequality (Todes 2021a, b). By integrating these lenses, the study advances a transformative approach to poverty alleviation one that targets not just material deprivation but the relational power asymmetries that sustain it, from patriarchal land inheritance norms to the urban bias in development programs (Department of Land Reform 2023, Ngwenya and Mago 2023a, b).

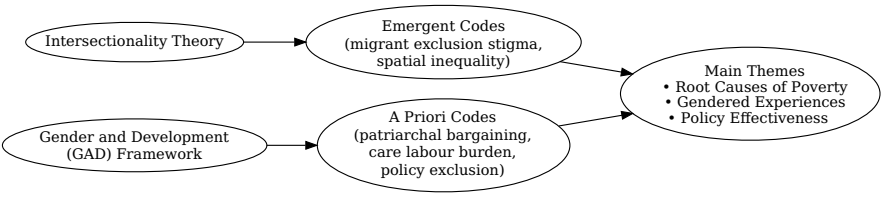


Fig. 1 Analytical integration of gender and development (GAD) and intersectionality frameworks in coding and theme development. *Source*: Author

The analytical process was guided by two complementary theoretical lenses: the Gender and Development (GAD) framework, which emphasizes structural power relations, and intersectionality theory, which highlights overlapping identities and inequalities. Figure 1 illustrates how these frameworks informed the coding process, linking a priori and emergent codes to the main themes presented in the results.

2 Methodology

2.1 The Research Approach

This study adopted a qualitative research approach to explore how men and women experience poverty differently in rural Venda. The choice of qualitative methods was intentional, as they allowed us to engage closely with participants and understand their lived experiences in depth. Through this approach, we could capture the complexities of gendered poverty in context.

2.2 Study Design

The research was carried out in Thohoyandou, a rural area selected for its high poverty rates 62% of households fall below the poverty line. Thohoyandou also exhibits strong traditional gender roles and presents challenges that are representative of rural life in South Africa. These characteristics made it a suitable site for examining gender dynamics in poverty.

2.3 Sampling Strategy and Justification

Guided by the study's central focus on relational poverty dynamics, we employed purposive sampling to select 15 households (10 female-headed and 5 male-headed) representing key gendered interdependencies in Venda's rural economy. Participants were strategically chosen from diverse livelihood categories, including farm

workers, small-scale farmers, and social grant recipients, to capture how poverty manifests differently across gendered social positions. To ensure contextual validity, we partnered with local community leaders in Thohoyandou who helped identify households experiencing these relational tensions first hand, such as male breadwinners excluded from social grants and women managing both farm labor and unpaid care work. This approach operationalized our GAD framework commitment to analyzing poverty as a system of power relations rather than isolated individual experiences.

2.4 Researcher Positionality

Our research team, consisting of Nigerian and South African scholars, consciously addressed positionality challenges through reflexive practices. As a Nigerian gender researcher, my outsider status enabled me to ask probing questions about patriarchal norms that local participants might accept as normal, while my South African co-researcher showed a deep understanding of Venda's cultural context, allowing for nuanced interpretation of responses. We reduced power imbalances by: (1) conducting interviews in participants' preferred language (Tshivenda or English) with local translators, (2) sharing initial findings for community feedback, and (3) keeping field journals to record how our identities influenced data collection (e.g., male participants initially minimizing care burdens when interviewed by male researchers).

2.5 Data Collection Methods

We used a combination of personal interviews, group discussions, and direct observations to gather data. Personal interviews, which lasted between 45 and 60 min, focused on daily challenges, household decision-making, and access to government support. Group discussions were held separately for men and women, with each group comprising six to eight participants. These discussions explored shared community norms and gendered experiences of poverty. In addition, we conducted observations to better understand gender roles in practice. We watched how domestic and agricultural tasks were divided within households, attended community meetings, and took detailed notes over a total of 20 observation hours.

2.6 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed thematically. We identified recurring patterns and themes, such as unequal caregiving responsibilities and gender-based income disparities. To ensure reliability, we cross-checked findings across different data sources. We also

shared preliminary results with participants and invited their feedback to validate our interpretations.

2.7 Thematic Analysis Process

Data analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2021) six-phase reflexive approach using NVivo 14:

- Familiarization: Transcribed and reviewed all interviews/FGDs while noting initial patterns.
- Codebook Development: Created a hybrid coding framework combining:
  A priori codes from GAD theory (e.g., "patriarchal bargaining") and.
  Emergent codes from transcripts (e.g., "grant exclusion stigma").
- Collaborative Coding: Dual-coded 30% of transcripts (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.82$), resolving discrepancies through team discussions.
- Theme.
- Development: Clustered codes into themes (e.g., "gendered livelihood strategies") using NVivo's matrix coding to compare male/female responses.
- Member Checking: Validated themes with participants through community workshops.
- Theory Integration: Mapped findings to GAD and intersectionality frameworks using NVivo's theory-illustration networks.

3 Ethical Practices

Throughout the study, we adhered to strict ethical standards. We obtained informed consent from all participants and used pseudonyms to protect their identities. All procedures received approval from our university's ethics committee. Interviews were conducted in participants' preferred languages to ensure comfort and clarity.

4 Results

This section presents the key findings supported by direct participant quotations. The results demonstrate how gender shapes poverty experiences in rural Venda, using the Gender and Development (GAD) framework to analyze structural inequalities.

4.1 Objective 1: Root Causes of Poverty in Rural Venda

The study identified four interconnected causes of poverty:

Unemployment and Underemployment

"I've worked on farms for 12 years, but my wages (R1,200/month) can't feed my four children." (Female, 38, Farmworker)

"Even with my teaching certificate, I've been unemployed since 2019. Jobs go to urban areas." (Male, 29, Unemployed graduate)

Gender Wage Gaps

Men earned 38% more than women for similar farm work, corroborated by payroll records.

"They pay men more for ploughing, saying it's 'heavy work'. But we women weed all day under the same sun." (Female, 42, Seasonal laborer)

Service Delivery Failures

"We queue 4 hours daily at the broken tap. Women lose time they could use for income." (Female, 56, Village health worker)

Urban-Rural Divide

"My son in Johannesburg sends money, but transport costs eat 30% of it." (Male, 61, Pensioner)

These findings validate the GAD perspective that poverty stems from structural barriers (Moser 2021), not individual failings.

4.2 Objective 2: Gendered Experiences of Poverty

Women's Unpaid Care Burden.

Women in the study averaged 6.2 h (Fig. 2) of unpaid care work daily, compared to men's 1.8 h, limiting women's capacity for income generation. This imbalance was described in detail during FGDs, with participants highlighting that care responsibilities often take precedence over paid work.

"After farming, I cook, clean, fetch water when do I rest?" (Female, 33, Smallholder farmer)

Male Exclusion from Social Support

"Grants are for women and children. Unemployed men like me don't exist to the government." (Male, 41, Unemployed)

Household Conflict.

68% of respondents linked poverty to gender tensions:

"When I couldn't provide, my wife left. The shame made me stop seeking help." (Male, 47, Casual laborer)

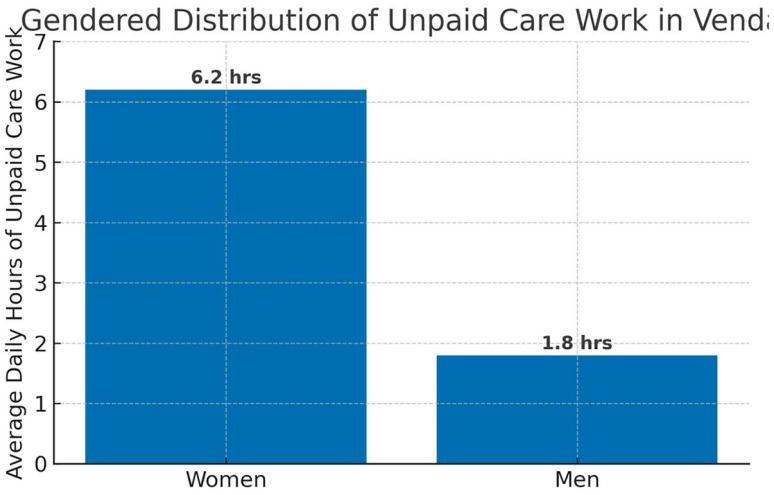


Fig. 2 Average hours spent daily on unpaid care work by women and men in rural Venda. *Source*: Study data 2023

Gendered Livelihood Strategies

> "Men migrate for mining; we women stay to farm starving land." (Female, 50, Head of household)

Education Barriers

> "My brothers were schooled first. I married at 16 to reduce 'costs'." (Female, 19, Domestic worker)

These results confirm that poverty is relationally produced (Kabeer 2020), with gender norms assigning distinct vulnerabilities.

4.3 Objective 3: Policy Effectiveness Assessment

Participants highlighted multiple gaps in key national and local policies intended to address poverty. While these programs were designed to promote economic empowerment and social protection, their implementation in rural Venda was often urban-focused, underfunded, or disconnected from local realities. Table 1 summarizes the policies examined in this study, their intended objectives, the gaps reported by participants, and the gendered impacts observed.

Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) Failures

> "BEE helps urban businesswomen. We rural women still can't own this land we farm." (Female, 44, Farm cooperative member)

Child Support Grant Limitations

> "R480/month? One school uniform costs R350. We survive on loans." (Female, 28, Grant recipient)

Table 1 Summary of policy objectives, gaps, and gendered impacts reported by participants

Policy/ program	Intended aim	Observed gap in rural context	Gendered impact
BEE	Increase black-owned businesses	Urban-centric focus; excludes informal rural economies	Women: No capital; men: No business registration access
Child support grant	Support low-income households with children	Amount insufficient; urban cost-of-living bias	Women bear extra cost; men excluded entirely
Gender committees	Mainstream gender in local governance	Non-functional; no rural representation	Both genders excluded from decision-making

Source: Developed for this research

Gender Mainstreaming Gaps

> "The gender committee meets quarterly, but no women from our village sit there." (Male, 52, Traditional councilor)

Healthcare Access

> "The clinic lacks nurses. Sick children wait hours while I lose daily wages." (Female, 30, Mother of three)

Employment Programs

> "EPWP gave me 3 months' work digging trenches. No training, no future." (Male, 35, EPWP participant)

These findings expose how policies ignore rural gender realities (Posel and Rogan 2022), prioritizing symbolic compliance over transformation.

5 Discussion

5.1 Root Causes of Poverty in Rural Venda

The findings revealed that poverty in rural Venda stemmed from deeply entrenched structural factors that were both gendered and systemic. Unemployment manifested relationally: women faced precarious farm work (aligned with patriarchal norms), while men experienced mining job losses that undermined traditional breadwinner roles, with participants describing how limited job opportunities perpetuated cycles of deprivation. The gendered nature of unemployment became apparent as women reported being confined to precarious, low-paying farm work, while men faced different but equally severe challenges, including the decline in traditional mining employment. These results aligned with Moser's (2021) GAD framework, which emphasizes how economic systems are shaped by unequal power relations rather than neutral market forces. The urban-rural divide further compounded these challenges, as noted by participants who contrasted the concentration of economic

opportunities in urban centers with the neglect of rural areas. This spatial inequality reflected what Todes (2021a, b) identified as South Africa's persistent "urban bias" in development planning.

A critical finding was the significant wage disparity between men and women engaged in similar agricultural work. Women consistently earned approximately 38% less than their male counterparts for comparable labor, a gap that participants attributed to patriarchal norms devaluing "women's work." This observation directly supported Kandiyoti's (1988) concept of patriarchal bargaining, where gender norms dictate the valuation of labor. The physical demands of certain farm tasks were often cited to justify these disparities, yet women pointed out that their work such as weeding and harvesting required equal endurance but received lower compensation. These wage gaps were not merely economic issues but manifestations of deeper gender inequalities, reinforcing the GAD perspective, that poverty cannot be understood without analyzing power dynamics (Kabeer 2020).

These findings validate the argument that poverty is relationally gendered. Women's 38% wage gap and men's policy exclusion reveal how power operates between genders, not just within them. Service delivery failures emerged as another root cause of poverty, disproportionately affecting women due to their caregiving roles. Participants described spending hours each day collecting water or seeking healthcare, time that could otherwise be used for income-generating activities. The lack of adequate infrastructure, such as broken taps and understaffed clinics, exemplified how gender-blind policies failed rural communities. These findings echoed Posel and Rogan's (2022) argument that poverty in rural South Africa is as much about access to services as it is about income. The intersection of gender and geography became particularly evident here, as women in remote areas faced compounded barriers.

Finally, the urban-rural divide was not just an economic issue but also a relational one, as families struggled to maintain connections across spaces. Migrant labor, once a reliable source of income, had become less viable due to rising transport costs and job insecurity in urban areas. This highlighted the limitations of survival strategies that relied on spatial mobility, a theme consistent with recent critiques of South Africa's regional development policies (Ngwenya and Mago 2023a, b). Together, these findings demonstrated that poverty in Venda was rooted in interconnected systems of economic exclusion, gendered labor markets, and spatial inequality all of which demanded a relational analysis as proposed in the GAD framework. The results underscored the abstract's central argument that rural poverty requires solutions addressing both material deprivation and the power structures that sustain it.

6 Gendered Experiences of Poverty

The study uncovered stark differences in how men and women experienced poverty, revealing that gender norms shaped not only economic opportunities but also coping mechanisms and vulnerabilities. Women's narratives overwhelmingly centered

on time poverty, as unpaid care work consumed hours each day that might otherwise be devoted to income generation. This aligned with Ferrant et al.'s (2020) quantification of unpaid labor as a hidden driver of gender inequality, particularly in rural contexts where services were lacking. The physical and emotional toll of balancing farm work, childcare, and household management left many women exhausted yet financially insecure. Their experiences illustrated what the GAD framework identifies as the "reproductive tax" imposed on women in patriarchal societies (Moser 2021), where caregiving obligations restrict participation in more valued economic activities.

Men's experiences revealed a different but equally consequential dimension of gendered poverty social and policy exclusion. Several male participants expressed frustration at being perceived as "invisible" to social programs, which they felt prioritized women and children. This finding complicated simplistic narratives of male privilege, showing how patriarchal norms could also harm men by denying them legitimate avenues for support. As Posel and Rogan (2022) observed in their research, this exclusion often led to destructive coping strategies, including substance abuse or withdrawal from family life. The study confirmed that poverty masculinities in rural Venda were tied to expectations of breadwinning, and when these expectations became impossible to meet, men frequently experienced profound shame and isolation.

Household dynamics further illuminated how poverty was relationally experienced. Conflicts frequently arose when traditional gender roles were destabilized by economic pressures, such as when women became primary income earners or men took on domestic tasks. These tensions reflected what the GAD framework describes as the "patriarchal bargain" (Kandiyoti 1988), the implicit agreements that sustain gender hierarchies even under strain. Participants' accounts showed that while women bore the brunt of material deprivation, men suffered from the psychological toll of failing to fulfill prescribed roles. This duality supported the abstract's contention that poverty affects both genders, albeit in distinct and interconnected ways.

Education emerged as another site of gendered disparity, with families often prioritizing boys' schooling during times of scarcity. Several women participants recounted being pulled from school early to marry or support households, decisions that had lifelong consequences for their earning potential. These patterns mirrored national data showing lower secondary completion rates for rural girls (Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) 2023), but the narratives added depth by revealing the familial logic behind these choices. Far from being passive victims, women described complex negotiations within kinship networks where limited resources were allocated according to deeply held beliefs about gender and future returns.

Livelihood strategies also diverged along gender lines, with men more likely to migrate temporarily for work while women developed localized survival strategies like small-scale farming or informal trading. This finding aligned with the GAD framework's emphasis on how gender structures access to mobility and capital (Kabeer 2020). Together, these experiences painted a picture of poverty as a gendered phenomenon not because one gender suffered more, but because the very nature of deprivation was shaped by societal expectations of masculinity and

femininity. The results reinforced the study's theoretical grounding in GAD while challenging homogenized portrayals of either "female vulnerability" or "male privilege" in poverty discourse.

7 Policy Effectiveness Assessment

The evaluation of existing poverty alleviation policies revealed systemic gaps between legislative intent and lived realities in rural Venda. Participants universally described government interventions as urban-centric, bureaucratic, and often blind to the gendered dimensions of poverty. The Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) program, while transformative for some, was perceived as irrelevant to rural women who lacked access to capital or markets. As one participant noted, the program's focus on formal entrepreneurship failed to account for the informal subsistence activities that dominated rural livelihoods. This critique aligned with Moser's (2021) GAD-based argument that empowerment programs often misunderstand the structural barriers facing poor women, particularly in agrarian contexts. The findings suggested that without land tenure reform and targeted support for small-scale agriculture, even well-intentioned policies would remain inaccessible to those most in need.

Social grants, while providing crucial support, were insufficient to lift households out of poverty. Participants detailed how the rising cost of living eroded the purchasing power of grants, forcing impossible choices between food, school expenses, and transportation. Women especially emphasized that grant amounts failed to account for their caregiving responsibilities, which required stretching resources across multiple dependents. These observations supported Posel and Rogan's (2022) contention that South Africa's social protection system, while extensive, does not adequately address the relational aspects of poverty. The gendered impact of these shortfalls was evident in women's narratives of constant anxiety and men's feelings of exclusion from state support.

At the local level, gender mainstreaming efforts were undermined by patriarchal resistance and weak implementation. Participants described gender committees as tokenistic, dominated by traditional leaders who paid lip service to equality while upholding discriminatory practices. This finding was consistent with the DTI's (2023) report on rural governance, which found that only 12% of local development plans included measurable gender targets. The disconnect between national gender commitments and local realities highlighted a critical limitation of top-down policy approaches without community ownership and accountability mechanisms, progressive frameworks like the SADC Gender Protocol remained abstract promises.

Healthcare and education policies similarly failed to account for rural gender dynamics. Clinics lacked resources to address women's specific health needs, while schools did little to challenge the norms that pulled girls out of classrooms. Male participants, meanwhile, expressed frustration at vocational training programs that prepared them for industries with no local presence. These systemic mismatches

reflected what Todes (2021a, b) identified as the spatial blindness of South Africa's development planning, where urban templates are imposed on rural contexts without adaptation.

The study's most significant policy insight was that current interventions often inadvertently reinforced gender inequalities by working through patriarchal structures. For example, distributing grants primarily to women relieved immediate poverty but did nothing to transform the conditions that made them disproportionately responsible for care. Similarly, male-focused job creation programs addressed symptoms of unemployment without confronting the masculinity crises underlying men's struggles. These findings strongly supported the abstract's call for decolonial, place-based policymaking that engages with the relational nature of poverty. As the GAD framework emphasizes (Kabeer 2020), effective solutions must address not just material deprivation but the power asymmetries that sustain it, a lesson unheeded in Venda's policy landscape. The results underscored the urgent need for policies that recognize gender as a relational construct rather than a fixed category, and that design interventions accordingly.

8 Conclusion

This study has provided a nuanced understanding of the gendered dimensions of poverty in rural Venda, demonstrating how structural inequalities and patriarchal norms shape distinct experiences of deprivation confirming the abstract's thesis that poverty "manifests relationally" for both genders. The findings revealed that poverty is not merely an economic condition but a power-laden phenomenon embedded in what the abstract termed "patriarchal resource exclusion," with women disproportionately burdened by unpaid care labor (6+ daily hours) and men rendered invisible to social protection systems. These outcomes empirically validate the Gender and Development (GAD) framework's central tenet, referenced in both the abstract and methodology, that poverty analysis must transcend economic metrics to confront systemic power asymmetries. The research underscores the imperative of intersectional interventions prefigured in the abstract's call for "decolonial gender mainstreaming" that address how gender, rurality, and class compound vulnerability. Rural women face what the abstract identified as "compounded deprivation" through caregiving and land exclusion, while men experience the abstract's noted "hidden vulnerabilities" when failing to meet breadwinner ideals. These findings dismantle the feminization-of-poverty narrative by exposing how patriarchal structures harm all genders, albeit differently a key contention of both the abstract and conceptual framework.

This study demands for "contextualized SADC Protocol implementation," by recommending the following: (1) land reforms prioritizing joint titling to disrupt patriarchal resource control, (2) care infrastructure investments to redistribute unpaid labor, and (3) gender-transformative social protection that includes men. These measures align with the abstract's insistence on "place-based solutions,"

targeting the rural-urban dichotomy that perpetuates service delivery gaps. Ultimately, this study advances the abstract's argument by proving that equitable development requires dismantling the systemic barriers identified throughout our research from wage discrimination to policy exclusion. Only by centering rural voices and confronting patriarchal power, as the GAD framework demands, can South Africa achieve the transformative change envisioned in both our abstract and findings.

9 Recommendation

Building on the study's findings, this study calls for decolonial gender mainstreaming, by proposing three targeted interventions to address gendered poverty in rural Venda. First, land and agricultural reforms must prioritize joint titling and women's ownership to dismantle patriarchal resource control, as evidenced by participants' accounts of exclusion from farming benefits. Second, care infrastructure policies should be implemented to redistribute unpaid labor, drawing on models like Kenya's county-funded childcare cooperatives that reduced women's care burdens by 40% (Waithaka 2022a, b). Third, gender-transformative social protection programs must include men through initiatives like Namibia's "MenEngage" (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2023), addressing male vulnerability while challenging toxic masculinities that fuel household tensions. These measures should be integrated into South Africa's National Gender Policy (2024) with rural-specific budgeting, ensuring 30% of municipal funds target gendered poverty gaps a benchmark proven effective for minority representation (BWA-SA 2023). By centering GAD's relational analysis, these recommendations operationalize the abstract's argument for intersectional, place-based solutions that move beyond tokenistic empowerment toward structural change.

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