



**Post-Peak China in Africa?**

Africa's Stance in the Russian-Ukrainian War: An Opportunity for Partnership with China and Russia

**Challenges in the Sustainable Economy of Northern Ghana – Impacts of Soybean Trade on Bambara Groundnut**

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PADRAIG CARMODY

## POST-PEAK CHINA IN AFRICA?

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China's increased engagements in Africa over the past two decades have been as notable as they have been controversial. While some have predicted China's economic stagnation as a result of issues such as debt, supply chain shortening as a result of the impacts of COVID and the impact of strict lockdowns in that country, others see its economy dramatically rebounding. However, it appears that Chinese lending to Africa has now peaked and is in precipitous decline. Other indicators of economic engagement have also decreased and other powers are also now vigorously contesting for space on the continent. This paper examines whether or not we are now in a period "post-peak China in Africa" and the reconfiguration of strategies of influence. The original Ian Taylor Memorial Lecture under the same title held on April 27, 2023 at the University of Pécs has been edited and headings added for clarity, and references included/provided.

ANNIE ABENA AKU AGYEMFRA

## AFRICA'S STANCE IN THE RUSSIA-UKRAINIAN WAR: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTNERSHIP WITH CHINA AND RUSSIA

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China's President Xi Jinping and Russia's President Vladimir Putin have repeatedly hailed a 'no limits' partnership between their respective countries to the displeasure of the United States in light of the ongoing war in Ukraine. Therefore, it has become more apparent that the long-term goals of the Russian and Chinese foreign policies are to establish a new world order by reinstating their countries as great powers while challenging the U.S.-led global hegemony. The current geopolitical turbulence accelerated by the great power rivalry has not only shattered the international order that has existed since the end of the Cold War, but also reframed partnerships where the role of African states are becoming more prominent. Notably, while Martin Kimani, Kenya's UN envoy, was widely praised for his powerful speech reaffirming Kenya's respect for the territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders during the Security Council's emergency session (21 February 2022), 25 of Africa's 54 states abstained or did not vote to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine during the emergency session of the UN General Assembly (A/RES/ES-11/1) in March 2022. This equivocal reaction contrasted sharply not only with the widespread condemnation of Russia's assault from every other region but also with African states' official positions on preserving territorial integrity and borders within Africa. The study, therefore, seeks to explore Africa's stance in light of the ongoing war and how the interests and (re)actions of African states contribute to furthering Russia's goal of weakening the United States as a dominant power. The study applies a qualitative approach by drawing from literature on Africa's relations with Russia and analyzing media and NGO reports on contemporary events, official communications of African officials, and voting patterns of African states in the UN General Assembly in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine. Initial findings suggest that several factors contribute to the hesitant position of some African countries. These include the legacy of colonial and imperial control, arms trading, food security, discriminatory treatment of African students in Ukraine, and the U.S. Congress' anti-Russian legislation (H.R. 7311, the Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act), which punishes African nations for their political and economic ties with Russia. These factors reinforce neo-colonialism in Africa.

NORBERT BOZSIK - SARA EL MOURABITE

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ESSAOUIRA

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An attempt is made to investigate the consequences of land tenure policy on the environment enhancing reforestation as a means of ascertaining tenure security in the Gambella region. This paper sheds light on the accelerated pace of deforestation in the study area and its impact on the environment. The theoretical and conceptual issues of the interrelation between reforestation, deforestation, land tenure system, and other socio-economic indicators have been given due attention in the literature review. Research methodology gives much focus on qualitative data analysis that uses ranges of data collection approaches; FGD, KII, semi-structured household interviews with the inclusion of secondary data reviews. The paper considers the effect of land tenure system on the environment and discusses the landholding system in the study area, including customary land rights among the Nuer, the Anywaa, and the Majangir. To this effect, external factors and urban expansions are addressed with the view to understanding the impact of socio-cultural practice on physical environment perception and management. A conclusion and policy implications are also discussed.

LAWALLEY COLE

## LEADERSHIP, EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR YOUTH IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN UNION PROGRAMS

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From September 16–19, 2022, the U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres hosted the Transforming Education Summit at U.N. Headquarters in New York on the margins of the U.N. General Assembly. This summit mobilized stakeholders to act and collaborate in solidarity to find solutions for transforming education by 2030. This summit's outcomes were national and international commitments to transform education with increased public engagement and support. Before the conference, the African Union had just concluded its fourth Specialized Technical Committee on Education, Science, and Technology with the theme of utilizing education, science, technology, and innovation to foster recovery in Africa and respond to, strengthen, and build resilience in a post-COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, there was a need to enhance the response from the science, technology, and innovation sectors. Growing globalization and faster technological progress have created many new social, economic, environmental, and COVID-19 problems. Because of this, the Coalition on Media and Education for Development Africa Forum (CAFOR) and its partners have been looking at the needs and opportunities that come from these changes. CAFOR and its partners are also determined to look beyond Africa's Continental Education Strategy (CESA 16–25) and examine how schools can prepare children in Africa for jobs and technologies that have yet to be created to solve future problems with innovation. CAFOR is forward-looking and works towards building stronger partnerships on the continent, ensuring a shared responsibility to identify new opportunities and solutions.

ÁRON VASKÓ - GYÖRGY IVÁN NESZMÉLYI

CHALLENGES IN THE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY  
OF NORTHERN GHANA- IMPACTS OF SOYBEAN  
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The global seed trade has reached and conquered Northern Ghana, squeezing out local suppliers. Considering ongoing population growth, rapidly urbanizing communities, changing diets, and vast quantities of imported food products, the endeavours of enterprises that try to reduce the local food production deficit should be more appreciated. Rice, maize, and soybeans are three types of grain that dominate the global seed trade. Furthermore, the natural conditions and vegetation of the sub-tropical region are close to optimal. While rice and maize have been cultivated for a long time, soybeans are a new crop in the semi-arid climate zone of the Guinea-Savannah.

The motivations and ambitions are clear: pushing improved soybean seeds into the traditional farming system of Northern Ghana to meet the zero hunger sustainable development goal while widening the market for western seed producers. In the Ghanaian context, microfinance is built on making customers dependent on services. On the one hand, it is a tool to extend farm sizes through mechanization, fertilizers, and modern cultivation technologies to increase yield; on the other hand, microfinance could cause financial difficulties within society and farmer associations, and it has negative effects on unsupported and unfinanced activities such as cultivating indigenous crops.

LÁSZLÓ MÁTHÉ

'WE SHALL PROBABLY CALL THE PLACE ZARIA,  
AS IT IS SUCH A PRETTY NAME' - MEDICAL  
DISCOURSE AND TOWN PLANNING IN  
NORTHERN NIGERIA, 1899-1914

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Early colonial administrations faced multiple challenges in their daily work. In specific areas, administrators reached out to science as a tool to understand and support their decisions. Town planning was an issue that brought together Europeans and Africans, and therefore created common living and working spaces for them. It became an important issue immediately after the conquest of Northern Nigerian territories, especially because a growing number of Europeans started living in the region on a more permanent basis. Town planning often seemed an arbitrary policy, yet, as it is demonstrated in this paper, daily administration reached out to science as a helping tool to guide and validate their goals. Segregating Europeans from Africans was a question that very soon became a hotly debated topic, that was supported or rejected by some governors. This contested question shows that colonial policy was not by default racial based, let alone racist.

## POST-PEAK CHINA IN AFRICA?

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### Abstract

China's increased engagements in Africa over the past two decades have been as notable as they have been controversial. While some have predicted China's economic stagnation as a result of issues such as debt, supply chain shortening as a result of the impacts of COVID and the impact of strict lockdowns in that country, others see its economy dramatically rebounding. However, it appears that Chinese lending to Africa has now peaked and is in precipitous decline. Other indicators of economic engagement have also decreased and other powers are also now vigorously contesting for space on the continent. This paper examines whether or not we are now in a period "post-peak China in Africa" and the reconfiguration of strategies of influence. The original Ian Taylor Memorial Lecture under the same title held on April 27, 2023 at the University of Pécs has been edited and headings added for clarity, and references included/provided.

### Keywords

*China, Africa, geopolitics, Belt and Road Initiative, lending*

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## Introduction

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you very much for the invite. It is a great honor and privilege to be here to remember Ian. István Tarrósy asked me to say a few words about him. I met Ian in 2005 at the Irish African Studies Conference, and we struck up a great friendship. For many years, he visited me, I visited him, and we collaborated. For those of you who are looking at your alerts, you see Ian is still publishing - books, articles are still coming out. He's publishing more than us, even though he's no longer with us, unfortunately. But in thinking and talking about Ian, I think one of the things I hadn't realized when he was alive was just the impact he had on people. And when he died, there was a collective outpouring of grief in the African Studies community. As you talk to people, you realize he impacted so many people across that community in so many different ways. As a mentor, always volunteering to be on PhD committees, give people feedback, searching out work, unlike many of us who claim we're too busy to do these things. So, he was an inspirational figure and I'm, as I say, delighted to be here to have the opportunity to remember him with you.

My talk today is entitled post-Peak China in Africa. I want to talk to you about whether China's influence economically and politically has peaked in the continent. What are some of the indicators and trends which will allow us to analyze whether that's the case or not.

Some of you may have heard this term before, "slowbalization" or "deglobalization" as it's sometimes called. Already from 2005, trade as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) in the world's major economies was falling (World Economic Forum, 2023). Globalization is a generally increasing process, but it's recursive, it's dialectical, and is subject to setbacks and to change, and obviously COVID impacted that heavily as well. But China seemed to buck the trend through, in particular, its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which now has more than 150 members. This was announced in 2013 by the Chinese President in Kazakhstan and fundamentally it's a major program of infrastructure financing and construction of ports, railroads, power stations, roads, etc. But there are other dimensions such as people to people exchange, policy coordination and so on.

So, Chinese inflected globalization seemed to be a kind of counter-trend to the general one. And this is because it's a particular form of globalization which is heavily state-directed. This is in contrast to Western-led and corporate-led globalization, which still exists and interpenetrates and influences the Belt and Road. The state in China is able to do things that a lot of other states aren't able to do, given the importance of state-owned enterprises, corporations and banks in that country.

Back in 2021, as COVID was at its height, Chris Patten, the former British governor of Hong Kong - the last one - talked about Post-Peak China (Patten, 2021). And there was some part of celebration in some of the Western media at China's travails; the idea that China had that COVID had originated there, that there were going to be lockdowns, that China's influence was waning as a result of the pandemic. And you see that echoed in other places beyond the West as well, but I'm not sure that is the case.

But China does face a variety of problems economically, as result of slowing economic growth, growing youth unemployment, a property crash and particularly the economically active population is projected to shrink by 194 million people by 2050 (Yi, Lee, & Xu, 2021). China's population declined for the first time in six decades last year (2022). There are ways of plugging that through immigration and other things you can do to promote fertility through pro-natalist policy.

China also faces the so-called middle income trap. What is this? The middle income trap is where you may be able to grow your economy quickly off a low base, but once you try and get to the technological frontier, you run up against patents, you run up against highly competitive incumbents, mostly Western-based, who essentially block your entry into higher value added sectors such as robotics and artificial intelligence. China's prioritization of less efficient state-owned enterprises may also contribute to this trap (Liu & Tsai, 2021).

China has a variety of plans such as made in China 2025 and the China 2035 standards plan to try and break out of this trap. And some people claim that was also one of the motivations for the BRI; that the Chinese economy was reaching its limits in terms of what could be achieved internally, and there was a need to open the field of capital accumulation for Chinese companies globally.

According to some estimates, China has since 2013 been the world's biggest economy at purchasing power parity (IMF, 2018) or what you can buy with Chinese money in China. But it's still about a third smaller than the US in US dollar terms and this is a bone of geopolitical contention as the US attempts to prevent China from over-taking it (Inkster, 2020). However, according to some due to the recent slow-down, the Chinese economy will not overtake the US until 2060, if ever (Sharma, 2022). Previously it was projected that was going to happen towards the end of this decade. At the same time, the Chinese president talks about things like "winning the initiative" and having the "dominant position". So, the old strategy of biding your time, not projecting yourself forcefully onto the international stage in order to not attract negative attention from the United States in particular has now been displaced by a new one of showing strength.

As China has grown its economy and geopolitical weight and has modernized its military, there's a different impetus, outlook and perspective on China's role in the world, at least in the Chinese policy elite. Again, this all interpenetrates with and is influenced by economics. Manufacturing value added as a percentage of GDP in China has been fairly consistently falling since 2007 to 28% from 32% (World Bank, 2023), so there's a process of servitization of the Chinese economy. And again, some people think this is a good thing - that it's a form of rebalancing, but it can be exaggerated. The Chinese economy is still growing quite rapidly, and so manufacturing is still growing, even if not as fast as the service sector. For example, Apple has made little progress moving manufacturing out of China - the vast majority of its products are still made there.

What about the argument that its economic growth is in long-term or secular decline. It's relatively easier to grow your economy at 10% off a low base. When you

get up into middle-income status, it becomes much, much more difficult, because you have a much bigger economy. China, at one point, was growing at 15% a year, an incredible rate of growth. Now it's around 5%, which is still a fast rate of economic growth for the kind of economy that China is.

### **The BRI and Africa**

The Chinese government has never produced a map of the BRI and some people have said that this is strategic. In a way, its fuzziness serves a useful geopolitical function (Narins & Agnew, 2020) as it can be shape-shifting - it can be whatever the Chinese government wants it to be at any particular time. If you formalize, categorize it too much, then people can say, "Oh, you're deviating from the plan". But if you leave it very vague, it provides a kind of discursive envelope where a variety of different things can be embedded in it. Initially the BRI focused on Eurasia. Some people say that was in response to the American "pivot to Asia" under Obama, that "forced" China to look west.

And if we're trying to think about what it is - what is the content of the BRI? Well, it interpenetrates with other vectors of Chinese-inflected globalisation (Carmody & Murphy, 2022), and because it's fuzzy, you can include a lot of things, potentially, in it. But it has three things we said in that paper: 1) spatial forms, such as special economic zones (SEZ), railroads, those kinds of concrete manifestations, which begin as ideation, of course. Someone has to have an idea to build a SEZ or to have a BRI at all, but it concretely manifests as spatial forms. 2) It's associated with particular forms of constitutive flows, so money has to come from China - loans typically - to build the infrastructure, steel and cement, workers, and all sorts of other flows and counterflows. Once the infrastructure is built, some people have said that facilitates primarily raw material exports back out from Africa and manufactured goods into Africa for example. That's what the trade pattern broadly looks like. And 3) it's facilitated by alliances, treaties, aid and governance agreements. For this structure to eventuate, there has to be strategic couplings of interest between foreign and Chinese political elites and economic elites. And that results in integrations, with particular economic, political, environmental, and social impacts. And I'll talk about a few of them.

So, what are changing Chinese engagements with Africa driven by? Well, the first thing is that the last couple of years has become very evident, there have been major problems with the BRI (Patey, 2020:

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Carmody & Wainwright, 2022). It was foregrounded as something which was going to be transformational. It was going to lead to a new form of economic development connectivity worldwide where we would have a “shared destiny for humanity”, according to Chinese government pronouncements. However it had large-scale problems, and also the Western powers have weaponized it, in particular through the meme of debt trap diplomacy (Bräutigam, 2020): that is the idea that China is deliberately trying to entrap countries in debt in order to compromise their sovereignty and exercise a kind of neo-imperial control over them. That’s largely been debunked, but it doesn’t mean that it isn’t a problematic programme.

The BRI provided the soft and hard infrastructure for China’s global expansion. We talked about the domestic economic slowdown, the changing global geopolitical context, and the trade war with the US. And the response in China to that was a new policy called “dual circulation”, where the internal economy is emphasized supposedly as much as the export-oriented nature of the Chinese economy, which had largely driven growth previously (Carmody, 2021).

Africa’s place in China’s geopolitical code is also shifting. And China seems to want to avoid dependence – again, it’s hard to know what goes on in people’s heads, but if you look at the statistics, you can discern trends. At one point in the 2010s, Africa counted for about a third of Chinese total oil imports. Now it’s down to 10% (Olander, 2022). So, the Chinese government seems to – we can’t know for sure as its foreign policy strategy is a state secret (Garlick, 2023) – wants to avoid excessive reliance on any world region. It tries to diversify its partners and suppliers globally in order to avoid this. In this changing global context, even as Africa may be becoming less economically important to China, nonetheless its geopolitical importance seems to be rising, particularly in the context of the war in Ukraine and the crystallization of the different blocks around “the West” versus the alternative block – the BRICS<sup>1</sup> plus or Global South, which some people say includes China and Russia. However the Belt and Road as a form of spatial connectivity generated its own contradictions. And I think this is the fundamental problem. What are these?

The first one is poor investment appraisal. So, China, after the North Atlantic financial crisis, China massively stimulated the economy. Between 2011 and 2013, more cement was poured in China than in the United States during the entire 20th century (Swanson, 2015). And that led to massive overcapacity issues in cement and steel and so on, that had to be exported. And this was a fundamental driver of the BRI. And so, the projects that were built, the ports, the railways and so on, often had poor investment appraisal. They weren’t necessarily economic in their own terms. And there are some spectacular examples of that that I’ll talk about a little bit later.

In order to fund many of these projects, you have to go into, oftentimes, debt and this is a bet on the future. If you take money and you invest it and get a rate of return which is higher than the interest rate on the loan, then it’s an economic prospect. If the rate of return is lower than the interest rate, you’re going to lose money on it. That’s not to say you don’t do it. Sometimes it can make sense for governments to invest in loss-making things as public goods, if they unlock broader economic poten-

tial or social benefits, but many of these projects haven't. In fact because the BRI is both a geoeconomic and a geopolitical project exposes it is exposed to enhanced risk, because things can go wrong politically, things can go wrong economically, and they can interact together (Carmody & Wainwright, 2022).

Why are oftentimes African political elites interested in loans to fund infrastructure projects like the big, multi-billion dollar Standard Gauge Railway in Kenya? Well, they generate short-term economic growth and jobs that boost the economy. The President of Kenya inaugurated the railway a couple of weeks before the 2017 election. So, there's a political business cycle, sometimes at work. While there can be potential repayment problems, mega-projects serve to maintain political regimes, but potentially reduce economic growth over the longer term if these are not economically viable prospects and result in a debt overhang.

What about the impacts on China? These projects boost economic growth through exports of cement, steel and so on. But there is exposure; there are risks of loan default. But the overall function we argue in a paper with Ian actually, is that this serves as a form of a spatial fix, which is a way of displacing your domestic economic problems - in this case excess production capacity in China - onto other countries (Carmody, Taylor, & Zajontz, 2022). Maybe you can defer them in time through debt, but somebody will have to pay for them ultimately. Depending on the balance of power this spatial fix is reproduced. The economic growth which is generated in China through exports, for example, however results in environmental degradation in other places. If you look at it, the China Road and Bridge Corporation took 800,000 cubic meters of sand from beaches and reefs around Mombasa, destroying the reefs without permits (Rotberg, 2020). So, there can be massive environmental impacts, with impacts on fishers in this case. And again, that's a form of displacement which will generate resistance.

If borrowers default, that could lead to blowback for China. It could affect its international reputation. So, China wants to avoid that, because it will make things difficult internationally. Now, according to Deng (2022), in a book last year, he says, there's a difference between China and the United States. China does not supply global public goods in the way that the US does or did. Stability, whether you agree with them or not, stability; free trade, as a global public good - some people say that. So, it doesn't have and lead these international institutions the way that the United States did or does, even if this is President Xi's goal (Freeman, 2021).

Ian Taylor (2020) noted that the SGR cost 6% of Kenya's gross domestic product to build. And for every 7.8 tons of cargo transported from Mombasa inland, manufactured goods coming in - high value manufacturing goods -, only 1.01 tons are railed back to the point of export, mostly low value added raw materials and natural resources. And this is just volume, it's not value. It's even worse if you look at value. So, this has led some people to argue that this is an extractivist form of economic engagement. And the Chinese government also became worried about the contradictions of the BRI. From 2016 new loan commitments to Africa drop off a cliff (Carmody, Zajontz, & Reboredo, 2022). The Chinese President talked about

the need to avoid building vanity projects in 2018, for example. They become aware that things were going wrong and so new loan commitments dramatically decreased. And other things have emerged recently, such as the fact that China has been giving emergency loans to many of the countries along the Belt and Road to prevent default, through the mechanism of currency swaps (Horn, Parks, Reinhart, & Trebesch, 2023). So, what is this?

This is where the People's Bank of China gives you Chinese yuan, you give them whatever your currency is nationally in exchange. So, it's not quite a loan, but you're exchanging a hard currency for a soft currency. So, in effect, it serves the same kind of function. So there have been huge bailouts, tens, and tens of billions of these emergency loans given to Belt and Road countries. And you'll see in six African countries this has been the case: Angola, Sudan, South Sudan, Egypt, Tanzania, and Kenya. Of this emergency lending, 80% was post 2016. And the average credit rating for a country in the Belt and Road Initiative is below investment grade or what market traders call junk (Macaes, 2018). So, the loans were being given to countries which did not have stable financial conditions according to "global" rating agencies.

According to Cobus von Staden (quoted in Hawkins, 2023), this additional lending was an acknowledgement that the BRI is as much about relationship-building as it is about infrastructure, showing China's "all-weather friendship". When you're in difficulty, China will be there for you to bail you out, give you new loans. But there's a different way of reading it, which is that it's also about not losing initial loan investments and also public relations.

**Why are oftentimes African political elites interested in loans to fund infrastructure projects like the big, multi-billion dollar Standard Gauge Railway in Kenya? Well, they generate short-term economic growth and jobs that boost the economy. The President of Kenya inaugurated the railway a couple of weeks before the 2017 election. So, there's a political business cycle, sometimes at work. While there can be potential repayment problems, mega-projects serve to maintain political regimes, but potentially reduce economic growth over the longer term if these are not economically viable prospects and result in a debt overhang.**

China has not participated fully in the multilateral debt relief initiatives that have been ongoing since COVID. It did participate in the debt suspension initiative for a couple of years, but there's now a bone of contention over China's non-participation. Why is this? Well, if you look at China internally, domestically, the China Development Bank does not write off loans internally. It's the agency, one of them, charged with building infrastructure internally, in China, and it can't afford to write off loans because then the whole model comes unstuck, and the same principle is applied internationally. If you start to write down these big loans, that will go down badly amongst your lenders in China as well. Why are people overseas getting debt relief, or elimination, whereas we're still having to pay for our loans?

### **African Perceptions of China and the Continent's Place in China's Geopolitical Code**

China has also had, in recent years, a variety of other problems in terms of its image on the continent. In particular, things like labor abuses. This is a video circulating online from Kenya, where a Chinese hotel manager can be seen caning a waiter for being late to work. This is just one instance. There have been a variety of scandals around Chinese actors appearing in blackface at New Year's Eve celebrations on TV in China; not once, but repeatedly. There is a scandal and then it happens again. That's not to downplay racism and labor abuses by other companies or other nationalities at all. But nonetheless, these things are happening that contribute to the "image problem" has among some sections of the continent's population.

According to Anita Plummer (2022, 166), after she has interviewed many, many people in Kenya about Chinese engagements on the role of the public in ensuring accountability or trying to ensure accountability for Chinese projects: "I believe people who say that at this particular moment, China's interventions feel like neo-colonialism. I would add that Kenyan elites, those who hold a disproportionate amount of wealth and power have taken the position of supporting Chinese public and private actors operating in Kenya over the protests of citizens, especially on issues related to climate and the environment, hiring practices and the debt burden." And you see this kind of discourse also repeated in other media, such as paintings by the Ghanaian artist Michael Soi. Again, some people might find that sensationalist, but these discourses are nonetheless out there. So have we reached post-peak China?

Let's look at some of the other vectors of engagement. China - Africa trade. You can see a dramatic decrease here after the global commodity price bust of 2014. That's not surprising to see a dramatic reduction in 2016 - but the trade balance favors China. So again, this has led some people to say this is an extractivist type of economic relationship. What about foreign direct investment stocks and flows? Again, both of these have been in decline. So Chinese investors investing less on a yearly basis, but the stock, the existing already invested capital also declining in some years. Many of you are probably familiar with the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the FOCAC. That has also seen funding being scaled back. So, funding commitments fell in Sub-Saharan Africa 54% in 2022 to only 7.5 billion dollars, a

relatively small amount; following on from a substantial reduction in the previous year's meeting (Sun, 2021).

This is going in tandem with pushback by Western powers on China, in Africa and globally. And again, I won't rehearse this too much, you're familiar with most of it. But according to some estimates, the United States is now Kenya's biggest trading partner again because of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, although that's disputed. Some estimates place the US still, third or fourth (Economist, 2020).

China has also, with its reshaping of its own geopolitical image and geopolitical code, or the way in which it views other places through the idea of "major country diplomacy". That China is a major country, the US is a major country, these are the big players, and they should set the kind of scene globally, geopolitically. So, this is an explicit policy: major country diplomacy. Despite the emphasis on South-South Cooperation and the supposed sovereign equality between nations, in practice, China has breached that principle through this policy of major country diplomacy - which in practice means "we need to focus on the big players". And one of the impacts of that, declining economic commitments and trade and so on, has been that aid has become an important, or more important vector of Chinese engagement with Africa. China never used to talk about aid, it was always South-South globalization, win-win cooperation, but now they talk about it (Kragelund, 2015). And this in a sense mirrors the Western partners, if you want to call them that, and their patterns of engagement with the continent, problematically.

But Africa is still important to China geopolitically, as I've talked about, particularly in a context of increased geopolitical polarisation globally. There's more emphasis on aid and market opening to offset other reduced economic exchanges. And market opening has, in some cases, in China been quite dramatic. So for example recently Beijing announced that it was dropping tariffs on 98% of goods imports from Burundi, Ethiopia and Nigeria, for example (TRT AFRIKA, 2023). This is significant and doesn't sit quite so easily with the "neocolonialism" discourse sometimes heard in the West. When the British colonized India, they restricted textile imports from India because they were better and cheaper, so they actually banned imports of calico from India. This is a different type of engagement, and it speaks to the fact that there is now juridical sovereignty and that African political elites serve as market and resource gatekeepers. So, they can't be treated the same way as the colonists treated their colonial subjects. There has to be a negotiation, a bargaining process, and a coupling of strategic interests for these relations to be maintained and arguably deepened.

From that paper with Tim (Zajontz) and Ricardo (Reboredo), Tim came up with this term, competitive developmentalism, that the idea that China and the US and the Europeans are all competing. The Western Powers now have the Global Gateway Initiative and the Blue Dot Initiative, which are also infrastructure programs. But they can't marshal the same resources that the Chinese state can because the Chinese state holds the world's largest foreign exchange reserves, 3.2 trillion dollars, and hundreds of thousands of state-owned enterprises in that country.

But the Western powers have woken up to the competition, some people might say. The DRC signed an agreement to develop the electric vehicle value chain with the US in 2020. Seventy percent of the world's cobalt is found in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and this is a key component for electric vehicles. So, the strategic importance of certain minerals is continuing to grow in this green transition.

### **The Nature of the Chinese State**

Okay, so how do we think about this in terms of the nature of Chinese global power. There's a debate in the literature. Is there an all-powerful central state directing Chinese actors around the world? Or is it diffused, decentralized competition between companies which is largely driving the nature of engagements? And in the literature, there's a consensus that it's not one or the other. So Breslin (2021) talks about "bounded autonomy", that state-owned enterprises can compete with each other within certain limits. And if they do something the central government doesn't like, then they get reined back in. Hameiri & Jones (2021) talk about the regulatory Chinese state. But many states are regulatory. The French state is regulatory, or the Hungarian state, I'm sure as well. So, there are a couple of key features about the nature of Chinese geo-economic and political engagements. Firstly, China engages with a broader range of actors than other states, according to Walsh (2022) because of the nature of its state society formation. As Sun (2023) says in a nutshell, one could say there is a significant degree of hybridity between "capitalism goes global" and "socialism goes global" - merging, planning with the market; this new form of state capitalism of which China is the primary exemplar.

The overall objectives of this is what Rush Doshi calls "partial hegemony", or what in the paper with Ian, we call "flexible hegemony", or "flexigemony" still exist (Carmody & Taylor, 2010). And so, in a project I'm developing with some colleagues at Trinity, Copenhagen and with Jim Murphy, we're developing this idea of Chinese web power. That is that the Chinese state operates differently and has a different form of power projection or a stronger form of web power projection. What is web power? Web power is where the central state is able to, if not coordinate, then heavily regulate and influence the behavior of nominally independent actors like the private sector or civil society. Some of you may remember Jack Ma's disappearance, you know, the founder of Alibaba, one of the world's richest people. He disappeared a couple of years ago for several months, only to appear at an event celebrating rural teachers after not being seen for months. You can think about the corporate social credit system in China, which is a way of making sure corporate actors don't get out of line. So it's the contradiction of the integration of a powerful center which is able to project its power and regulate other social actors and influence them through a variety of different mechanisms. And there are a whole host of those subsidies I don't have time to go into. Web power is manifests through a variety of different axes but China primarily exercises power economically. It's never invaded in another country (with the exception of Tibet), unlike some other countries. But it does exercise its power economically: maybe not letting Filipino bananas in because in theory they

don't meet sanitary standards and leaving them on the dock for a week or two, which doesn't do much for their sale price, for example. But you can think about other things like standards, the profusion of Chinese standards around railways, around artificial intelligence, around all sorts of advanced technologies. And once you lock people into your standards, that guarantees your market into the future. And that's one of the things the Western countries have been very successful, and corporations at doing historically.

### **Post-Peak China in Africa?**

Now we'll talk about the Zambian case. Zambia had the first overseas bank and mine from China in the late 1990s. It's a major copper producer and in fact it was the world's largest exporter of raw copper - I think last year - and China consumes a massive proportion of the world's copper. President Sata, when he was elected in 2011, had run on a kind of anti-Chinese campaign. He said things like "We need investors, not infestors" in his prior election campaign. Who was his first visitor to state house upon his election as president? The Chinese ambassador. So, he was enrolled in the copper export-oriented assemblage by virtue of the structure of the Chinese economy (Carmody & Kragelund, 2016). He realized immediately of course this wasn't a sustainable position to antagonize your primary trade partner, although some also suggest there may have been under the table funding flowing prior to this.

The Patriotic Front, as commodity prices fell and President Sata died in office, went on what Tim Zajontz has called a "road bonanza" to try and keep the economy growing, borrowing money, building roads and so on (Zajontz, 2022). And Zambia became the first African country to default on its debts during COVID. So, we can think about it as a site where these contradictions are perhaps very clearly or most clearly expressed. Zambian government debt to GDP ramps up dramatically over the space of around a decade or so.

If you look at the US response, you've probably noticed in the media Janet Yellen, visiting a variety of African countries. Kamala Harris was in Zambia, a couple of weeks ago during tour of the continent. Jill

**But you can think about other things like standards, the profusion of Chinese standards around railways, around artificial intelligence, around all sorts of advanced technologies. And once you lock people into your standards, that guarantees your market into the future. And that's one of the things the Western countries have been very successful, and corporations are doing historically.**

Biden, and Joe Biden is slated to visit the continent as well. In the Zambian case, the US Secretary, Janet Yellen, called Beijing a barrier to the resolution of Zambia's debt. And the Chinese reaction said the US government should act on responsible monetary policies, cope with its own debt problem and stop sabotaging other sovereign countries' active efforts. But the US and Chinese ambassadors did meet subsequently to this, to try and dial down the temperature a little bit.

If you look at Zambian exports to China, you can once again see a dramatic decline, which mirrors the copper price. As the copper price has gone back up, exports have increased but are still, off their peak.

China is very sensitive to the criticism that it exports food from Africa and Deborah Bräutigam has a book about this called *Will Africa Feed China?* (Bräutigam, 2016) And they have a domestic food security target of 80 to 90%. So, they don't export that much food from their state-owned farms, for example, in Zambia and elsewhere. Nonetheless, you see there 134 million dollars of food exports in 2014 from Zambia, but again these are in decline.

Now we can also think about counter cases, and in particular, Djibouti, where you have this Doraleh multifacility port, special economic zone, and a recently announced spaceport - Chinese spaceport. So according to Benjamin Barton (2023) in his recent book, the whirlwind triggered by the early BRI funding pledges spurred China Merchants Company to behave more audaciously in Djibouti. And it was also the site of China's first overseas military base in a long time in 2017. If you look at the countries globally that are most in debt to China, three of the top five are in Africa. In Djibouti, 43%, and up to 70% by some other estimates, of GDP equivalent is debt to China.

So, does all this mean we're in an era of post-peak China in Africa? Well, it depends on the regime type, how it articulates and negotiates and uses the nature of dependent relations. Where it's successful, there may be more appetite for deeper engagement. Anita Plummer also highlights the role of publics: their key role in African politics. Also some vectors of engagement have been strengthened, such as aid, fellowship programmes and others (Benabdallah, 2019), and different vectors are incommensurable so it may be difficult to say.

So, are we post peak or post a peak? Prediction in social science is famously wrong or risky consequently, so I'm not going to do it. But the Chinese economy is projected to grow at 5.2% in 2023, this year. It has rebounded. If that rate of growth was maintained, that would give a doubling time of 14 years, by which time it would overtake well the United States as the world's biggest economy. The US has restricted high tech electronic chip exports. This may reduce or constrain the nature of economic growth in China, and there's an estimate of one yuan worth of chips can support 10 yuan worth of electrical capacity and generates 100 yuan of economic output (Zhang quoted in Tang & Siqi, 2023). There's some return to financing of infrastructure in Africa. A recent loan to Nigeria for the Kaduna-Kano railway has been negotiated, but at a commercial rate, so not at a soft lending rate and China accounts for 85% of Nigeria's bilateral debt. So, for the biggest economy in Africa,



85% of bilateral state-to-state debt is with China. But there's greater borrowing and lending caution. What will the future of relations depend on? It will obviously depend on the evolution of the Chinese political economy. We can't predict that. It will also depend on changes in African political economy and global geopolitics including climate geopolitics. And if we're applying an economic terminology to the nature of these relations, we could say the economic and political demand for Africa will depend on the conjunction and interpenetration of these three factors, I argue. And the supply of markets, raw materials, and geopolitical support will depend on the perceived benefits for different actors at different timescales.



## Q&A

Q: (Note: Somewhat rephrased for the sake of clarity)

*- Good morning, and thank you very much for the enlightening paper presentation. I have a question that intrigues me. During the negotiations for Chinese investments in various massive African projects, we often hear about African governments offering valuable assets as collateral in case of loan defaults. Are there any examples where such defaults have occurred, and African governments have been tested by having to turn over those assets to Chinese control?*

Prof. Carmody:

*- Yes. So again, this speaks to the idea of debt trap diplomacy. Our government's, not just in Africa but around the world, mortgaging critical national assets like airports, ports and so on, as collateral for these debts. So there's a couple of things to say. The first one is the sovereign exception clause is a regular feature in commercial lending contracts. So it's not something that is just used by China. So it's something which if you borrow from Western vendors, they will have a sovereign exception. So it's basically, you can't claim that you can change your own laws and wipe out the debt. It has to be subject to international arbitration, typically in London, in commercial contracts, but the Chinese have now set up their own international arbitration court in Hong Kong I think. There's been huge controversies in Africa about the Mombasa port and the Standard Gauge Railway for example, but it's quite standard practice in a lot of ways. What is different about the contract is that often they're very opaque. They're not made public what the terms are. The Chinese banks often require African governments to co-fund these projects as well. So the Chinese entities don't assume all of the risk, so they're often co-funded projects. That again probably makes sense. So the short answer to your question is: not really in Africa. Chinese companies did take over the Laotian power grid in Asia, for example. There's the famous case of the Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka, which Deborah Bräutigam has written about. It's not a simple kind of resource grab where the port was taken over.*

*The Sri Lankan government couldn't service this debt, there was a new loan given in exchange for a 99-year lease. In Zambia, the television station, I guess, or one of the TV stations was – you'll know more about this Agnes – was taken over by a Chinese company as well. There was some controversy about that. But not really is the answer to your question. So this debt trap diplomacy narrative hasn't really been proven by the facts.*

Q: (Note: Somewhat rephrased for the sake of clarity)

*- Your perspective on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) contradictions, especially in the case of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) in Kenya, was quite interesting. I'd like to add an observation to your outlined BRI contradictions, particularly concerning its main objective, which envisions connecting various entities across continents. In Africa, this brings us to the discussion of regional integration. Ironically, as more governments seek to sign agreements and start implementing infrastructure projects, it has led to an infrastructural race. I've discussed this issue elsewhere, and we're witnessing that this race is somewhat hindering the concept of regional integration. For instance, within the East African Community, Kenya and Tanzania are at odds regarding the nature and extent of implementation. Therefore, BRI might exacerbate the problem of regional integration.*

*My second concern is related to the discussion on debt trap diplomacy, with a particular focus on the increasing appetite of African governments for Western commercial loans. The challenges they currently face in repaying these loans are noteworthy. We recently examined these statistics in collaboration with our colleagues in South Africa and found that the number of Western commercial loans is increasing when compared to Chinese loans.*

Prof. Carmody:

*- I mean Barney Walsh's book talks about the East African community and the challenges China presents – so the East African community according to him has a competence in infrastructure development. The plans are meant to be developed regionally and rolled out regionally. But the fact that these loans are negotiated bilaterally with Chinese companies, or in the Tanzanian case a Turkish company building the Standard Gauge Railway there complicates those efforts. So his book is good on that.*

Q: (Note: Somewhat rephrased for the sake of clarity)

*- Thank you for your presentation. In Africa, and particularly in Kenya, there is substantial engagement at a personal and small-scale level. African small-scale entrepreneurs travel to China and bring back goods. Simultaneously, small-scale Chinese businesses are entering Kenya and Africa, encountering resistance from local small-scale businesses. How does this dynamic fit into the larger narrative of China's involvement in Africa, and where might the primary sources of resistance emerge?*

*The other aspect I'm considering, as I reflect on the situation and the historical context, is that this isn't the first time Africa has experienced colonization, especially by Europeans. There is now a perceived threat of a similar nature. I wonder, and I understand you might not have a definitive answer, which one is more detrimental to Africans. With the previous colonization, we at least knew who was where. However, with the Chinese, it's less clear. I would appreciate your comments on these matters.*

Prof. Carmody:

*- So again, I'd recommend Anita Plummer's book. She's really good talking about the role of publics in Kenya in restraining the government. So, there's a group called the Decoalanz, which has been campaigning against coal-fired power plants, for example, and a variety of other ways in which publics have been able to restrain maybe some of the worst excesses. There was the controversy around tilapia imports in Kenya, where the government did eventually, I think, ban Chinese tilapia imports for a time because fishers were saying they couldn't meet the cost competition. So, the African states, like any state, have to balance and negotiate different social forces and actors, and different social forces can exert more or less power at different points in time. So, it's not that people are powerless, or publics are powerless, far from it. But the state has to pay attention oftentimes, even authoritarian states, like China itself, has to pay significant attention to what the public wants. Where will the resistance come from? I think you talked about that. People in markets, obviously the mining communities in Zambia... There was a mining explosion in 2005 before the election where 50 miners – well, they weren't miners, they were actually working in an explosive factory without any training - were killed, and that set off, along with other things, a wave of anti-Chinese rioting in Zambia. So, there's resistance in different places and times. And again, Oscar was talking about the shift back towards the Western partners in terms of lending, geopolitical influence and orientation, right? So, resistance will also come from certain political elites. Again, depending on what their own personal kind of beliefs are, but also how they feel public opinion is moving and their key constituencies. So, resistance can come in different ways and different times at different places. One of the differences between colonialism and Chinese engagement is that Chinese engagement and power is fundamentally projected through something I call commodity power. What's commodity power? Commodity power is where you have such competitive manufacturing products, that local producers can't compete with them. And that strengthens not only Chinese-centric capital, but it also strengthens this Chinese state by virtue of the tax revenue which is generated and mobilized by those products being produced in China. So, it's a fundamentally geo-economic form of power, which has similarities and differences to colonialism. I mean, the outrages of colonialism – I think China can only – even though of labor abuses and so on – can only pale in comparison to the horrific human rights abuses that were committed during the colonial era. So, I don't know if that kind of speaks to your question.*

Q: (Note: Somewhat rephrased for the sake of clarity)

- First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude for your insightful presentation; it was genuinely beneficial. However, I have a couple of questions and a comment to add. Your presentation touched on the comparison between the European post-colonial powers and the increasing Chinese influence on the African continent. I'm curious about the distinctions between Chinese influence and that of the post-colonial powers. This would be my first question.

Secondly, I'd like to explore the possibility of African countries extricating themselves from what's commonly referred to as the 'diplomacy of the debt trap.' Is there a viable way to escape this situation? Additionally, I want to address concerns related to labor abuse, racism, and the violation of human rights, emphasizing that the Chinese actions may not necessarily be less severe than what the Europeans historically perpetrated in Africa. It's a complex issue, and no one is entirely blameless. Therefore, I would appreciate an elaboration on potential financial policies that could help African nations avoid falling into the 'diplomacy of the debt trap.'

Prof. Carmody:

- So, I think the first thing to say is people are people. We're all complex, we're driven by different emotions. There are cultural differences, but fundamentally, I think people are people. And some people can be brutal and cruel and harsh, irrespective of their nationality. And many people, of course, are lovely and sociable and cooperative and so on and so forth. And that's the primary mode of human engagement. We tend to pay attention to the other side of human nature, which comes to the fore at times. It's an interesting question about how to negotiate China, right? So China is the largest market for African exports. In some years it's the biggest investor, although it's been falling. And by stock, it's still, I think only around fourth position. The Netherlands is even higher than China in terms of the stock of foreign investment. Different countries have been able to negotiate China differently, so the regime type is incredibly important. Meles Zenawi, when he was Prime Minister of Ethiopia, went to China and convinced Chinese investors to come and set up special economic zones in Ethiopia, for example, and was able to leverage engagements with China. Now the main exports from Ethiopia to China is still sesame seeds and nuts, I think. So, the nature of the dependent relationship wasn't reconfigured by those engagements. But nonetheless, it allowed for some manufacturing diversification. It also came with debt, some of which has been fairly recently been rescheduled. Obviously, we've had the civil war and the whole thing has come unstuck, but for other internal political reasons as well. In terms of the difference between China and the so-called postcolonial powers, I think the big difference is in the nature of the Chinese state society complex as manifest through this web power that I was talking about. So, whereas in Western countries you have a relatively autonomous private sector, civil society and governmental sector, that's not the case in China. And what that means is that China is able to much more effectively leverage different axes of power and it has a multi-vector engagement across the continent. So, in the

same way as there was no country not of interest to the United States after World War II, there's now no country on the planet not of interest to the Chinese government. Obviously, some still recognize Taiwan, so there isn't as much engagement with them. And the hundreds of thousands of state-owned corporations which cannot be leveraged to follow the Chinese government's bidding, even as many of those are provincial corporations and city corporations. But nonetheless, they're subject to extensive influence and their chief executives are promoted and embedded in the Chinese Communist Party hierarchy, which operates incredibly tightly. So, the Chinese state, I'd argue, is largely a creature and reflection of the Chinese Communist Party, which doesn't have a legal existence in China. As it doesn't legally exist, it can never be sued. It's coordinated through something called the Red Phone Network. There are about 3,000 people with Red Phones on their desks and there's a special military unit that directs their calls through this red phone network. They're meant to be able to recognize people by voice alone. So, there is extremely tight coordination internally in the Communist Party and the organs of state are in some sense secondary to that highly coordinated, organized, disciplined, regulated social force that is the CCP.

Q: (Note: Somewhat rephrased for the sake of clarity)

- Thank you. My name is Imanuel. Interestingly, I'm coming from China, but I'm originally from Ghana.

I have both a comment and a question. Firstly, when discussing the 'debt trap,' one thing that comes to mind is that we can't discuss China and Africa without considering the role of the US. It's becoming evident that there's a gradual shift towards China, with African countries turning to China for loans and other forms of support. The US is now trying to reassure Africa that it's still a relevant player.

Additionally, we shouldn't overlook the fact that China often presents itself as non-interfering, even though the depth and intentions of this stance compared to the Western approach can be questionable. It's akin to seeking a loan in China with a 20% interest rate, and then in the US with a 10% interest rate. However, in the case of the US, it's like they add certain conditions. For instance, they might ask, 'Why do you allow your children to watch TV after 10 PM?' If you continue to allow your children to watch TV after 10 PM, we won't grant the loan.

To illustrate this, let's imagine you have two bakeries that sell the same bread with the same ingredients. You visit one bakery, and the baker says his bread costs five forints. At another, they ask for 20 forints. Then, you go to the fifth bakery, and they say, 'Why don't you allow your children to watch TV after 10 PM? You should allow them to do so. If you don't, I won't sell you my bread.' Now, based on your circumstances and resources, you have to consider not letting your children watch TV after 10 PM. So, the alternative is to buy the bread for 20 forints, even though it's more expensive, but it comes with fewer complications.

*This highlights the complex relationship that China has with Africa. As the US seeks to strengthen its ties with Africa to counter Chinese and we should also consider the emerging influence of Russia.*

*“America wants to keep reassuring the countries and the leaders of Africa, like – ‘We didn’t forget you.’ You know, we were isolationist, pretty much for the last four years of the last administration. We want to say, ‘Hey, we’re back.’” These were the words of First Lady Dr. Jill Biden, after her visit to Africa. How do you view this renewed interest by the US in Africa? Is it a case of ‘too little, too late?’*

**Prof. Carmody:**

*- So just to speak to your first point about conditionality. So Western loans typically, as you say, come with conditionality, the World Bank and the IMF, which we see many African countries now being subject to again, given the debt crisis on the continent. But if you think about it, there’s been a rescaling of conditionality. So, when you take sometimes loans from China, you have to do debt for infrastructure swaps and pay in resources. Maybe you have to use Chinese construction companies to build the project. So, it’s not that there’s not conditionality; it’s re-scaled. Secondly, the non-interference principle has been weakening and there are new strategic concepts in China, like creative engagement. If you look at China’s first overseas military bases, apparently there’s plans to build others on the continent and elsewhere. You can think about the combat mission of Chinese troops in South Sudan in 2013, the first combat mission. Also, people say if you’re supplying Robert Mugabe’s regime with weapons, radio jamming equipment and other things to beat and suppress the opposition, is that non-interference? Is that what we’re defining as non-interference? So again, non-interference is a discursive construction which is very malleable and subject to interpretation and change depending on the political, geopolitical context and consequences around it.*

*In terms of it too little too late from the US? Well, I mean, this is great power competition. So, it’s not a question of being in favor of the US or against China. This is great power competition to access resources, markets, geopolitical support, and other things of interest. In addition to being driven by other motives like humanitarianism and altruism, again people are complex. We’re not just driven by materiality. We have emotions. We have values. We have ideas ourselves. So, you can’t oversimplify it. So, I think the Chinese government has such power advantages that the US government and European governments will find it very, very difficult to compete, given the established position and the continuing power resources of the Chinese state.*

**Q: (Note: Somewhat rephrased for the sake of clarity)**

*- Thank you, Professor, for the insightful presentation. I’m Tolera, and I’m originally from Ethiopia. Currently, I’m an exchange student at the University of Paris. My question revolves around Ethiopia and China’s presence in the country. We’ve noticed a shift from large-scale construction projects to Chinese ownership of small*

shops in Addis Ababa. These shops are having an impact on our existing relations and economic dynamics.

But my question also extends to a broader perspective concerning North Africa. We've been observing growing strategic controversies as superpowers and even middle powers engage in competition in the region. Despite facing challenges in terms of soft power, China is exploring alternative strategies, as you've mentioned. For instance, there's an ongoing crisis and conflict in Sudan, and it appears that China continues to show interest in its engagement there.

I'm concerned that a trend is emerging in the Horn of Africa. Due to the presence of various stakeholders seeking strategic resources, access to trade routes, and market opportunities, there's a growing possibility of confrontations. Do you believe that the Horn of Africa could become a focal point for superpower confrontations, potentially involving military actions or proxy conflicts?

Prof. Carmody:

- Thank you. So I think that has already happened previously to an extent, when there was conflict between Sudan and South Sudan - if you want to call them that -, the Chinese sided effectively with the North, but they maintained relations with the southerners also because there's no harm in maintaining relations, good relations with everybody. And the Americans were effectively pro southern Sudanese independence. So, the Horn of Africa is a geopolitical fracture zone where you see, periodically, proxy wars being fought. I remember speaking to a British military officer in Ethiopia and him saying to me that he was on a training mission. He said: "Well, we train them; they're here fighting our wars for us, so we don't have to." So, he was very explicit about it. He was talking about the Somali conflict at that time. So, these things, these are not new things. I guess what is different in the current context is that we're in an era of what some people refer to now as the post-American world. Where American hegemony is in decline and being vigorously contested. And the kind of global public good of stability and order, even though the United States breached that itself through illegal invasions in Iraq, for example, nonetheless had a suppressive effect on conflict, despite the massive social inequalities and political inequalities within and between states. Nonetheless, American hegemony had a broadly suppressive effect on conflict. But now we're in a new geopolitical era, there's been a so-called revival of geopolitics, most acutely expressed through the invasion of Ukraine, and that some people argue is also part of what's happening in Africa. As the United States is distracted and weakened and declining in relative power - although this is again, dialectical - it's been able to leverage and build a coalition quite effectively to counter Russia and its invasion of Ukraine. So, these things are dialectical, but I think that's what some people have argued that I've seen recently.

Q: (Note: Somewhat rephrased for the sake of clarity)

- I just wanted to briefly emphasize what you mentioned regarding Africans not being powerless. The prevailing narrative often portrays China as the one in control while Africans are perceived as having no agency. However, the reality is quite different; Africans do possess agency and can exercise their power. This can be seen in various instances, such as negotiations. Take Ethiopia, for example, which negotiated a more favorable deal than Kenya when it came to building a railway line. You also touched upon South African dockworkers who refused to unload arms destined for Zimbabwe, deeming it unethical. In Zambia, there were protests against the visiting Chinese president, specifically in areas where miners had been affected.

So, when we consider where resistance may emerge, it's important to acknowledge these pockets of agency within African societies. In various situations, Africans have displayed their capacity to influence outcomes, from negotiations in Angola that led to better deals to legal action taken by Kenyan citizens to address environmental concerns. In essence, Africans have agency, and they exercise it at multiple levels, from grassroots initiatives to government-level negotiations. I just wanted to highlight this aspect of our discussion.

Q2: (Note: Somewhat rephrased for the sake of clarity)

- Before you comment on it right away, I would like to add to this geopolitical and competitive context. I fully agree with the notion of increasing African agency, where Africans are making decisions and choices for themselves in a landscape filled with numerous options. As you mentioned, there are indeed various actors at play, and you also touched upon the rise of competitive developmental geopolitics. So, my question is, who do you think and see are the major competitors for China in Africa.

Prof. Carmody:

- So, Benjamin Barton has a great book out about the Doraleh Disputes, and he talks about the way the Guelleh regime in Djibouti was able to leverage China for its own strategic objectives. Djibouti only became independent in 1977, but he was able to leverage Chinese investment to his own ends of regime maintenance and displacing other powers that were felt to be less beneficial to that. So, I think it's absolutely right. Also, there's differentiated levels of power that different people have. So, some people may be very powerful, other people may have relatively limited power. So, there's huge, huge differences. In terms of the major competitors... I mean, that's an interesting question. You could read it at two kinds of levels. You could read it at the level of great power, geopolitical and geoeconomic competition, or you could read it at the level of competition around alternative visions of the future. You could read it from a kind of societal level. So, what social forces internally in the continent will carry a progressive social agenda around which people can mobilize and through which external actors can be more effectively leveraged, negotiated, bargained with and ultimately hopefully disciplined to achieve socioeconomic benefits for the majority of the population. In terms of the great power competition, I think Africa



*holds an interesting, kind of discursive position. If you look at the total level of Chinese investment in the continent, it's around the same as there is in Germany. So, one country in Europe, the biggest economy in Europe, but nonetheless one country in Europe. It serves as a space primarily of discursive contestation. It serves a very useful discursive function. The Chinese foreign minister's first visit every year is to Africa. And that's putting a marker down. It's sending a signal that China is a Southern country that has suffered under Western intervention and colonialism - not to the same degree, maybe as many other places, but nonetheless there's that shared history there. And it serves as useful discursive function, as a marker to the rest of the global south, other regions of which, particularly in Southeast Asia, are more economically important to China, that there is this enduring south-south solidarity. And the sense the renewed Western interest is again, largely around discourse and the performance of geopolitics, if I can call it that. That is that because Africans are perceived oftentimes and presented in Western media as being powerless and therefore easy prey to supposedly nefarious Chinese actors that the West has a kind of moral duty to intervene and to offer an alternative to these supposedly predatory practices that are being put in place by Chinese actors.*

Q: (Note: Somewhat rephrased for the sake of clarity)

*- I'd like to revisit the 1980s. In 1979, Moscow invaded and occupied Afghanistan. Jimmy Carter urged his allies not to participate in the Moscow Olympics. Kenya abstained from sending a runner, even though winning medals holds immense significance for African athletes. Evidently, Kenya's decision was not solely based on its national interests. Four years later, the Olympics took place in Los Angeles. Moscow, in turn, asked its satellite states not to compete. The ones who suffered were the athletes. Doesn't this illustrate that Africa is still under some form of colonization?*

Prof. Carmody:

*- I don't think so. It may have been a particular reading of interests that Kenya has traditionally been more aligned to the Western powers. I know the British and American militaries keep supplies, I think, in Kenya. There are training missions and so on. And Kenya has been more in the Western orbit where, obviously, Ethiopia at that time is more in the Soviet orbit. And so, I would say those decisions probably resulted from a reading of the material interest, not of the runners, but of the regimes in place and their political interests. So, I don't think you can say that Africa is still colonized. As Agnes was pointing out, African governments have a huge amount of latitude, even within the constraints of the neoliberal trade and international capital regimes to be able to implement effective economic and social policies. But it's around the social constitution of African states, their constituencies, and ideation, the articulation of alternative visions. And there are some around that. There's an alternative economist network around finance being set up in Africa I was hearing about the other week. Whereas the World Bank and the Western land institutions have been very effective at socializing neoliberal economics into the African policy*

elites, it doesn't equate to colonization. You could say it's maybe hegemony, but to me colonialism was direct territorial control associated with military invasion. In a sense, military invasion was the precursor to economic globalization. So, we're in a different era. There are huge power differences between different states and different social forces. I'm not disputing that in any way, the massive power differentials that exist. But juridical sovereignty does offer African states at least in theory, if oftentimes not in practice, the ability to institute and practice different sorts of economic and social policies which are potentially more inclusive and economically transformative. So, it's a complex question. There are elements of neocolonialism, for example. If you look at the trade structure, the raw material exports for manufactured imports. We've seen that before. If you go to the National Famine Memorial in Ireland, you go up to the children's bedroom - It was an old Anglo-Irish stately home- and there's a game called the Colonial Game where they taught their children to export manufactured goods and import raw materials cheap. So those practices still continue. So, I'm not in any way kind of disputing that, but it's complex.

## Note

<sup>1</sup> Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Six new members will be admitted from January 2024.

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# AFRICA'S STANCE IN THE RUSSIA-UKRAINIAN WAR: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTNERSHIP WITH CHINA AND RUSSIA

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## Abstract

China's President Xi Jinping and Russia's President Vladimir Putin have repeatedly hailed a 'no limits' partnership between their respective countries to the displeasure of the United States in light of the ongoing war in Ukraine. Therefore, it has become more apparent that the long-term goals of the Russian and Chinese foreign policies are to establish a new world order by reinstating their countries as great powers while challenging the U.S.-led global hegemony. The current geopolitical turbulence accelerated by the great power rivalry has not only shattered the international order that has existed since the end of the Cold War, but also reframed partnerships where the role of African states are becoming more prominent. Notably, while Martin Kimani, Kenya's UN envoy, was widely praised for his powerful speech reaffirming Kenya's respect for the territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders during the Security Council's emergency session (21 February 2022), 25 of Africa's 54 states abstained or did not vote to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine during the emergency session of the UN General Assembly (A/RES/ES-11/1) in March 2022. This equivocal reaction contrasted sharply not only with the widespread condemnation of Russia's assault from every other region but also with African states' official positions on preserving territorial integrity and borders within Africa.

The study, therefore, seeks to explore Africa's stance in light of the ongoing war and how the interests and (re)actions of African states contribute to furthering Russia's goal of weakening the United States as a dominant power. The study applies a qualitative approach by drawing from literature on Africa's relations with Russia and analyzing media and NGO reports on contemporary events, official communications of African officials, and voting patterns of African states in the UN General Assembly in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine. Initial findings suggest that several factors contribute to the hesitant position of some African countries. These include the legacy of colonial and imperial control, arms trading, food security, discriminatory treatment of African students in Ukraine, and the U.S. Congress' anti-Russian legislation (H.R. 7311, the Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act), which punishes African nations for their political and economic ties with Russia. These factors reinforce neo-colonialism in Africa.

## Keywords

*Russia-Ukraine War, Africa, China, UN Votes*

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## Introduction

Russia launched a military offensive in Ukraine on the night of 23<sup>rd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022. The United Nations considers this attack to be a violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty (UN Sustainable Development Group, 2022). Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has set alight the bloodiest conflict in Europe, leading to tens of thousands of deaths on both sides and creating Europe's largest refugee wave since World War II (International Rescue Committee, 2022). The conflict is not only causing a humanitarian, social, and economic crisis for the Ukrainian (International Rescue Committee, 2022) people, but is also affecting the global economy, accentuating the disruption of the supplies of commodities, especially in the food and energy sector, and threatening the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic (OECD, 2022: 2). In addition, the Russian invasion of Ukraine is an existential crisis and a direct challenge to the international security order.

In light of the ongoing war, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted on Wednesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2022 an emergency resolution (A/RES/ES-11/1) (UN General Assembly Resolutions Tables, 2022) deploring the "aggression" committed by Russia against Ukraine (141 votes in favor, 5 against, and 35 abstentions). Notably, while Martin Kimani, Kenya's UN envoy, was widely praised for his powerful speech reaffirming Kenya's respect for the territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders during the Security Council's emergency session (21 February 2022), 25 of Africa's 54 states abstained or did not vote to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine (Siegle, 2022). This number rose on April 7<sup>th</sup> 2022, when 22 African countries, which included powerhouses like Nigeria, abstained from voting to suspend Russia from the UN Human Rights Council. Similarly, on October 12<sup>th</sup> 2022, a total of 35 states, including India, China, and 19 African countries, abstained from voting at a UN General Assembly resolution, which called on the international community to not recognize any of Moscow's annexation claims (Mishra, 2023). This equivocal reaction contrasted sharply not only with the widespread condemnation of Russia's assault from every other region but also with African states' official positions on preserving territorial integrity and borders within Africa.

In light of the war, Africa's stance is becoming very prominent considering the current geopolitical turbulence that is accelerated by the ongoing power rivalry existing between Russia, China, and the United States since the end of the Cold War. China's President Xi Jinping and Russia's President Vladimir Putin have, to the displeasure of the US, repeatedly hailed a 'no limits' partnership between their respective countries in light of the ongoing war in Ukraine (Association of Global South Studies, 2023). Therefore, it has become more apparent that the long-term goals of the Russian and Chinese foreign policies are to establish a new world order by reinstating their countries as great powers while challenging the U.S.-led global hegemony. The high number of voting abstentions from the African countries was widely interpreted as a sign of Russian influence or evidence of the growing anti-Westernism of African governments and citizens.

This study explores Africa's stances, focusing on the high number of abstentions during the UN resolution votes in light of the ongoing war. The study demonstrates how Africa's interests and (re)actions contribute to furthering Russia and China's goal of weakening the United States as a dominant power. The research, therefore, seeks to explore what factors may contribute to or explain the voting pattern of African countries during the UN resolution vote.

### **Methods, materials, sources, and the structure of the paper**

This paper is primarily based on desk research through the use of publicly available documents and secondary sources. These secondary sources included reports such as press releases and media reports. Current Affairs Publications from *The Conversation* and *The Diplomat*, as well as newspapers such as Reuters, BBC News, Aljazeera, DW News, and Foreign Policy Newsletters with a focus on Africa, Europe, and international politics were among the sources reviewed to reconstruct contemporary relations between Africa, Russia, and China. The search for the relevant academic literature was done using Google Scholar and Scopus as the primary search engines. The content of journals was browsed for articles on African–Russian relations from World War I until the first anniversary of the Russian–Ukrainian War in February 2023.

This paper is divided into three major sections structuring the findings. The first part explores the dynamics of African, Chinese, and Russian relations by mapping the historical and contemporary relations between Africa–Russia, Africa–China, and Russia–China, respectively. This section exposes the reader to an overview of the relationship dynamics that existed before the Russian–Ukrainian war since World War I. Using data results from the UN vote, the second section analyses Africa's stance by exploring the possible factors contributing to the rationale behind the vote of the African countries. The final section concludes by assessing how Africa's stance could shape partnership (economic, security) opportunities with Russia and China.

### **The Triangle of African–Russian–Chinese relations**

#### ***Africa–Russia Relations: A Historical Overview***

In recent years, Russia has rekindled its historic ties with countries on the African continent. Many of these relations were first established by Russia's communist predecessor, the Soviet Union, during the Cold War. Its involvement was driven by a mixture of ideological commitment, pragmatic economic interests, and the need to build alliances during the Cold War (Siegle, 2022). The Soviet Union supported anti-colonial movements in several African countries, offering training and funding to independence movements and facilitating academic exchange programs for young people across the continent. The newly independent African countries desperately needed to find economic partners other than their former colonial powers to help them build their economies and survive long-term (Besliu, 2022). Several of these ultimately became theatres for protracted Cold War proxy wars since Africa became

a sort of military training or experimental field where the United States or the Soviet Union could challenge each other without ‘white’ losses. Such Proxy wars included the Ethio-Somali war (1977 to 1978) and the Angolan civil war (1975 to 2002) (Besliu, 2022).

The Soviet Union engaged with many regimes across the continent, which varied from region to region, including Modibo Keita in Mali and Sekou Touré in Guinea (Besliu, 2022). The Soviet Union established a multifaceted partnership with Mali after gaining independence in 1960. In 1961, the two countries signed trade, economic, and cultural cooperation agreements, allowing Mali to reduce its dependency on France (Matusevich, 2019). It also built infrastructure, such as a cement factory and a gold mining enterprise, to aid Mali’s industrial development. Keita’s regime in Mali was overthrown in 1968, with power taken by a government that improved relations with France (Matusevich, 2019). However, Mali continued to receive military aid from the Soviet Union, such as pilot training and artillery and parachute training (Matusevich, 2019). Guinea was another country that held deep relations with the Soviet Union. After independence from France in 1958, Guinea became the first former French colony in West Africa to refuse membership in the French community and instead opted for complete independence (Maclean, 2019). This move led France to withdraw support. Guinea’s leader, Sekou Touré rejected the United States as an ally and courted the Soviet Union instead. Guinea received arms and equipment, military training, and economic assistance (Besliu, 2022). The Soviet Union also gave Guinea millions of dollars in aid, supporting its industry and constructing cement and leather mills. The West African country’s relationship with the Soviet Union fluctuated over the years, from rapprochement with the United States during the Kennedy administration to allowing the Soviets to use its airfields during the Angolan war (Besliu, 2022).

However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and being preoccupied with domestic challenges, the Russian Federation faced a decade-long social and economic crisis (Taylor & Williams, 2004). Its political and financial commitments and involvements significantly declined in Africa during the 1990s and early 2000s, though the legacy of ties remained. As Russia’s economic conditions improved and its geopolitical role was bolstered by a more aggressive foreign policy under President Vladimir Putin, Russian involvement on the African continent has revived (Taylor & Williams, 2004).

### *A Contemporary Perspective on African–Russian Relations*

Russia’s interest in Africa was reignited following the oil boom of the first decade of the 21st century. Buoyed by newfound economic strength, Russia set out to establish a multipolar world in which it could have a pivotal role, and simultaneously, Syria and certain African countries offered the opportunity for Russia to challenge the United States. Since then, Russia has expanded its partnerships on the African continent (Stronski, 2019). In 2008, President Vladimir Putin visited Libya, a country that previously enjoyed close ties with the Soviet Union. Putin discussed energy



and arms sales and cleared billions of dollars of Libyan Soviet-era debt (Fasanotti, 2016). Then, in 2009, elected President Dmitry Medvedev embarked on a four-day trip to Africa, visiting countries such as Egypt, Nigeria, Namibia, and Angola, accompanied by a 400-strong business delegation, including heads of key Russian companies such as Gazprom. The trip focused on energy and mineral exploration and the sale of Russian technology (Besliu, 2022).

Hoping to reset the U.S.-Russia relationship and increase its influence in Africa, Medvedev's Russia abstained from a vote in the UN Security Council in 2011, enabling a US-led NATO intervention in Libya (Heisten, 2020). The Russian president took this decision despite security officials warning him about its potential to extend US hegemony and, then Prime Minister Putin, decrying a possible rise in extremist movements in case of a NATO intervention (Heisten, 2020). Enabling NATO's intervention proved disastrous for Russia. The intervention contributed to regime change and Libya's destabilization and jeopardized 6.5 billion dollars' worth of signed or verbally promised contracts for Russian energy companies (Besliu, 2022). Instead of resetting US-Russia relations, the intervention made Putin, who would soon regain the presidency, more distrustful of the West:

NATO's intervention heightened Putin's sense of vulnerability. If a leader like Gaddafi, who accepted Western terms, was nevertheless brutally removed from power, who could guarantee that this would not happen in other places, including Russia? Muammar Gaddafi was one of the most significant political figures in the modern history of Libya and one of the most influential regional leaders in Africa who ruled Libya for 4 decades after successfully being appointed as the head of government in a series of military coups led by him (Firdaus, 2020). In 2011, the NATO-led intervention in Libya resulted in the violent death of the country's eccentric dictator Muammar Gaddafi (Kjell, Marcus, & Charlotte, 2014). After the killing of Gaddafi, Putin flatly denied there was a U.S.-Russia alliance at the time, stating: "I sometimes feel that America does not need allies. It needs vassals" (Reuters, 2011)

Western sanctions enacted following Russia's occupation of Crimea and more comprehensive interventions in Ukraine since 2014 led Russia to redouble its efforts in Africa (Besliu, 2022). Russia re-entered the stage at a time of growing discontent.

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France, in particular, is seen as continuing a policy of imperialism in West Africa through conditional support and profitable business deals (Grimsson, et al., 2019). Increasing numbers of African leaders also felt disillusioned with China's offer of an alternative, as it indebted African partners with its loans while conducting its projects with Chinese workers and experts (Grimsson, et al., 2019). This disappointment has led countries such as Ghana to cancel Chinese-led initiatives (Grimsson, et al., 2019). Russia's re-engagement also coincided with US disengagement from the region under Donald Trump, whose priorities included Iran, China, and American isolationism.

Russia has rekindled relations with former allies, such as Guinea and Mali, and entered into a new partnership with the Central African Republic (CAR) (Ling, 2023). In 2018, Moscow swooped into Bangui, Central African Republic (CAR), with arms and mercenaries to prop up President Faustin-Archange Touadera's fragile government in exchange for mineral rights (Ling, 2023). A former Russian intelligence officer is now a national security advisor, and Moscow is considering opening up a military base in the CAR (Ling, 2023). In Sudan, Russia provided diplomatic, financial, and arms support to the beleaguered government of Omar al-Bashir, who, overseeing economic mismanagement and rapidly rising inflation, was ousted in a military coup in April 2019 following widespread protests to his 30 years in power (SMA TRADOC White Paper-Russian Strategic Intentions, 2019).

Russia's outreach to Africa is more than short-term opportunism. Moscow has also strategically pursued mineral access, weapon sales, negotiated security cooperation agreements, nuclear power development, and trade relationships in selected African countries. African Export-Import Bank President Benedict Oramah said in an interview with Russia's state-owned Tass news agency, cited by the Russia Briefing investment news site, that trade between Russia and African countries has doubled since 2015, to about \$20 billion a year (Guensburg, 2022). He stated that Russia exported \$14 billion worth of goods and services and imported roughly \$5 billion in African products from 2015 to 2020 (Guensburg, 2022). This has resulted in a steady growth of Russia's trade with Africa over the past decade. Targeted countries include partnerships existing during the Cold War era, mineral-rich Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, and countries with large populations and growing markets (Guensburg, 2022). Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has made several trips to the African continent over the past few years. More recently, on October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019, the Black Sea resort town of Sochi welcomed more than 3,000 delegates – forty-three of whom were heads of state and government – from all fifty-four African states for the first-ever Russia–Africa Summit and Economic Forum, hosted by Russia's president Vladimir Putin and Egypt's president Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi (Couch, 2019). According to a report, Putin wrote off approximately \$24 billion in African debt during the two-day summit (Couch, 2019). The first-ever Russia–Africa summit also generated diplomatic agreements and billions of dollars in deals involving arms, energy, agriculture, banking, and more, said the organizer, the Roscongress Foundation (DW News, 2019). While preparation is ongoing for the

next Russia-Africa Summit to be held in St. Petersburg in July 2023 (Roncongress, 2023), the unprecedented gathering of the maiden Russian-African summit is widely seen as a response or contribution to Beijing's Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.

### *Africa–China relations*

An overview of the Africa–China relations is vital in light of the ongoing war in Ukraine, considering that China's relationship with African countries has deepened significantly since the turn of the millennium (Taylor, 2009), as has its influence on the continent, reflecting China's rise to superpower status. China's activities in Africa began with Beijing's support of liberation movements, fighting colonial rule (Kieran 2009), and for every year since 1950, bar one, the foreign minister of the People's Republic of China (PRC) has first visited an African country (Mboya, 2022). In 1971, the votes of African countries were instrumental in winning the PRC's control of China's seat in the UN General Assembly and Security Council – displacing representatives from Chinese nationalist forces, who had been defeated in the civil war and now governed Taiwan (Taylor, 2009). In the late 1990s, China's commercial engagement intensified, and in 1999, China created its 'Going Out' strategy, which encouraged Chinese companies to invest beyond China (Vines & Wallace, 2023). Chinese engagement also became official in 2013 with the Belt and Road Initiative (Tarrósy, 2020), a well-resourced effort to build political influence and grow commercial relationships throughout the developing world (Vines & Wallace, 2023). Key activities include lending for infrastructure development engineered and constructed by Chinese companies and resource extraction by Chinese mining and energy firms (Carmody, 2023).

While certain countries, including Ethiopia, Angola, and Zambia, have been a priority, China has grown its presence in almost every African country (Bodomo, 2010). Since 2000, China has held the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation every three years (Bodomo, 2010), which is widely seen as an essential means of advancing Chinese diplomatic and commercial interests. Over the decades since the Cold War, Chinese influence in Africa has increased significantly (Vines & Wallace, 2023). China is Africa's largest two-way trading partner, hitting \$254 billion in 2021, exceeding U.S.-Africa trade by a factor of four (Mboya, 2022). China is the largest provider of foreign direct investment, supporting hundreds of thousands of African jobs. This is roughly double the U.S. foreign

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direct investment (Sheehy, 2022). Although Chinese lending to African countries has recently decreased, China remains the largest lender to African countries. Given China's booming economy, which has become the second largest in the world, its commercial activity in Africa is expected to increase. This is due to their need for raw materials to support their large manufacturing base (Brautigam, 2015). Despite numerous debates and controversies regarding China in Africa (Brautigam, 2015), their unprecedented presence represents a strong effort by the Chinese government to make significant progress in Africa. Furthermore, the BRICS countries include China alongside Russia, emerging as new effective actors in the world arena but particularly deepening its engagement in Africa (Deych, 2015).

### ***Russia–China Relations (focusing on Africa)***

The People's Republic of China (PRC or China) and the Russian Federation (Russia) maintain a strategic and multifaceted relationship with extensive military, diplomatic, and economic connections. Although the contemporary China-Russia relationship dates back to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Barrios & Bowen, 2023), the two countries also share a long, tumultuous history that has included periods of security and diplomatic cooperation, fluctuations in ideological alignment, diplomatic crises, and a border war in the 1960s (Kendall-Taylor & Shullman, 2022). Russian and Chinese capacities complement each other. China has the world's biggest economy; Russia has the most extensive nuclear arsenal (Barrios & Bowen, 2023). China has money but needs fossil fuels; Russia has fossil fuels but needs money. Together, the two might be able to build a "de-dollarized" financial system immune to Western sanctions, and each validates the other's authoritarianism, much as fascist dictators did in the 1930s (Morris, 2022).

Many experts trace the current dynamism of the relationship to the previous Russian aggression in Ukraine in 2014. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 significantly accelerated the slow warming of the relationship that started in the waning days of the Cold War (Morris, 2022). Convinced that it had no real economic opportunities in the West, the Kremlin turned to China to help offset Western pressure (Morris, 2022). At that time, China's initial support for Moscow was tepid. Beijing was vaguely critical of the West for supposedly causing the crisis, never verbally supporting Russian annexation, abstaining from key UN resolutions, and allowing Chinese firms to abide by U.S. and European sanctions (Morris, 2022). China also took advantage of Russia's increased economic dependence to drive a hard bargain on key energy deals (Morris, 2022).

However, Beijing eventually leaned into its partnership with Russia. While Moscow's need to diversify away from the West energized relations, Beijing also came around to recognize the utility of building a stronger relationship with the Kremlin (Bossuyt & Kaczmarek 2021). In particular, the China-Russia partnership crystallized around a fundamentally similar view of the United States as a primary strategic threat and competitor regarding power. Both Xi and Putin view U.S. support for democracies in their regions—and those fighting repression and authoritarianism

inside China and Russia – as an effort to extend influence and ultimately overthrow their regimes (Kendall-Taylor & Shullman 2022). The leaders also view the U.S. alliance network – including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Quad grouping in the Indo-Pacific – as a direct challenge to their security and their regimes (Kendall-Taylor & Shullman 2022). The two countries’ apparent mutual affinity has led some U.S. policymakers and Members of Congress to express concern that Beijing and Moscow constitute a *de facto* alliance and to seek ways to counter their global influence (Barrios & Bowen, 2023). The PRC and Russia’s bilateral relationship falls short of a mutual defense pact, more closely resembling a non-binding alignment based on shared opposition to what they describe as the U.S.-led international order. This joint opposition has spurred cooperation between the two countries but has not fully overcome their historical strategic mistrust.

In the wake of Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Russia’s reliance on China’s economic and political support has grown (McDonald, 2023). At the same time, the war has drawn increased scrutiny to the Beijing–Moscow relationship, including the extent to which China is willing and able to help relieve sanction pressures on Russia. Some observers believe Russia’s invasion has strained relations, with China unaware of Russia’s plans and unwilling to be drawn into the conflict (Kendall-Taylor & Shullman, 2022). Nonetheless, China has avoided public condemnation of Russia’s actions. Russia, meanwhile, appears to be turning to China to circumvent Western sanctions, including selling oil and purchasing critical components for its defense industry (Kendall-Taylor & Shullman, 2022). Trade data suggests some PRC firms may be providing dual-use goods to Russia, but it remains unclear how much support China is supplying Russia. Media reports suggest the PRC government is selective in its engagement, allowing transactions that maximize advantages to China – such as buying oil at a discount, but not supplying lethal weaponry (Kendall-Taylor & Shullman, 2022). Considering a new dimension of Russian-China relations and each country’s pivotal role on the African continent, combined with their joint opposition against a U.S.-led international order, analyzing Africa’s position in light of the ongoing war in Ukraine is crucial.

### **Africa’s Stance in Light of the On-Going War in Ukraine**

Even though African countries are struggling with high inflation, the effects of drought, and a lack of Ukrainian imports (Gbadamosi, 2022), China has made it clear it will provide support to the continent only if Africa pushes back against what Beijing calls Western interference in the war, especially the sanctions aimed at the government of Russian President Vladimir Putin (Stallard, 2023). Meanwhile, on the day of the invasion, February 24<sup>th</sup>, the African Union unequivocally called on Russia to respect “the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Ukraine,” while Kenya’s U.N. ambassador, Martin Kimani, spoke for many when he compared Russian aggression to that of Africa’s former colonial masters (Cocks, 2022).

The African continent has emerged as an unexpected player in the Ukrainian conflict. A new geopolitical order could take shape, one where Africa revives its

Votes in favour	Votes: abstained	Absent from voting	Votes against
Benin, Cabo Verde, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Zambia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, STP, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Tunisia	Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burundi, CAR, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe	Morocco, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Comoros, Guinea, Somalia	Eritrea

▲ Table 1. Votes during the 24 March 2022 UN Resolution about the Russia-Ukraine war (Ton, 2022)

historical position of nonalignment with the West and defends its own interests. However, considering the voting records in the UN General Assembly, seen in Table 1., history is unlikely to repeat itself as African countries increasingly align their various interests with Russia's and Beijing's ambitions, seemingly at the expense of their past relationship with the West.

The high number of abstentions from the African countries was widely interpreted as a sign of Russian influence or evidence of the growing anti-Westernism of African governments and citizens. The factors introduced and explained below are possible reasons for the absenteeism of some African nations resonating as support to the Russians.

### ***Imperialist control***

African people's deep anti-colonial and anti-Western resentment does not include Russia since the latter's colonial past did not extend to Africa (Smith, 2023). Russia, at that time, the Soviet Union, instead backed many liberation movements in Africa at a time of Western political dominance. For instance, during apartheid in South Africa, the Soviets offered funding and paramilitary training to the liberation movement that became the governing African National Congress (ANC) after democracy in 1994 (Muronzi 2023). South Africa, therefore, has positive memories of warm relations forged during the Soviet era regarding its own fight against apartheid. Jacob Zuma's presidency from 2009 to 2018 was the pinnacle of the relationship when interpersonal ties in both governments formed a solid basis for cooperation (Vines2023). Similarly, in Zimbabwe, the Soviets supported the African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) when the party fought a settler Rhodesian government from the 1960s until independence in 1980 (Nolutshungu, 1982). The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) received help from the Soviets to gain independence from Portugal in 1975 (Meijer & Birmingham 2004). Tanzania's Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) ruling party and Namibia's ruling SWAPO party were based on socialist or communist doctrine, and these movements received help from the Soviet Union (Bagnetto 2022). South Africa, and five other

liberation movements in southern Africa that have such historical ties with the former Soviet Union, all abstained in the vote. Therefore, the legacy of the 1960s and 1970s Third-Worldism still shapes the views of Africa's governments and citizens, particularly manifested amongst some African states pitching an alignment towards Russia in the ongoing war in Ukraine.

### *Arms trade and military aid*

Military and security cooperation is a key factor in the relationship between Russia and several African countries and may account for the reasoning behind the assumed support for Russia in light of the ongoing war. In fact, with a market share of 37.6%, Russia is the top weapons supplier to Africa, followed by the US with 16%, France with 14%, and China with 9% (Nia, 2020). These include major arms (battle tanks, warships, fighter aircraft, and combat helicopters) and small arms (pistols and assault rifles, such as the new Kalashnikov AK-200 series rifle) (Nia, 2020). Algeria reportedly remains the largest recipient of Russian arms in Africa, followed by Egypt, Sudan, and Angola (Nia, 2020). According to a 2020 German daily Bild, citing a secret German Foreign Ministry report, Russia is planning to step up its military cooperation with African countries as part of its new Africa strategy, including building bases in six countries: namely the Central African Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Sudan (Daily Sabah, 2020). Moreover, Russia's army is partially secretly and partially officially training soldiers from those countries, according to the report, which claimed, for instance, that 180 Russian army instructors were currently based in the Central African Republic or elsewhere in Africa, adding that "around 20 Malian soldiers are trained in Russia every year" (Daily Sabah, 2020). In fact, since 2015, Russia has concluded military cooperation agreements with 21 countries in Africa, according to the German report (Daily Sabah, 2020). Previously, there were only four military cooperation treaties across the entire continent.

By the end of 2021 alone, Russia had signed military cooperation agreements with Nigeria and Ethiopia, Africa's two most populous nations (Smith, 2021). In Ethiopia, Russia has supported Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government after Western governments balked at his forces' military response to an insurgency in northern Tigray (Alemseged, 2022). Ethiopia felt the U.S., in particular, was aligning with Egypt in the ongoing dispute over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken further evoked the ire of Addis Ababa in March 2021 by accusing forces in Tigray of "ethnic cleansing." Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov then met with Ethiopian counterpart Demeke Mekonnen in June (Abbay, 2022). Russia has supplied strategic weapons both as a potential defense against any Egyptian strike on the GERD, and to aid government forces in Tigray. Ethiopia and Russia signed a military cooperation agreement in July 2021, focused explicitly on knowledge and technology transfers, but simultaneously providing weapons to fight against the "Gains by the Tigray Defence Force (TDF), which had captured parts of the Afar and Amhara (Lanfranchi & Bruijne, 2022).

Russians are therefore interested in presenting themselves as reliable security partners, which is attractive to other countries on the African Continent. South Africa is holding a joint military exercise with Russia and China that opposition figures say amounts to an endorsement of Russia's invasion of Ukraine (BBC News, 2023). The US has also criticized the 10-day naval drills in South Africa, which will continue over the first anniversary of the war in Ukraine (BBC News, 2023). It must be noted that South Africa previously abstained from a UN vote condemning the invasion (UN General Assembly Resolutions Tables, 2022). It also refused to join the US and Europe in imposing sanctions on Russia. Apart from the fact that South Africa's governing African National Congress (ANC) also has long-standing ties with Russia, which dates back to the years of white-minority rule before 1994 (Arkhangelskaya & Shubin 2013), South Africa is also taking part in the joint-military exercise because its armed forces are underfunded and overstretched, according to Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, head of the South African Institute of International Affairs (BBC News, 2023). The navy's priorities are to protect fisheries in its home waters and combat piracy in the Indian Ocean. South Africa, therefore, needs to cooperate with other nations to have the capacity to deal with things off its coast, such as piracy, and Russia seems to provide such a need (BBC News, 2023).

Russia's ability to sell weapons without any pre-conditions makes this a big deal among quite a number of people such as military junta leaders in Africa. One of the abstentions came from Western ally Uganda (UN General Assembly Resolutions Tables, 2022), but this aligns with President Yoweri Museveni's previous dealings with Russia. At the 2019 Russia-Africa summit in Sochi, some African leaders said they would be interested in buying arms and weapons. Museveni went one step further. "Uganda said that Russia should give more loans to African countries so they can purchase arms and weaponry from Russian manufacturers," (Bagnetto, 2022). In addition, Russia has deployed the shadowy paramilitary outfit, the Wagner Group, in at least a half dozen African countries in recent years (Siegle, 2021), making Africa one of the most active regions of Russia's mercenary deployments globally. For instance, mercenaries from the Kremlin-backed Wagner Group are playing a major role in fighting militants in Mali, filling a vacuum left by France, which pulled the last of its troops out in 2022 amid disputes with the country's junta (The Africa Report, 2023). In recent times, Russia has delivered "very large supplies of aviation equipment" to Mali over the past few months, which has "significantly increased" the capability of local forces to fight extremists, according to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. During the minister's recent trip to Mali, he added that Russia is planning additional steps in the field of education through military

**Russians are therefore interested in presenting themselves as reliable security partners, which is attractive to other countries on the African Continent.**



higher educational institutions and regarding the supplies of weapons and military equipment (France24, 2023). Clearly, the provision of reliable security and military partnerships from Russia greatly influences some African states and their decision to align with Russia amidst the ongoing war in Ukraine.

### ***Ukrainian racism perceived by African students in Ukraine***

Within days of Russia attacking Ukraine, hundreds of people have been killed, thousands displaced, and hundreds of thousands aimed to flee to border countries that accept refugees (Ray, 2022). The mass exodus of these civilians includes thousands of international students from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Ukraine was home to over 76,000 foreign students, according to government data from 2020 (Ali, 2022), with an estimated 16,000 being African students, the largest numbers coming from Nigeria, Morocco, and Egypt (Mlaba, 2022). Thousands have fled, hundreds are still trapped, and many remain uncertain about the fate of their education. While confronting difficulties in evacuating a perilous warzone, the exacerbation of an already dire situation has been the numerous accounts of egregious prejudice reported by African students.

Many African students who studied in Ukraine reported that they were facing racial discrimination during their terrifying journeys fleeing Russia's attacks, often struggling to find a way out of the country (Reinstein et al., 2022). Many reports of Black people being refused at border crossings in favor of white Ukrainians, leaving them stuck at borders for days in brutal conditions (Ray, 2022). Ukraine stated they would first allow women and children on trains and transport out of the country to flee the Russian invasion (Ray, 2022). However, it seems they meant Ukrainian and European women and children. Videos show Black people being pushed off trains and Black drivers being reprimanded and stalled by Ukrainians as they try to flee (Ray, 2022). There are even reports of animals being allowed on trains before Africans. BuzzFeed News conveyed the narration from two Nigerian students who said they were subjected to racial slurs on a train and violently thrown off by Ukrainian police officers who pulled a gun on them (Reinstein et al., 2022). Similarly, a student from Sierra Leone said that she and her companions were not allowed to board a train headed to the border despite having tickets. A student from Liberia said she was forced to spend two days in the cold without food and shelter at the Ukrainian border after guards refused to let her and other people of color board buses taking refugees across to Poland (Reinstein et al., 2022). "I was begging. The official literally looked me in my eye and said: 'Only Ukrainians. That's all. If you are Black, you should walk.'" (Mlaba, 2022)

The call for justice following discrimination against Black and African people at the beginning of Russia's war in Ukraine was defined by this singular quote. A quote that reverberated across the internet, taking over our social media feeds and topping news headlines worldwide at the end of February 2022 and stemmed a movement "#AfricansInUkraine." Representatives from the three African nations on the UN Security Council – Kenya, Ghana, and Gabon – all condemned reports

of discrimination against African citizens at the Ukrainian border during a meeting at the UN headquarters in New York City (Ly & Princewill, 2022). Similarly, in a tweet, Nigeria's government strongly criticized reports and video images from its citizens – and those from other African nations – that they were being prevented from leaving and facing harsh treatment in neighboring Poland (Hegarty, 2022). H.E. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal and Chairperson of the African Union, sharply condemned the ill-treatment faced by African civilians fleeing the warzone in Ukraine for neighboring countries on March 3, 2022. He also called for implementing an international commission of inquiry into allegations of human rights violations in Ukraine (Felix, 2022). Considering the narrations and reports of several forms of racisms perceived by many African students in Ukraine, it will not be to the disbelief of many when some African countries do not support Ukraine in the ongoing Russia–Ukraine war.

### ***Food Security***

According to United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) 25 African countries depended on Russia and Ukraine for at least 30 percent of their wheat, while 16 of these 25 countries sourced 50 percent of their wheat from Russia and Ukraine (Joala & Urhahn, 2022). More than 30 African countries import nitrogenous, potassium, and phosphate fertilizers from Russia and Belarus. For instance, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW), Cameroon, Tanzania, Uganda, and Sudan source “more than 40 percent of their wheat from Russia and Ukraine” (Odiwuor, 2022). 64 percent of wheat and 14 percent of fertilizers in Rwanda come from Russia, and Senegal annually imports up to 650,000 tons of wheat, partly from Russia and Ukraine (Odiwuor, 2022). During the 2020-2021 agricultural season, the continent was supplied with wheat, corn, cooking oil, and other staple foods worth approximately 2.6 billion euros from Ukraine and 3.6 billion euros from Russia (Akinyi, 2023). With the war, supplies are tight and prices have risen, increasing Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) Food Price Index by 12.6 percent, a 34 percent increase in twelve months, the highest since the 1990s (Odiwuor, 2022).

The war has worsened a food security crisis already burgeoning in many countries. There are 281 million people in Africa who do not have enough food to eat daily, and nearly three-quarters of the population cannot afford nutritious food (Dongyu, 2022). There are also implications of climate change, a severe drought in East Africa, as well as the toll from the COVID-19 pandemic crisis that dropped agricultural productivity by 18% and increased hunger by more than 20% (Flowers, 2022). This means that strategic food reserves are being depleted quickly in many African countries, which is problematic since the crisis will hit hard by the next planting season, mainly because farmers cannot afford fertilizer that has doubled in price. This assertion has been confirmed by Apollos Nwafra, vice president for policy and state capability for the Alliance for a Green Revolution for Africa (AGRA) (Flowers, 2022). Countries in North Africa currently experiencing drought, such as Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, and Libya, are likely to feel the pinch

due to their heavy reliance on grains to feed their populations. On the other hand, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Chad, Burkina Faso, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which are already on the verge of famine, are also at risk due to their reliance on food aid, which primarily consists of grains from Russia and Ukraine (Akinyi, 2023). Currently, global food prices are at the highest since 2011 (Horowitz, 2023), meaning that the invasion will only make things worse for food security and economic stability on the continent.

On March 9, 2022, the Ukrainian government banned grain exports and other food products to prevent a domestic humanitarian crisis (Ramsay et al., 2022). Egypt, the world's largest wheat importer from Russia and Ukraine (Abay et al., 2023), is especially vulnerable as it relies heavily on subsidized imports to ensure affordable access to bread and vegetable oil, with more than 70 million of its citizens depending on subsidized bread. Additionally, the country imports over half of its sunflower oil from Ukraine (Abay et al., 2023). In a cabinet meeting on February 23rd, Egypt's Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly stated that the country's current stockpile of wheat in silos would be sufficient for four months, and that in April, local production would be harvested, extending the stock to approximately nine months (Human Rights Watch, 2022). A few days later, on March 10<sup>th</sup>, the Egyptian government announced an immediate three-month ban on the export of wheat, flour, and other staples. The government aims to secure wheat from alternative sources and will most likely avoid an immediate shortage of wheat supplies, but the direct impact could be a sharp increase in prices (Human Rights Watch, 2022). If the price of wheat increases, the government may need to maintain subsidies to keep the cost of bread affordable for the population, even as they were considering cutting back on subsidies. It is important to note that in June 2021, the Egyptian government reduced subsidies for sunflower and soybean oil by 20 percent in response to increasing prices (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

In July 2022, Senegal's President, Macky Sall, the current head of the African Union (AU), flew to the Russian Black Sea resort of Sochi to discuss with Mr. Putin how to free up the obstacles that are curbing desperately needed food exports from both Russia and Ukraine (BBC, 2022). South Africa's President, Cyril Ramaphosa, also called Mr. Putin to discuss Russian agricultural products and fertilizer deliveries to Africa (Fabricius, 2022). Consequently, Russia won more support from African Countries when Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the Kremlin is ready to provide food to Africa "free of charge" – on a condition that a deal on exports via the Black Sea is not extended after the recently agreed 60 days, according to the Associated Press (VOA Africa, 2023). A deal that allowed grain to flow from Ukraine to countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia was extended just before its expiration date, officials confirmed. Speaking at the International Parliamentary Russia-Africa Conference in Moscow, Putin said the extension meant the deal would run for another 60 days. For some African states to keep securing their main source of cereal food and fertilizers, there is a need to align with their suppliers and in this case, Russia.

### *U.S. Congress' anti-Russian Bill (Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act, H.R. 7311)*

The “Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act” adopted by the U.S. House of Representatives is a well-designed legislative measure broadly worded enabling the State Department to monitor the foreign policy of the Russian Federation in Africa, including military affairs and any efforts that Washington deems as malign influence (Azikiwe, 2022). The United States Congressional bill was approved by a wide margin that would target and punish African states that maintain political and economic relations with the Russian Federation. Labeled as the “Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act” (H.R. 7311), it was passed on April 27<sup>th</sup> 2022 by the House of Representatives in a bipartisan 419-9 majority and approved by the Senate, which is evenly split between Democrats and Republicans (Klomegâh, 2022). The bill broadly defines malign activities as those that ‘undermine United States objectives and interests.’ The Secretary of State would monitor the actions of Russia’s government and its ‘proxies’ – including private military companies (e.g., Wagner ) and oligarchs (Fabricius, 2022). This implies that the U.S. government would have to counter such activities effectively, including through U.S. foreign aid programs. It would need to hold accountable the Russian Federation and African governments and their officials who are complicit in aiding such malign influence and activities (Fabricius, 2022).

The bill was introduced to Congress on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2022 was a response to Russia’s February 24<sup>th</sup> invasion of Ukraine. Several other punitive laws aimed at Russia – including one directing the administration to gather evidence of Russian war crimes in Ukraine – were introduced at about the same time (Fabricius, 2022). New York Democrat Gregory Meeks, chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said the bill was designed to thwart Russian President Vladimir Putin’s efforts to ‘pilfer, manipulate and exploit resources in parts of Africa to evade sanctions and undermine U.S. interests’ and to finance his war in Ukraine (Fabricius, 2022). Meeks also presented the bill as supportive of Africa, intended to protect all innocent people who have been victimized by Putin’s mercenaries and agents credibly accused of gross violations of human rights in Africa, including in the Central African Republic and Mali (Fabricius, 2022). In the Central African Republic (CAR) and Mali, Wagner has been accused of committing human rights violations to prop up dubious governments and thwart Western interests.

The African continent is questioning the U.S. motives considering the Cold War experience with this superpower. During the Cold War, the U.S. government invoked the pretext of Russian interference to justify a range of crimes, including the assassination of Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, the overthrow of Pan-Africanist hero Kwame Nkrumah, the arrest of Nelson

**The African continent is questioning the U.S. motives considering the Cold War experience with this superpower.**

Mandela, and intervention in the Angolan civil war. Some African governments suspect there's more at play than protecting 'fragile states in Africa,' as Meeks put it. 'Why target Africa?' one senior African government official asked. 'They're unhappy with the way so many African countries voted in the General Assembly and their relatively non-aligned position (Fabricius, 2022).'

The Southern African Development Community (SADC), during its 42nd Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government, held on August 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> at Palais du Peuple (Parliament Building), vehemently expressed their collective opposition to a proposed United States law on countering Russian influence and activities in Africa (Klomegãh, 2022). The "Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act" adopted by the U.S. House of Representatives directs the U.S. Secretary of State to submit a strategy on Russia. According to the statement posted to its website, the 16-member regional bloc complained that the United States has made the African continent "the target of unilateral and punitive measures," and its Senate's Foreign Relations Committee pushed the bill designed to stop President Vladimir Putin from using Africa to bypass U.S. sanctions and fund his war in Ukraine, as well as to protect African people from human rights violations by Russian mercenaries (Klomegãh, 2022). The U.S., may very well seek to punish those actors through economic sanctions or regime change. "Russian aggression" is generally being invoked to justify more significant U.S. intervention in Africa, including expanding the Africa Command (AFRICOM) and U.S. military base network across the continent.

Although the Russians have been involved in some questionable activities, many African countries have had positive relationships with Russia for an extended time and have benefited from its support of African liberation movements during the Cold War. This contrasts the U.S., which did not provide such support, particularly in South Africa. Meeks' remarks seem to be projecting their own country's actions onto Russia by accusing the latter of attempting to exploit Africa's resources. However, the U.S. has engaged in this type of exploitation far more extensively and over a much more extended period than Russia. AFRICOM founder Vice Admiral Robert Moeller admitted that one of the U.S. Africa Command's (AFRICOM) guiding principles was "protecting the free flow of natural resources from Africa to the global market." The "Countering Malign Russian Influence Activities in Africa" Act will be used to justify flagrant infringements on the sovereignty of African countries. It uses the Russian bogeyman – like in the Cold War era – as a pretext for neocolonial expansion.

## **Conclusion**

This paper explored Africa's stances, focusing on the high number of abstentions during the UN resolution votes in light of the ongoing war in Ukraine. The paper, therefore, explored what factors may contribute to or explain the voting pattern of African countries during the UN resolution vote. The discussion results reveal aspects such as the historical memory of colonial and imperialist control, arms trade and military aid, food security, and Ukrainian racism perceived by African

students, explaining the voting pattern of some African states in the form of abstention or voting against the bill that condemns Russia. In addition, the U.S. Congress' anti-Russian Bill (Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act, H.R. 7311), punishing African states for maintaining political and economic relations with the Russian Federation, that is reinforcing neo-colonialism in Africa, has been opposed vehemently by most African states and is seemingly a factor that pushes the African states towards supporting Russia.

While the paper indicates certain factors that could explain the (re)action of some African states in light of the ongoing war in Ukraine, the paper consequently contributes to scholarly discussions and debates on how Africa's interests and (re)actions contribute to furthering Russia and China's goal of weakening the United States as a dominant power. China's President Xi Jinping and Russia's President Vladimir Putin have repeatedly hailed a 'no limits' partnership between their respective countries to the displeasure of the U.S. in light of the ongoing war in Ukraine. The current geopolitical turbulence accelerated by the great power rivalry has not only shattered the global order that has existed since the end of the Cold War but also reframes partnerships in which the role of African States is also becoming more prominent. ✨

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## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

### IN ESSAOUIRA

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### Abstract

An attempt is made to investigate the consequences of land tenure policy on the environment enhancing reforestation as a means of ascertaining tenure security in the Gambella region. This paper sheds light on the accelerated pace of deforestation in the study area and its impact on the environment. The theoretical and conceptual issues of the interrelation between reforestation, deforestation, land tenure system, and other socio-economic indicators have been given due attention in the literature review. Research methodology gives much focus on qualitative data analysis that uses ranges of data collection approaches; FGD, KII, semi-structured household interviews with the inclusion of secondary data reviews. The paper considers the effect of land tenure system on the environment and discusses the landholding system in the study area, including customary land rights among the Nuer, the Anywaa, and the Majangir. To this effect, external factors and urban expansions are addressed with the view to understanding the impact of socio-cultural practice on physical environment perception and management. A conclusion and policy implications are also discussed.

### Keywords

*land tenure, deforestation, reforestation, environment, Gambella*

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## **Introduction**

The term sustainability has been present for decades in scientific papers and in public life. Sustainability is a fashionable concept but it is considered very expensive to put into practice for firms, local authorities, and governments. In 1987, the Brundtland Report defined sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). It requires effort to link the issues of economic development with environmental stability. Sustainable development is often associated with issues like energy use, pollution, or waste. However, these are only the physical components of sustainability; the concept of sustainability encompasses three equally important issues: environment, economy, and society (David & Baross, 2009).

## **Sustainable Tourism**

Tourism is an important part of the global economy and culture. Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries in the world; it contributes significantly to global GDP, and is forecast to grow at an annual rate of 4%. However, the tourism sector also accounts for 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions, which is a very large share when we consider all of the possible sources of emissions (Lenzen et al., 2018). This is the reason why it is crucial to move towards a more sustainable tourism model. Sustainable tourism can be defined as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities” (UNWTO, 2005). Sustainable tourism includes protecting the environment, providing socio-economic benefits for communities who live in tourist destinations, conserving the cultural heritage, creating authentic tourist experiences, bringing tourists and local communities together for mutual benefit, as well as creating inclusive and accessible tourist opportunities (Guth & Vasa, 2003; Future Learn, 2021). The concept of sustainable tourism is derived from sustainable development. The notion of sustainable tourism is not exclusively an environmental issue, but also a social, economic, cultural, political, and administrative concept.

Developing countries consider tourism as an essential element for economic development and poverty alleviation. In these countries, tourism as a sustainable instrument against poverty depends on how well tourism development policy is linked with other policies, like overall economic, agriculture, energy, and environmental policies (Khan et al., 2020). Long-term commitment is just as important as planning and implementing sustainable tourism practices for it to become a priority in all policies. Additionally, all stakeholders must be included and consulted in the decision-making process regarding tourism, with mandatory reporting of sustainable development issues, to effectively implement sustainable tourism strategies. In this case, the adverse effects on the environment must be minimized, it must have a solid overall concept of the target market to achieve design innovation, originality, a cost-benefit balance, and improve social and economic incomes for local communities and individuals.

As for tourism, it must increase environmental education, for example, by advising the client on how to behave in an environmentally friendly manner. Most importantly, increasing community value, growing local capabilities, respecting natural and cultural values, providing reciprocal incomes for tourists and hosts, and reducing water and energy consumption, are major principles to be followed in the practice of tourism (UNWTO, 2005).

### **Environmentally sustainable tourism**

Sustainable tourism is closely related to the environment because it uses natural resources. Environmental sustainability is one of the most important parts of tourism. The essence of environmental sustainability is to ensure that resources in a region are well preserved for use by future generations. Tourism relies heavily on natural resources as its main attraction. Therefore, it is crucial for the government or tourism authorities to take necessary measures to conserve the natural environment and wildlife, as they hold immense value as tourism resources. Motivation is extremely important, particularly in developing countries (like Morocco), because if tourism-related organizations are unable to stimulate the government, it can damage the environment and wildlife through industrial and residential development. Residents must make tourists aware of environmental problems and drive them to a campaign to protect the environment. The government must not create new cities, towns, roads, infrastructure for airports, and dams that destroy the natural environment (Swarbrook, 2002). Besides, the tourism sector must also take a leading role in protecting and enhancing the environment on which it depends for the benefit of future generations (OECD, 2020).

### **Economically sustainable tourism**

Economic sustainability is the ability of an economy to sustain a certain level of economic production indefinitely (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010; Remenyik et al., 2021). In other words, economic sustainability is all about using resources responsibly and efficiently. Instead of maximizing profits, firms develop strategies that benefit humans as well as the Earth. Tourism that is economically sustainable can have a beneficial impact on employment, profit, and production. Nevertheless, uncontrolled and haphazard growth in tourism may not be the optimal approach for maximizing long-term production. As the primary source of tourism resources and products, the environment must be safeguarded to ensure the continued growth of tourism and economic development in the future (Lemma, 2014; Priatmoko et al., 2021).

### **Socially sustainable tourism**

McKenzie (2004) defines social sustainability as a life-enhancing condition within communities and a process within communities that can achieve that condition. The concept of social sustainability is the quality of life and the ability to maintain social order. When tourists start to visit the tourist destination, there are social and cultural impacts of these tourists on the host community. Tourist behaviour can have a nega-

tive impact on the quality of life of the host community, for example, overcrowding, drug and alcohol problems, prostitution, and an increase in crime also (Monterrubio & Bello, 2016). Social sustainability minimizes these negative effects and focuses on more positive effects, such as supporting cultural exchanges and maintaining local traditions. This can usually be done by involving the local population in the tourism industry (Swarbrook, 2002). If the local tourism organization can engage the host community in the tourism industry, it can provide visitors with a more realistic experience, and it is expected that the host segment will see tourism positively and will be proud of it as well.

All in all, tourism is not only one of the world's quickest growing industries but also a tremendous source of profit for many countries. Sustainable tourism creates many job opportunities for the local population, which increases quality of life, minimizes poverty, and supports local economies. It protects biological diversity, preserves the natural resources of future generations, and helps the development of innovation and new ideas in the development of sustainable goods and services (Bac, 2014).

### **Overview of Tourism in Morocco**

The Kingdom of Morocco is situated in the northwest of Africa. It is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the west, the Mediterranean Sea to the north, Algeria to the east and southeast, and the Sahara Desert to the south. Being separated by the Strait of Gibraltar making it just a few kilometres from Europe, it is approximately 2.5 hours away by plane from main European capitals. Its area stretches 710,850 square kilometres, and its population is approximately 37.1 million. The Moroccan capital Rabat is situated in the northwest of the country and overlooks the Atlantic Ocean. Other big cities are Casablanca on the Atlantic Ocean, Essaouira (the commercial capital) in the centre, and Tangier in the north, on the gorge of Gibraltar. The formal language is Arabic. However, Berber is also an official language and a mutual heritage of all Moroccans. French is still widely used as a business language, mostly in central and southern Morocco. Due to its proximity to Spain, the Spanish language is also spoken, particularly in the north.

Morocco is known for its diverse geography, which includes a 1,835-km coastline, mountainous regions, and vast areas of desert. The Atlas Mountains and countryside stretch from east to west, while the southern border with Mauritania is marked by sandy terrain. The country also boasts dense forests on its central plateau, productive plains in Meseta, arid high plateaus, luxurious meadows in the Sousse basin, and a multitude of rivers and lakes. The dominating weather pattern in Morocco is a Mediterranean climate, moderated in the west and the north by the Atlantic Ocean. Inland, the weather is more continental, with significant variations in temperatures. The Atlas area is very humid with frequent snowfalls and, in the south, there is a desert climate (Worlddata.info, 2021).

Morocco has a diverse cultural heritage, which is the result of a mixture of traditions and customs deriving from various civilizations that have passed through the

country: Berber, Carthaginian, Romanian, Muslim, Hassani, Jewish, Andalusian, Mediterranean, and African, among others. In addition, every region has its own characteristics that sing the entire Moroccan cultural identity. Morocco's diverse landscapes and rich culture make it an ideal destination that caters to a wide range of visitor preferences. Morocco has the world's largest phosphate reserves, a very diverse agricultural sector, numerous fisheries, and a growing tourist industry (Gilliard, 2004). Indeed, tourism is one of the most important economic activities in Morocco. One of the most popular tourist destinations in the world, is the Mediterranean region, to which Morocco belongs.

Historically, tourism began in Morocco during the French and Spanish protectorate period between 1912 and 1956, with the goal of providing for the European community's needs for vacation and leisure. After independence in 1956, the Moroccan government began a process in which tourism was increasingly recognized as a major strategic sector for Morocco's economic development (Hillali, 2005). The primary reasons for these resolutions were that Morocco does not have oil as a resource, and has received significant recommendations from international tourism experts to prioritize tourism as a key economic activity. Additionally, Morocco has long been recognized as a desirable tourist destination among European countries, contributing to its positive reputation in the industry. All this momentum promoted Morocco to consider tourism a major driver of its economic evolution (Aouni, 2015).

Nowadays, Morocco, as one of 29 Mediterranean destinations, supplies a perfect model of an emerging country that has adopted tourism as an important device for its social and economic development. Tourism in Morocco has a significant impact on the country's economy, contributing to its growth in numerous positive ways. It



▲ *Figure 1: Destinations and lines of tourist development in Morocco*  
*Source: Vision 2020 for tourism in Morocco*

serves as the primary source of foreign exchange earnings and is the second-largest contributor to GDP after agriculture and fishery. Additionally, it generates employment opportunities within the country. (Boujrouf, 2005).

There are eight major tourism destinations in Morocco: North Cape, Mediterranean Morocco, Central Atlantic, Central Morocco, Atlas and Valleys, Marrakech Atlantic, Souss Atlantic-desert, and the major South Atlantic coast. (Figure 1)

### Development of the tourism sector in Morocco

Morocco is one of the most important destinations for tourists traveling to Africa, with the number of tourists travelling to the country continually increasing. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, international tourism made up 47% of the total tourism in Morocco. In the last decades, tourism of Morocco has been a flourishing sector. Figure 2 shows how many millions of tourists arrived in Morocco between 1995 and 2020. In Figure 2, anyone who spends at least one night in Morocco but remains for less than 12 months is considered a tourist. It can be seen that number of tourists continually increased between 1995 and 2019 from 2.75 million tourists reaching 13.11 million tourists. However, due to COVID-19, the number of tourists declined significantly to 2.8 million tourists for the year 2020. The red line represents the average of six countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Sudan).

In the year 1995, tourism revenues amounted to 1.47 billion USD, and the sector had a 3.8% share of the gross national product (GNP). For the year 2019, the revenue amounted to 9.95 billion USD, accounting for 8.3% of GNP. In the year 2020 (COVID-19 epidemic year), the tourism income of Morocco dropped to 4.51 billion USD, accounting for 3.9% of GNP. However, in 2021 the tourism sector again contributed about 9 billion USD to Morocco's revenue. The share of domestic tourists was 44%, and that of international tourists was 56% of the total revenue (Statista, 2022).

### Overview of tourism in Essaouira

Essaouira is a coastal city along the Atlantic coast of Morocco, about 150 km to the north of Agadir and 180 km to the west of Marrakech. The port city was built in 1765 by Mohammed Ben Abdullah. Essaouira was a commercial centre open to foreign trade in order to strengthen the Moroccan's European relations at the time. In ancient



Figure 2: Development of the tourism sector in Morocco  
Source: WorldData 2021



time, due to its favourable geographical situation, moderate climate, and calm harbour that protected Essaouira, it was a popular anchorage for sailors. The weather is optimal for tourists all year round. It is never cold, nor does it really get hot in Essaouira. During the hotter summer months between June to August, Moroccans come from all over the country, and especially from Marrakech, to relax and enjoy the sun and wind on the beaches of cooler Essaouira. Summers are rarely hotter than 30°C, thanks to the steady breeze from the Atlantic Ocean that cools the city. The city has an amazing beach that curves for kilometres toward the south, and its relaxed atmosphere is in complete contrast to the cities of Marrakesh, Meknès Fès, and Tangier.

Tourism was established in the 1960's when the first European tourists arrived. Essaouira is a cultural commodity for visitors and tourists and has invested in its historic old town. It is known for its historic old town surrounded by complete walls and is a popular tourist destination. The locally produced consumer goods, known as “Essaouira Spirit,” include items such as woodwork, paintings, and experiences like the wind, sea, beach, and music. These goods are marketed effectively and are in high demand among tourists from Morocco and around the world, particularly Europe. (Bauer et al., 2006) In the Maghreb region, the main product of tourism is originality and exoticism, which in the domain of superficial knowledge of otherness (at the point of contact between the West and the Other), buys and orders less ethnographic facts and more representations that can be utilized with the help of the “natives” (A. Gergely, 2007).

Essaouira is poor in resources, so tourism and fishing are the two main activities that form the basis of the economy. The tourism sector provides an opportunity for



^ Figure 3: The coast of Essaouira  
Source: [www.travelo.hu/tavol/20180212-essaouira-marokko-kek-feher-varos-latinvaloi.html](http://www.travelo.hu/tavol/20180212-essaouira-marokko-kek-feher-varos-latinvaloi.html)

the city of Essaouira and for all of the country to cover its needs in foreign currency and tax revenues. It is also a good chance for the inhabitants to receive permanent income, jobs, and opportunities to improve the basic infrastructure needs of the city. These are railways, airports, and other facilities that the residents are looking for in everyday life (Hadach & Rachid, 2019).

### Research on sustainable tourism in Essaouira

The aim of this research was to reveal the development of sustainable tourism in Essaouira. We applied research by collecting data and by creating a set of questionnaires. Our sample design, known as simple random sampling, ensured that every item in the population had an equal opportunity to be included in the sample and any possible samples. Then, we prepared charts and illustrations to present the information more clearly.

### Characteristics of the respondents

During the research, 135 questionnaires were completed. The questionnaire was filled out by 124 Moroccan, 2 Austrian, 2 Egyptian, 2 Indian, 2 Russian, and 3 Tunisian tourists. Most of the respondents (91.8%) were from Morocco whereas the lowest percentage of respondents (9.2%) were foreigners. (Figure 4) In terms of gender, women represented 55.6%, while men represented 44.4%.

Figure 5 shows that the majority of the respondents belonged to the younger age group. Based on age composition, the age group between 15 and 25 years old was dominant (55.6%), followed by those between 26 and 35 years old (37.8%). They were followed by the age 46-55 years old representing 4.4% and the category of over 55 years old made up 2.2%.

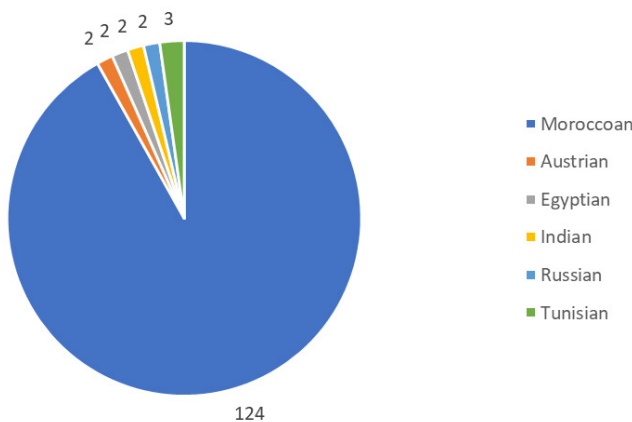


Figure 4: Nationality of Citizenship

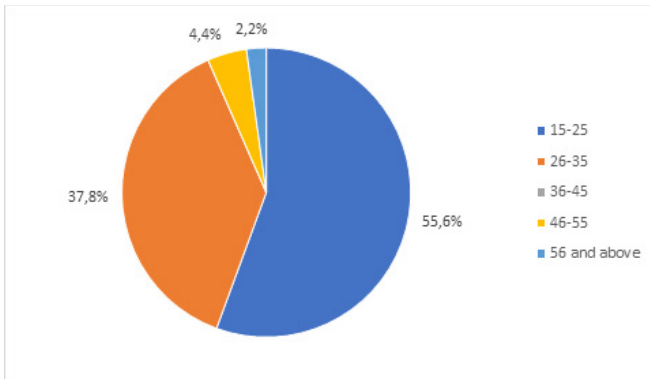


Figure 5: Age group of the tourists

### The main attractions in Essaouira

Figure 6 shows the different types of touristic attractions in Essaouira, such as natural attractions, cultural attractions, sports and recreation, events, and others. We received the following answers to the question of which main tourist attractions in Essaouira are known by the respondent. (More answers were possible.)

According to 77.8% of the respondents, the main tourist attractions of Essaouira were the cultural attractions, followed by natural attractions making up 53.3% and events having a 48.9% share. The share of sport and reaction had 13.3%, followed by other specify with a share of 8.9%.

### Vital role of sustainability

93.3% of the tourists stated that they had already stayed at an accommodation with green accreditation, but 6.7% had no idea about green accreditation. The next question concerned the vital role of sustainability. 62.2% of the respondents agree, and 37.8% strongly agree with the vital role of sustainability. The tourists believe that sustainability can play a vital role in the development of Essaouira. (Figure 7)

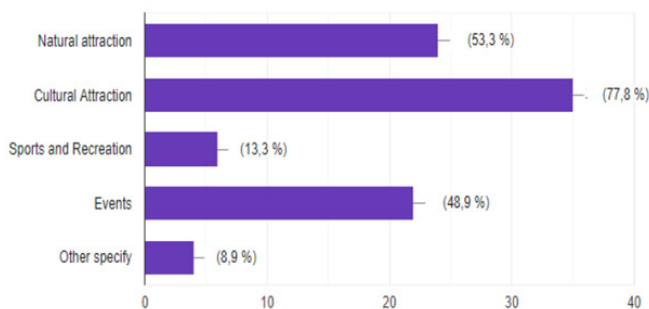


Figure 6: Which attractions of Essaouira you know

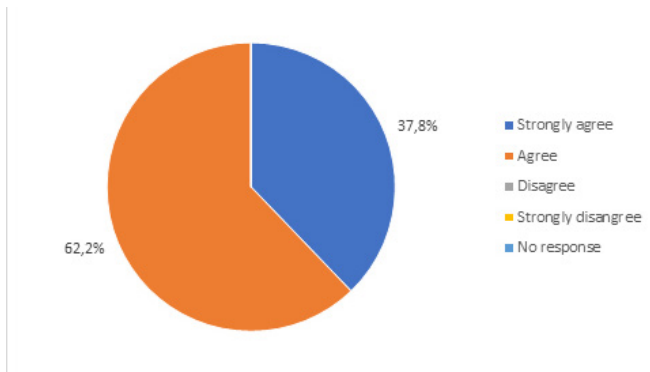


Figure 7: Vital role of Sustainability

### Government activity and awareness

The next question concerned the government's activity and awareness. 48.9% of tourists agree, and another 48.9% strongly agree that the government should be more active and aware of sustainability, while 2.2% of the tourists disagree with this issue. Therefore, Figure 8 clearly shows that majority of the tourists agree with government activity and are aware of the lingering problems.

### People's responsibility and ethicality towards nature

The tourists gave answers to the question of people's responsibility and ethics towards nature. As shown in Figure 9, 75.6% of the tourists strongly agree, and 20% of them agree and believe that people should be responsible and act ethically towards nature. Only 4.4% of the tourists disagree or strongly disagree with people's responsibility and ethics towards nature.

### Environmental awareness

The next question of the questionnaire asked about the tourists' environmental awareness. Figure 10 shows that 53.3% of the tourists think that she/he is good

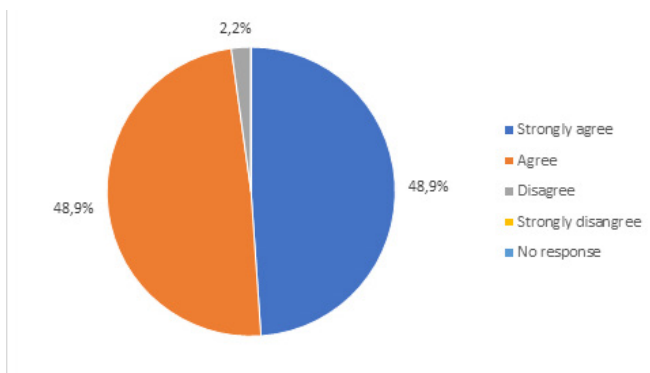


Figure 8: Activeness of Government

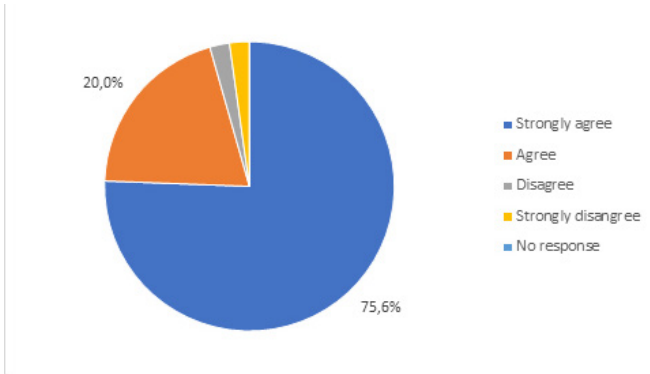


Figure 9: People's responsibility and ethicality towards nature

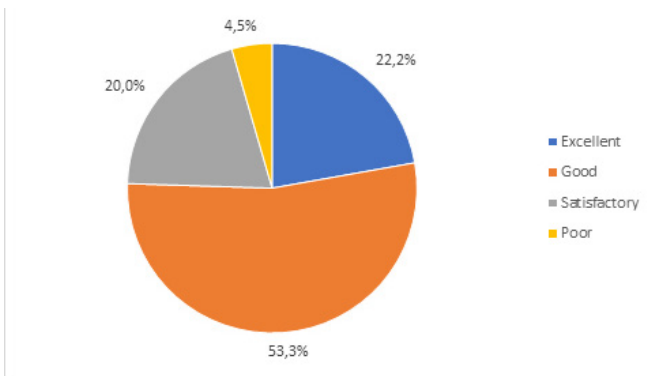


Figure 10: environmental awareness

regarding environmental awareness. Besides, 22.2% of them are excellent and 20% of them are satisfactory regarding environmental awareness. Only 4.5% of tourists think that she/he is poor in this regard.

### Practice of sustainability

The next question concerned the practice of sustainability in Morocco. Figure 11 shows that 44.4% of tourists agree that sustainability practices are good in Morocco compared to other countries, while 33.3% of tourists disagree with the statement. Besides, 11.1% of the tourists strongly agreed with the statement, but 11.2% could not answer this question or strongly disagreed.

### Factors making tourism more sustainable

The next question was about which factor makes tourism more sustainable in Essaouira. The answers were balanced. Based on the survey, 60% of tourists believed that government policies, 51.1% of tourists answered that local awareness, and 48.9%

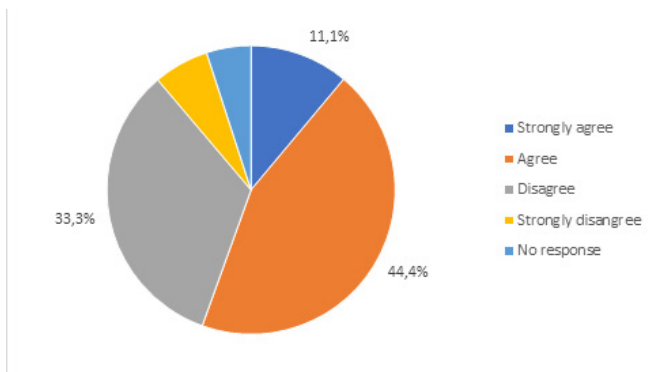


Figure 11: Practice of sustainability in Morocco

of tourists answered that marketing policy could promote tourism more sustainably in Essaouira. In addition, 46.7% of respondents believed that coordination between stakeholders of tourism could promote tourism more sustainably in the city. See Figure 12.

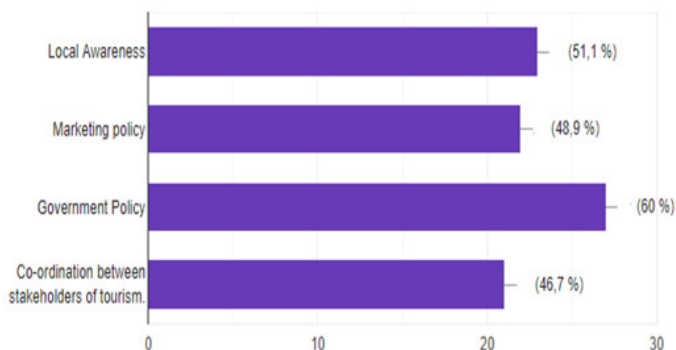


Figure 12: The factor that can create tourism business more sustainably

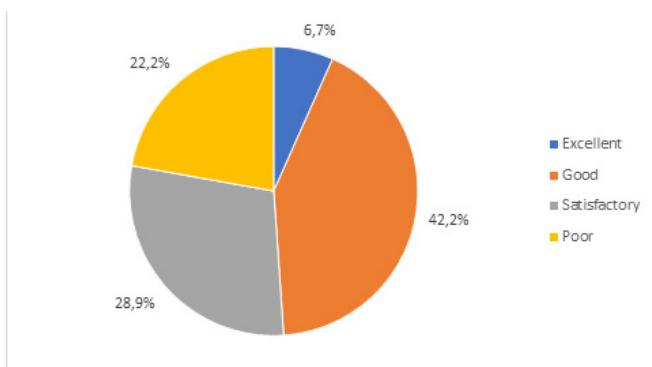


Figure 13: The rate of participation of private sectors and of local entrepreneurs

### Participation of the private sector and local entrepreneurs in sustainable tourism

The next question to the tourists was how they evaluate the participation of private sectors and local entrepreneurs in sustainable tourism in Essaouira. Figure 13 showed that 42.2% of the respondents believed that the participation of the private sector and local entrepreneurs was good in sustainable tourism, 28.9% of respondents said that it was satisfactory, while 22.2% of them answered that it was poor. Only 6.7% of the respondents believed that participation in the business sector is excellent for sustainable tourism in Essaouira.

### Tourism activities have adverse effects on the environment in Essaouira

Tourists were asked whether tourism activities had any adverse effects on the environment in Essaouira. 64.4% of the tourists agreed and 4.4% of them strongly agreed that tourism activities had a negative impact on the environment in Essaouira. However, 13.3% of the tourists disagreed and 11.1% of them strongly disagreed with this statement. 6.7% of the respondents did not answer. (Figure 14)

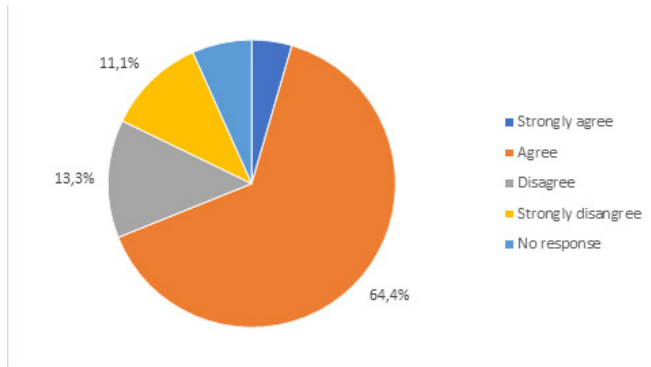


Figure 14: Tourism activities have adverse effects on the environment in Essaouira

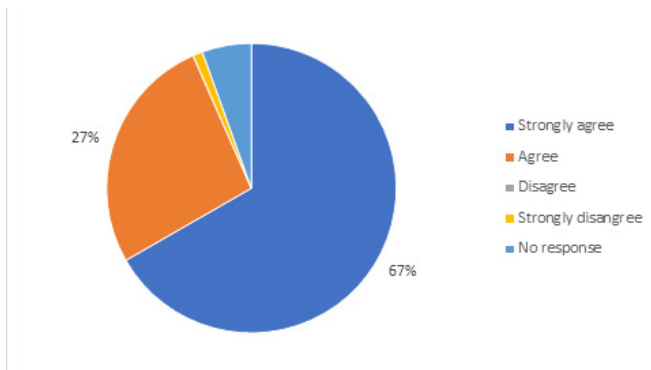


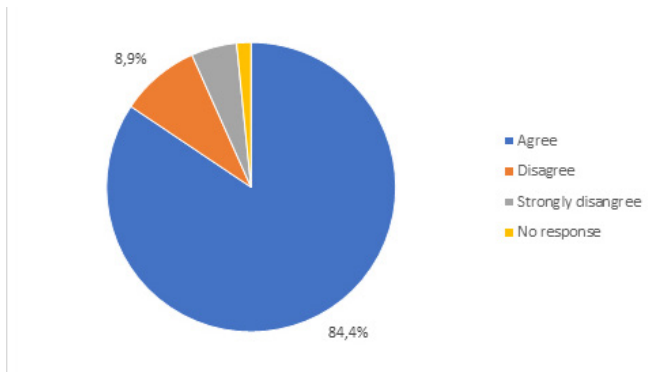
Figure 15: The government and the people should work together to make the environment more ecological and sustainable in Essaouira

### **The government and the people should work together to make the environment more ecological and sustainable in Essaouira**

The next question on the questionnaire asked whether the government and the people should work together to make the environment more ecological and sustainable in Essaouira. As Figure 15 shows, 66.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that the government and the people must work together to make the city more ecological and sustainable in the future. Moreover, 26.7% of the tourists agreed with this statement. The proportion of other answers was negligible.

### **Tourism organizations and tourism-related companies must develop more sustainable products and follow the Business Sustainability Act**

Respondents were asked whether tourism organizations and tourism-related companies should develop more sustainable products and follow the Business Sustainability Act. Figure 16 shows that 84.4% of the respondents agreed that tourism organizations and tourism-related companies must develop more sustainable products and follow the Business Sustainability Act. However, 8.9% of the tourists disagreed and 4.3% of them strongly disagreed with this statement. 2.2% of the respondents did not answer.

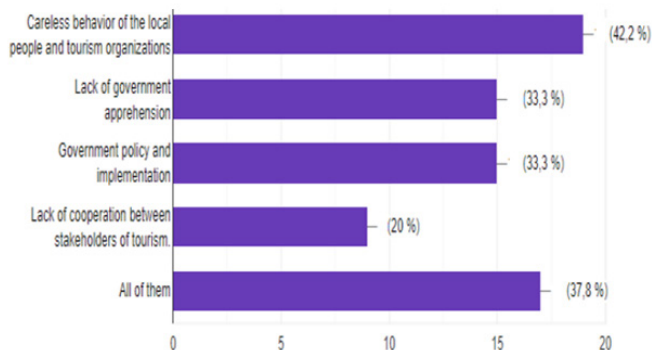


*Figure 16: Tourism organizations and tourism-related companies must develop more sustainable products and follow the Business Sustainability Act*

### **Main difficulties of sustainability issues in Essaouira**

The next question focused on the main difficulties of sustainability issues in Essaouira. 42.2% of tourists answered that the careless behaviour of local residents and tourism organizations presented difficulties in terms of sustainability in Essaouira. One-third of the tourists thought that lack of government apprehension, and an additional one-third of them believed that government policy and implementation are responsible for problems in sustainability in the city. 20% of the respondents believed that the lack of cooperation between tourism stakeholders is a serious problem in terms of sustainability. 37.8% of the tourists thought that each factor is responsible for problems in sustainability in Essaouira. (Figure 17)

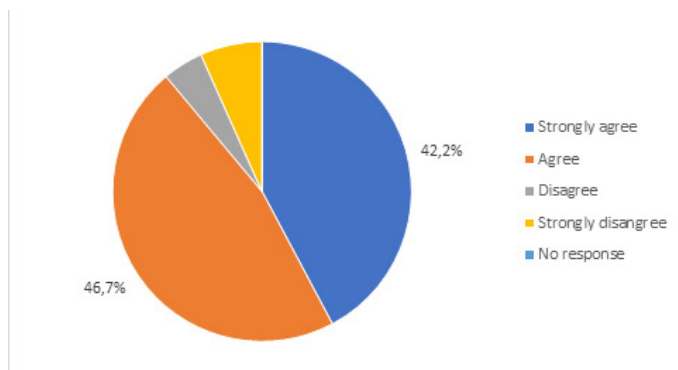




▲ Figure 17: Main difficulties of sustainability issues in Essaouira

### Local people gain benefits economically and socially from the tourism sector

The tourists were asked whether the local people gain benefits economically and socially from the tourism sector. Figure 18 shows that the majority of the tourists (42.2%) agreed or strongly agreed (46.7%) that the residents receive economic and social benefits from the tourism sector. However, 4.5% of the tourists disagreed and 6.9% of them strongly disagreed with this statement.



▲ Figure 18: Local people gain benefits economically and socially from the tourism sector

Finally, the tourists were asked whether the infrastructure is adequate to host tourism activities in Essaouira. Most of the tourists (80%) believed that the infrastructure is adequate to host tourism activities in Essaouira, while 20% of them did not think so.

### Conclusion

For Essaouira, as a city in a developing country, tourism plays an important role in economic growth, and has become a tourist attraction destination in Morocco. Sustainable development is needed in order to increase the length of stay of tourists; therefore, it is necessary to behave responsibly and ethically towards nature. This is

also important because certain tourist activities have negative impacts on Essaouira's environment (for example overcrowding, littering, drug and alcohol consumption). In addition to business organizations, local residents also benefit from the tourism sector, Apart from the local population and tourists, the local government should also take a more active role in creating sustainability (e.g. the local government should utilize natural resources in a sustainable way by preserving biodiversity). Essaouira needs to be a safe city to attract foreign and domestic tourists. Therefore, the local government should consider providing nightlife events throughout the season. On the market side, the properly chosen marketing policy of tourist organizations can also make tourism more sustainable in Essaouira. Tourism organizations and tourism-related companies should develop sustainable products (for example, more frequent use of electric vehicles or camels for transport, use of degradable packaging materials, etc.). There are many avenues, such as those mentioned here, to achieve sustainable development in developing countries whose economy depends on tourism to survive and thrive. ✨

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# LEADERSHIP, EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR YOUTH IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN UNION PROGRAMS

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## Abstract

From September 16–19, 2022, the U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres hosted the Transforming Education Summit at U.N. Headquarters in New York on the margins of the U.N. General Assembly. This summit mobilized stakeholders to act and collaborate in solidarity to find solutions for transforming education by 2030. This summit's outcomes were national and international commitments to transform education with increased public engagement and support. Before the conference, the African Union had just concluded its fourth Specialized Technical Committee on Education, Science, and Technology with the theme of utilizing education, science, technology, and innovation to foster recovery in Africa and respond to, strengthen, and build resilience in a post-COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, there was a need to enhance the response from the science, technology, and innovation sectors. Growing globalization and faster technological progress have created many new social, economic, environmental, and COVID-19 problems. Because of this, the Coalition on Media and Education for Development Africa Forum (CAFOR) and its partners have been looking at the needs and opportunities that come from these changes. CAFOR and its partners are also determined to look beyond Africa's Continental Education Strategy (CESA 16–25) and examine how schools can prepare children in Africa for jobs and technologies that have yet to be created to solve future problems with innovation. CAFOR is forward-looking and works towards building stronger partnerships on the continent, ensuring a shared responsibility to identify new opportunities and solutions.

## Keywords

*transforming education, African leadership, the African Union, CAFOR, COVID-19 pandemic, technologies, innovation*

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## Overview of Leadership and Contemporary Education in Africa

Africa has the youngest population in the world, with more than 400 million people between 15 and 35 years old. Such a young population calls for increased investment in economic and social development programs to improve the development index among African countries (UNDP et al., 2016, Youth development | African Union 2016. <https://au.int/en/youth-development>).

However, the continent faces various leadership challenges, such as corruption, weak institutions, a lack of accountability, and inadequate infrastructure (Mare, 2018). These challenges have resulted in political instability, economic inequality, and social unrest, hindering the continent's development. To address these issues, African leaders need to prioritize good governance, democracy, and human rights. Additionally, they should invest in education and training opportunities while fostering economic growth through sustainable development and regional integration (Ibid.). By focusing on these areas, African leaders can create a conducive environment that encourages innovation, productivity, and political stability while improving their citizens' overall quality of life. After gaining independence, African countries began investing heavily in the education sector, which was necessary due to the low literacy levels in most of the newly independent countries.

Africa is undergoing a significant transformation with the emergence of a new generation of leaders. Their most pressing challenge is securing access to the continent's vast natural resources. This task is becoming increasingly challenging due to intense competition from external players competing to tap into African resources, often for economic gain. The accumulation of personal wealth is now a defining feature of African leadership, unlike the previous era of the immediate post-independence leaders who worked to uplift all African citizens and fought for social equality. Kamarck (2018) noted that this shift in leadership priorities has been a critical driver of resource exploitation across Africa today.



^ Figure 1: Some of the first generation of African leaders, plus Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso. Source: Olatorera, 2021

Today, a new generation of leaders with deep social consciousness and the desire to serve people genuinely for their common good is needed. Appreciative leadership, moral leadership, democratic leadership, servant leadership, and social justice leadership are some kinds of leadership used to prepare today's leaders (Mare, 2018). There is also a great interest in educational leadership today because of the widespread belief that leadership quality significantly affects school and student outcomes (Ezeani, 2015; Kanyamuna & Bonsu, 2017; Kimenyi, 2015; Leibbrandt, 2013; Mapangu, 2014; Maziya, 2015; Mugenda et al., A., 2013; Musa, 2014).

Educational leaders are crucial in promoting student success through effective leadership styles, policies, and practices crucial to boosting education, addressing existing disparities, and ensuring student success. This essence is particularly relevant in Africa, where there are substantial challenges in the education system. The focus of educational leadership must be on student learning and achievement, development, and well-being. This principle involves developing a clear vision for the school, designing instructional programs that align with the school's objectives, managing resources effectively, creating an inclusive and culturally responsive environment, and promoting ethical and professional standards to facilitate a professional learning community. The Standards for Educational Leadership reflect interdependent domains, qualities, and values integral to student success, including visionary leadership, instructional improvement, effective management, inclusive practice, cultural responsiveness, ethics, and professional norms. Visionary leadership involves developing a shared understanding of the school's goals and creating a path to achieve them. Instructional improvement focuses on developing effective teaching methods and promoting professional development. Effective management involves promoting resource management, fiscal responsibility, and time management. Inclusive practice focuses on creating a welcoming environment that values

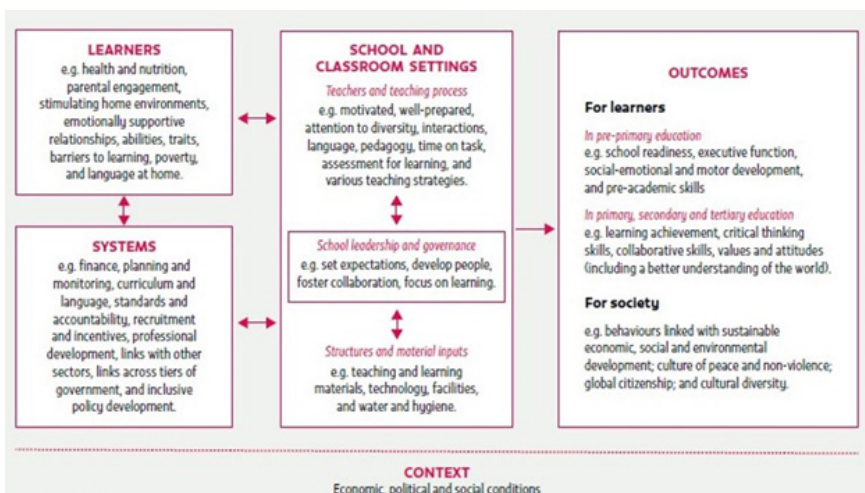


Figure 2: School leadership is at the centre of a framework of education quality

diversity, while cultural responsiveness involves recognizing cultural differences and promoting cultural understanding and awareness. Ethical and professional behavior are also essential aspects of educational leadership. Effective education leadership is vital for successful learning outcomes, particularly in Africa. (Kocabas et al. 2020).

Given the enormous challenges the continent faces, such as increasing poverty, poor infrastructure, rapidly growing populations, climate change, and the growing dominance of narrow identity groups and conflict between them, leaders must address these social issues now (Kohler & Erdmann, 2004). Africa’s current leaders must give the utmost attention to these challenges and must understand such problems to be committed to the common good. They must utilize their national resources to lead their nations, regions, and the continent to sustainable solutions by implementing solid developmental plans to address these challenges now and over the following decades.

Countries in Africa will continue to experience continuous changes, new challenges, and opportunities. Historically, successful governments were capable of anticipating essential changes in the domestic or global marketplaces of goods and services and responding to them timely and effectively with new ideas and principles of production and organization (Wang & Liu, 2019).

The world has been in a continuous shift, with significant changes in science and technology, scales and types of production, organizational principles, the invention of new goods and services, and various forms of political and socio-economic development. Those involved in or aware of these changes—Asian countries such as China, Malaysia, Indonesia, South Korea, India, and Singapore—acquired the right capabilities and responded positively and timely to the challenges and opportunities those changes brought (Mohamed & Sohail, 2019). They could also predict and prepare for changes, challenges, and opportunities. Moreover, the recent COVID-19

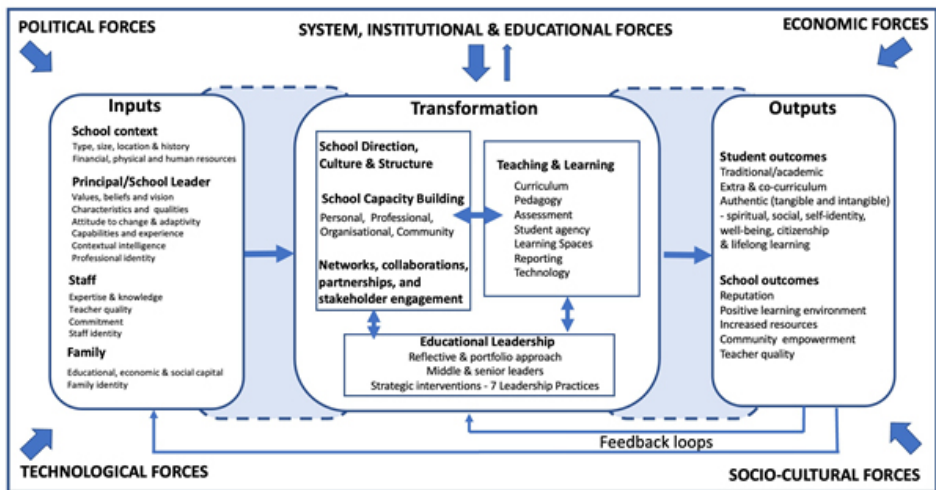


Figure 3: Successful school leadership model



pandemic devastated most populations worldwide and brought new technological advancements for businesses.

The first-generation African leaders needed help anticipating and responding effectively to the challenges generated after independence (Doe, 2005). During the 21st century, defined by globalization, it is clear that Africa needs a new class of leaders. The continent needs the kind of intelligent leadership capable of anticipating the possibilities of social, economic, and political change domestically and globally, comprehending the significance of such developments, and effectively responding to these conditions. Africa needs intelligent leaders who respect education, are educated, skilled, and experienced, value knowledge and information, and know how and where to acquire the advice and expertise needed to formulate and implement policies. Africa needs leaders who are committed to the promotion of African perspectives on democracy and good governance. It needs leaders who understand economic development strategies compatible with African socio-cultural realities, have integrity, vision, and competence, and can inspire people to realize this vision for the future. Moreover, leaders must acknowledge the positive contributions of previous generations and recognize the importance of generational linkages. Leaders who commit themselves to developing synergy between generations will be more likely to be successful.

In the last four decades, Africa has transformed tremendously from state-led and government-controlled economies to free enterprise and government-regulated, private sector-led strategies in African countries' economic and social development. There has been a transformation from military rule and one-party authoritarian governments to multiparty politics and democratic governance (Ayttey, 2011).

Today, we can identify two types of leaders: functional and political (Boohene et al., 2017). Functional or operational leaders ensure the efficient and effective performance of various governmental institutions and agencies in civil society and the private sector. These people are trained to do specific jobs in the different areas and levels of the government system. Examples include senior civil servants and people who work in technical services that help health, education, communication, engineering, security, and defense institutions and agencies (Compaoré, 2021).

However, leadership entails identifying, mobilizing, and organizing the relevant talent, expertise, and experience among employees to execute the necessary operations in institutions and agencies. This attribute necessitates creating and maintaining appropriate environments, working conditions, and incentives. However, although some professionals are capable leaders, they still require developing skills to identify and mobilize the workforce needed to perform leadership functions effectively. These efforts involve working with other people and possibly authority agencies and integrating their talent and expertise for collaborative action. Thus, they must understand governance issues and the societal context in which they function.

Education is of utmost importance, and consequently, political leaders in Africa need training considering the contemporary political environment in which knowledge and information are crucial for policies to be implemented effectively in the

government systems. Formerly, African political leaders generally emerged from society in response to political demands. They had minimal training or prior preparation (Kisangani & Bonsu, 2019). Africa is transforming and must be prepared to respond effectively to the global challenges and opportunities likely to emerge in the 21st century (Nyang'oro, 2018). Policymakers must have the relevant information and knowledge to formulate and implement the appropriate policies or decisions to be efficient and influential players in the various domains and levels of governance. Beyond the ability to mobilize, organize, and inspire people to collective action, political leaders must also have a sound understanding of the fundamental economic, political, or social issues they manage. With this understanding, political leaders will be able to fully understand the advice of their senior professionals and perform their functions efficiently and effectively. They would also need help making informed decisions or evaluating their performance objectively.

Thus, to be efficient and effective in their respective functions, both types of leaders – the functional and the political – must understand the economic, social, political, and global issues they face. They also need to understand the governance systems they work in, the principles of good governance, and the kinds of actions that could lead to bad management in their societies (Boohene et al., 2017). As governments are dynamic and engaged in continuous processes to implement policies, responding to needs, demands, and changing societal contexts requires the life-long education and training of both types of leaders in a rapidly changing global environment.

### **The Transforming Education Summit**

In September 2022, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres convened the Transforming Education Summit (TES) at U.N. Headquarters in New York. The summit focused on equity and inclusion, quality, and relevance in response to the global crisis in education. Its goal was to elevate education to the top of the global political agenda and mobilize action, ambition, solidarity, and solutions to recover from pandemic-related learning losses and transform education in a rapidly changing world.

The TES had four specific objectives:

- national and international commitments to transform education
- greater public engagement around and support for transforming education
- a report to document the knowledge and agreements generated by participants at the summit for future action and follow-up after the summit through the SDG4-Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee and the proposed inter-governmental Summit of the Future in 2023

The summit utilized a focused, inclusive process built from the ground up to accomplish these goals while ensuring meaningful interaction between young people and education stakeholders. It concentrated on three intersecting themes: national consultations for developing a shared vision, commitment, and alignment of action across constituencies to transform education by 2030, thematic action tracks to accelerate

progress on education as part of the 2030 Agenda for transforming education, and financing of education to generate and prioritize shared goals, build capacity, and broker knowledge.

The thematic action tracks focused on inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools, teachers, teaching, and the teaching profession, learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development, digital learning and transformation, and financing of education to generate and prioritize shared goals, build capacity, and broker knowledge.

Furthermore, leaders from the African Union met and established a common position to explore how schools in Africa can prepare children for jobs that do not exist yet and technologies that are not yet invented to utilize innovations for solving problems that have not yet been anticipated. These leaders must become more future-oriented and work towards building stronger partnerships on the continent to ensure shared responsibility, new opportunities, and solutions to global problems.

The TES resulted in several initiatives, including a proposal for establishing a Global Commission on the Teaching Profession, a Global Youth Initiative, and a renewed focus on promoting disability inclusion in education. Additionally, the International Financing Facility for Education has been established and can generate approximately USD 10 billion in financial resources for lower-middle-income nations in the foreseeable future.

Member states and partners have a follow-up plan built upon five pillars. The pillars are to incorporate national expressions of dedication into their preexisting socio-economic and educational programs, strategies, and frameworks to achieve SDG4, a thorough examination of the transformation of education within the conclusions of the 2024 summit of the future, maintain and expand the worldwide movement that arose from the summit, promotion, and implementation of a Global Youth Initiative, and strategic plans and engagement in advocacy endeavors to guarantee the successful execution of the five theme initiatives that originated from the summit.

In essence, the Transforming Education Summit was a crucial endeavor that has the potential to facilitate progress toward achieving the 2030 agenda for education. It provided a comprehensive framework for guiding principles for education in the 21st century while generating initiatives and a follow-up plan for subsequent actions.

CAFOR and its partners are looking beyond Africa's Continental Education Strategy (CESA 16-25) and examine how schools can prepare children in Africa for jobs that do not exist yet or technologies that are not yet invented, or solve problems that have not yet been anticipated through new kinds of innovation. Therefore, we must be more future-looking in Africa and work towards building stronger partnerships within the continent and ensuring a shared responsibility as we seize new opportunities and find solutions.

As we reflect on the Transforming Education Summit and its related topics regarding education in Africa, it is essential to remember that education should prepare future leaders in all domains. Education should equip all learners with the necessary learning agency, a sense of purpose, and competencies to shape their own lives while contributing to economic and social development. For the summit to

achieve these outcomes, it should prioritize the rapid reversal of the downward trend in domestic and international resources for education in Africa. The discussion must also address the substantial education financing gap on the African continent, which poses a significant challenge amid the slow recovery from COVID-19 and tight budgets. Therefore, African leaders must focus on the five thematic tracks outlined above as they aim to transform education in Africa. (The Future of Education and Skills: Education 2030, OECD, n.d.).

The Transforming Education Summit resulted in significant partner involvement and the presentation of national commitments by 133 member states. The Vision Statement by the U.N. Secretary-General presented guiding principles for education in the 21st century, and global initiatives were implemented to address education crises, promote sustainable education, and advance gender equality. The creation of the International Financing Facility for Education strengthened the case for more significant investment in education, and the involvement of young leaders and stakeholders reinforced the global movement to improve education. The High-Level Steering Committee (HLSC) will play a vital role in integrating the summit outcomes into SDG4 coordination efforts, and a TES follow-up plan built on five key pillars was endorsed. These pillars include national pledges of commitment, examining the transformation of education at future summits, expanding the global movement, collaborating with institutions and educators for financing education, and establishing a high-level panel to address the shortage of teachers.

Leaders must understand the overall goals, challenges, opportunities, and potential solutions for tackling the continent's education financing crisis. The TES recommends that addressing the gaps in education financing would entail policy actions in three key areas: (1) mobilizing more resources, mainly domestic; (2) increasing efficiency and equity of allocations and expenditures; and (3) improving education-financing data. This summit will help countries build upon previous global commitments on education financing based on the U.N. 2030 Agenda and SDG 4, which set out a universal rights-based agenda for a new social contract for education around lifelong learning for all, which has become more urgent because of pandemics, crisis and conflicts across the continent.

### **The African Union Perspectives for Transforming Education in Africa**

The African Union was established during a significant change in the world order. African leaders struggled to keep up with current affairs and often reacted rather than governed. The various heads of state of the members of the African Union ultimately decided that they needed a plan to make Africa the global player they believed it could be. As a result, they created Agenda 2063.

#### ***(a) Setting up Africa to prosper in the 21st century***

Agenda 2063 is rooted in pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance, providing a robust framework for addressing past injustices and recognizing the 21st century as the African century.

The agenda is a flexible document that can adjust to social conditions over time. Agenda 2063 begins with a ten-year implementation plan, which lays out the concrete steps and achievable milestones in the journey toward 2063 to fulfill the African Union vision (African Union Commission, 2013).

***(b) Agenda 2063 is a paradigm shift for the continent if implemented on all fronts.***

The successful execution of Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030 (global Sustainable Development Goals) in Africa will require a harmonized framework (Cole, 2019). This framework will ensure that both agendas align to create coherent, meaningful, and impactful results. The vision of Agenda 2063 is to transform Africa into a thriving continent with high-quality growth that generates employment opportunities for all, particularly women and youth. This transformation will be achieved through sound policies, excellent infrastructure, and a favorable environment for private sector development, investment, and business growth. Africa needs visionary and determined leadership to drive the shift towards sustained and inclusive economic growth for this to be possible.

To achieve this vision, Africa must move beyond its current sources of economic growth and opportunity and promote productivity to encourage sustained and inclusive economic growth. CAFOR is committed to supporting this transformation in various ways, such as education-related skills, science, technology, research, innovation, and skills that can drive growth and innovation for Africa in the 21st century. Furthermore, the African Union has developed several youth development policies and programs at the continental level, such as the African Youth Charter, Youth Decade Plan of Action, and the Malabo Decision on Youth Empowerment. These initiatives aim to ensure that African countries benefit from their demographic dividend and promote youth participation while protecting their rights, such as freedom of movement, speech, association, religion, ownership of property, and other human rights.

In conclusion, harmonizing Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030 will facilitate realizing a prosperous and transformed Africa that provides economic opportunities for all its people. This transformation will require visionary and determined leadership, investment in education, science, technology, research, and innovation, and a favorable environment for private sector development and growth. The African Union's commitment to youth development policies and programs will also play a crucial role in ensuring that the younger generation contributes to the continent's growth and development.

The Youth Decade Plan of Action emphasizes five crucial factors that require attention to empower young people (African Union Youth Division, 2017). These include education and skills development, ensuring youth employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, governance, peace and security, youth health, including sexual reproductive health rights, as well as agriculture, climate change, and environment-related concerns.

In addition to the Youth Decade Plan of Action, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Continental Strategy offers an extensive framework

for developing national policies and strategies that cater to the challenges posed by technical and vocational training, education, and economic growth. The strategy aims to create national wealth and combat poverty by leveraging youth entrepreneurship, innovation, and employment. Besides, the Department of Women, Gender, and Youth supports the African Union’s efforts to promote youth development.

**(c) Challenges to realizing Agenda 2063**

The stakes are high for the realization of this vision. Several economies on the continent remain fragile, and infrastructure remains underdeveloped. Many African economies still rely on raw materials, with a limited diversification of their productive structures.

Poverty rates remain unacceptably high, and inequality is high. According to the United Nations, six of the ten most unequal countries in the world are African (United Nations, 2020). Recent global food crises and continuing struggles with hunger in some parts of Africa, particularly in the Horn region, stress the need for greater food security. Africa must also harness more natural resources and human and financial capital to invest in future development.

**(d) A demographic challenge**

As indicated previously, Africa’s population is young and growing, and a rapidly expanding number of job seekers will soon enter the labor markets. Population growth rates are even higher in cities, where an estimated 40% of Africa’s population lives. Africa’s challenge is not only to create employment fast enough to keep pace with this population growth but also to provide everyone with the skills to join a productive workforce.

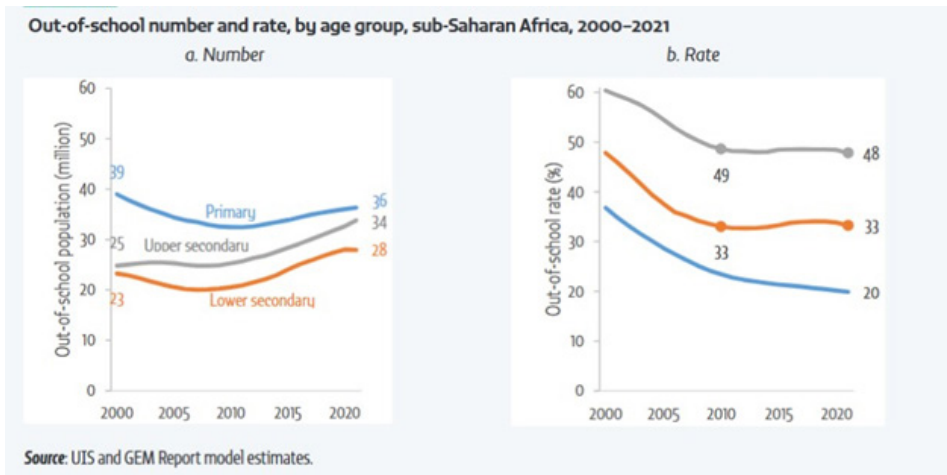


Figure 4: Out of school number and rate, by age group, sub-Saharan Africa, 2000–2021

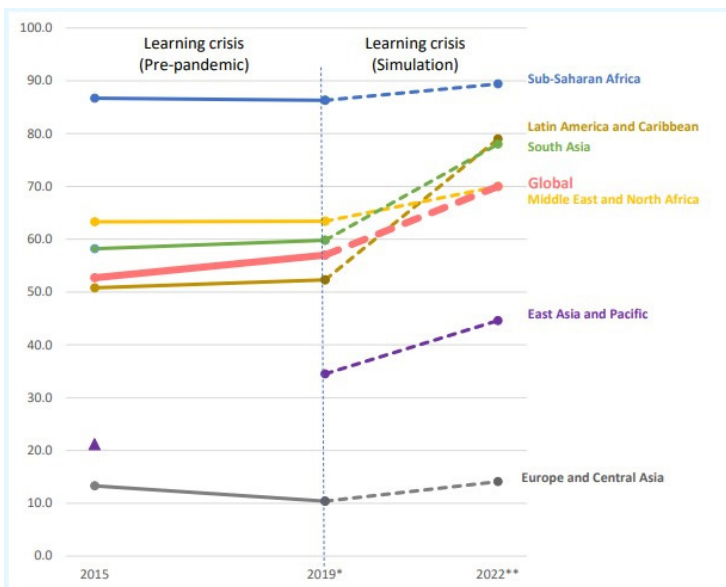
**(e) Investing in people first through education**

Agenda 2063 demands that Africa invests in skills, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics so that the people of Africa can drive the continent’s development (African Union Commission, 2015). In this respect, Agenda 2063 has set up pillars for the priority areas to make this vision a reality.

One of the pillars of Agenda 2063 is the need to invest in the people of Africa as its most precious resource. According to Agenda 2063, these resources include nutrition and health, access to shelter, water, and sanitation, expanding quality education, and strengthening science, technology, innovation, and research (Cole, 2017). Unfortunately, there is a disconnect between the skills school systems produce and the skills the private sector requires. Educational quality is often low, and African students rank lowest internationally in reading and computational skills (Chimombo & Egesah, 2016). The continent’s education systems need to enhance skills in traditional professions – such as teachers, nurses, doctors, and lawyers – and in sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics to support the rapidly changing demands of African economies. Developing skills for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises is also urgent.

**(f) Achieving the vision of Agenda 2063 through education**

The goal of Agenda 2063 is to realize Africa’s goal to be a stable, integrated, and prosperous continent with competitive, diversified, and growing economies participating fully in global trade and investment (African Union Commission, 2015). African Union leadership and partners see education as a fundamental human right outlined in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 28 of the



▲ Figure 5: Learning poverty globally and by region – 2015 and 2019, with 2022 simulation estimates. Source: World Bank, 2022

Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Article 11 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (OAU, 1990). These frameworks emphasize the need for governments to provide free and compulsory primary education.

Additionally, Aspiration 6 of the African Union Agenda 2063 envisions “an Africa where development is people driven, unleashing the potential of its women and youth” and “Africa’s youth are guaranteed full access to education, training, skills, and technology” principles which are both outlined in the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016–2025).

### ***(g) Transforming Education in Africa***

The African Union Commission, in line with the Transforming Education Summit in New York, has set out an agenda for transforming education in Africa. The goals of this agenda include

- working towards achieving the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016 to 2025,
- advocating for education to be the A.U. theme of the year for 2023 and
- taking deliberate measures to increase financing and invest systematically in education in line with international and regional benchmarks.

In 2024, the African Union will focus on Education in Africa, providing a unique opportunity to re-ignite Member States’ commitment to achieving CESA and SDG4 targets. This initiative will build on previous commitments, including the STC-EST4, AU-HLSE Declarations, the Urgent Call for Action by the SDG4 High-level Steering Committee, and the U.N. Secretary General’s Vision Statement on Transforming Education. The African Union has proposed as its theme for 2024, “Educate an African fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa” (AUC, 2023: 7). The African Union Commission will coordinate efforts to rally governments and development partners to re-imagine education and skill development models needed for the 21st-century Africa we desire.

The Education in Africa theme for 2024 will emphasize implementing system-wide transformative strategies that are effective and sustainable while stimulating recovery from COVID-19 and building resilience. Furthermore, it will inspire the implementation of previous declarations emanating from critical continental and global education moments, including the fourth ordinary session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Education, Science, and Technology, the U.N. Transforming Education Summit, the

**■ In 2024, the African Union will focus on Education in Africa, providing a unique opportunity to re-ignite Member States’ commitment to achieving CESA and SDG4 targets.**



High-level Side Event on Transforming Education in Africa, and the Youth Manifesto on Transforming Education in Africa.

The sub-themes underpinning the proposed focus will encompass the entire education and skills development spectrum, from early childhood education and development to tertiary and vocational education and life-long learning. These areas will highlight the role of teachers as essential change agents who need to be adequately supported and empowered to play their role in the transformation.

Various national, regional, continental, and global activities are planned (AUC, 2023) to commemorate this crucial initiative. These activities will foster the implementation of vital resolutions toward building responsive and resilient African education systems. The Department of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation of the A.U. Commission will provide the technical leadership, coordinating with the Committee of Ten Heads of States on Education in Africa to make impactful changes through collaborations among member states, regional economic communities, development partners, U.N. agencies, education stakeholders, and the private sector (Ibid: 7).

Initiating education as the theme for 2024 will sustain the momentum generated by the Transforming Education Summit (TES), place an African Union spotlight on recovery from COVID-19, and build resilient systems to increase access to inclusive, quality, and relevant education in Africa. This strategic focus will aim to achieve concrete, observable actions implemented in African Union Member States, contributing to the education transformation in Africa.

#### ***(h) African Union agenda to strengthen the implementation of the Year of Education in Africa***

The agenda calls for measures to strengthen education budget transparency, efficiency, and accountability mechanisms, as well as allocate more funding to neglected but critical sub-sectors such as early childhood care and education, re-integrating out-of-school girls and boys into the education system, and green technical and vocational education and training. The agenda also seeks to reform the teaching profession, focusing on quality teacher training, recruitment, and management policies that improve learner outcomes and help improve teacher retention and fulfillment.

Additionally, the agenda highlights the need to upscale the implementation of evidence-based, innovative, feasible, and sustainable solutions that address the evolving context of education and training. This plan includes digital learning solutions, disability-inclusive education, special programs for children and adolescents at high risk of dropping out of school, programming for displaced and crisis-affected children and youth, safe and gender-responsive learning environments, and multi-sectoral adolescent girls' education and related programming. The agenda also emphasizes the importance of focusing on foundational learning from an early stage, with an emphasis on teaching Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and essential reading in preschool and primary school.

Finally, the agenda seeks to establish and strengthen multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder education partnerships at the country, regional, and continental levels. This movement should also leverage schools as multi-sectoral and multi-level platforms by forging strategic partnerships across crucial development actors and sectors like agriculture, health, telecommunication, green and digital transition, climate change, the private sector, and youth to transform education to insulate against future shocks. This agenda is a comprehensive strategy for transforming education in Africa, with specific measures designed to achieve ambitious goals.

### Youth and training for job markets in Africa

Africa is currently in the middle of a developmental crisis. Countries on the continent need to address the critical issues to effectively respond to the demands of new policy and development frameworks. Africa is the second largest and most populous continent globally, with an estimated population of 1.4 billion, equivalent to 17.89 % of the global population (U.N., 2023). The continent’s population is the youngest and fastest growing worldwide. Over 40% of Africans are under 15, and 20% are between 15 and 24. By 2050, one-third of the world’s population will live in Africa, up from nearly one-fifth in 2012. Sub-Saharan Africa will have a higher youth-to-population ratio over the next 35 years, highlighting the need to prepare for an increasingly young labor force (Smith, 2019). Whether these young people join the labor market successfully will have significant implications for Africa and its neighbors. Therefore, it is imperative to have a good understanding of how young job seekers engage with labor markets.

There is also a significant gender discrepancy emerging as young women enter marriage early, withdraw from the labor force, and focus on raising families. Afri-

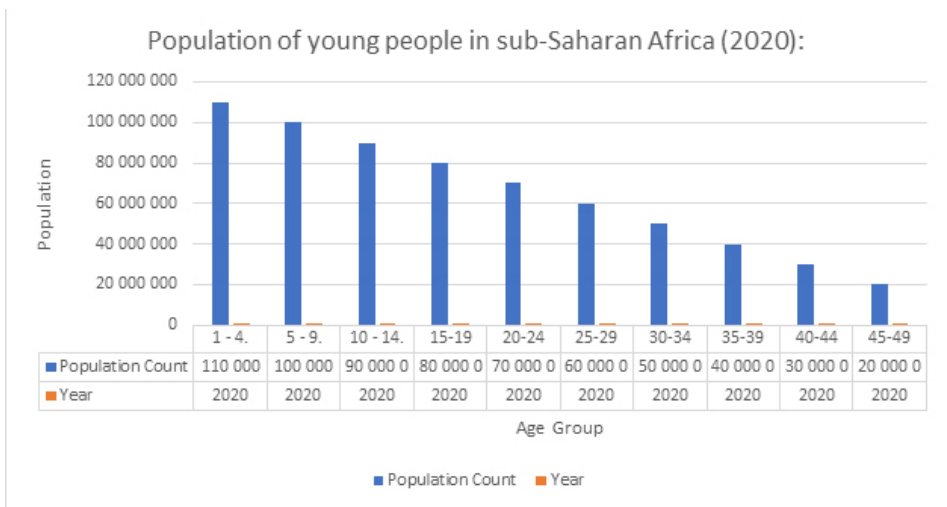


Figure 6: Population data of young people in sub-Sahara Africa 2020. Source: World Bank, 2022

can women in most countries do not enjoy the same economic, social, and political opportunities as men. Regarding education, work, and health, women lose out as fewer girls than boys go to school and complete the learning cycle. Women earn less than men for paid labor, and harmful practices such as child marriage and sexual and physical violence adversely affect women’s health and development. Africa’s widespread youth unemployment threatens to undermine social and political stability and make young people vulnerable to radicalization.

Africa has vast, untapped economic potential, but young people struggle to gain employment opportunities – 60% of the unemployed are younger than 25, with women being the most impacted (World Bank, 2018). Limited access to education and the practical training needed to build skills perpetuate the cycle, and the economic prospects propel young Africans to seek a better life elsewhere. This phenomenon, in turn, further damages local economies as significantly more developed nations are steadily drained of their workforce.

Africa is pursuing a transformation agenda under the recognition of the African Union’s vision for “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena” (African Union Commission, 2015). Therefore, it is evident that success will only be possible if leaders purposefully harness the potential of the continent’s young people. As African leaders give credence to this view, they have identified youth development in science, technology, and innovation as the main pillars of Agenda 2063. Innovation in Africa is not new, and human survival requires constant change and adaptation. For most Africans, innovation is necessary, enabling them to navigate difficulties and challenges in life. With African fortunes and prospects looking up and the continent making strides to achieve its transformation agenda, there is an urgent need to intro-

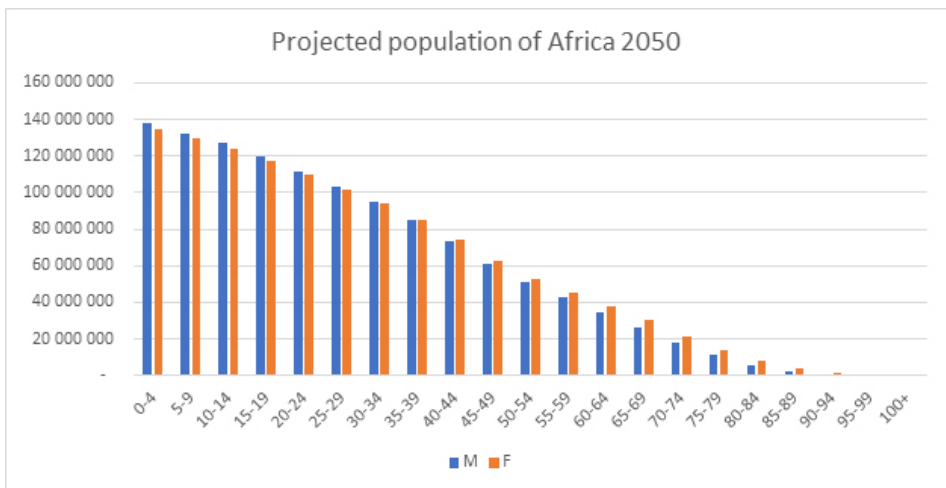


Figure 7: Projected population of Africa for 2050. Source: Pyramid population 2022

duce and intensify the use of science and technology in traditional innovation. There is also the overarching question of how innovations in science and technology can be helpful to build on the momentum of economic growth in Africa. This vision can elicit ideas on how a technological change can harness the potential of African youth to advance the African development agenda and counter the steadily rising youth unemployment rates.

African youth want to work but need education, information, skills training, and opportunities to get good jobs. Many in Africa believe it is time to break away entirely from the past, look at situations from a different perspective and a new vision, and find permanent solutions to youth employment problems on the continent (Ihejirika & Onyemere, 2018). In recent forums, African youth have expressed their desire to learn marketable skills in school and urged African governments to revise educational policies to align with workforce demands (Africa Renewal, 2018). African youth know and feel that merely graduating from school does not guarantee jobs. African youth would like to see educational programs revamped to better equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to compete in the workforce (Harrison, 2019). Young people have recently been talking about getting support in making career choices. They have emphasized the need for more effective mentorship programs, counseling, and career guidance centers to help students, business owners, and graduates.

Others discuss having the right skills for present-day employment, including creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making. Many agree that schools should develop such skills through high-quality teaching, reduced drop-out rates, improved access to higher education, quality vocational and technical training, and building bridges between formal and non-formal educational systems and the labor market. Schools should also offer specialized on-the-job training (Magara, 2019).

Although the employment landscape in Africa today reveals that the continent's workforce is more educated and employed in a diverse set of sectors than is commonly perceived, finding workers with appropriate skills and experience is difficult (African Development Bank Group, 2017). However, compared to the other issues, these are generally regarded as much lower-ranked obstacles to business growth on the continent. This remedy reflects the fundamental nature of constraints in finance, infrastructure, and overall macroeconomic conditions. Companies in Africa have complained about the lack of worker qualifications and skills, sometimes presenting an issue for hiring. Employers cite a need for more technical skills as an obstacle to hiring. In some cases, they have even pointed out that job applicants commonly lack soft skills such as time management, punctuality, and communication.

The Office of the African Union Commission Chairperson's Youth Envoy, the Department of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI), and the Women, Gender, and Youth Directorate conducted extensive consultations with young people across the continent.

As a result, they gathered young people's views and opinions on various issues and recommendations concerning the transformation of education in Africa (Office of the African Union Commission Chairperson's Youth Envoy et al., 2019). These areas align with Aspiration 62 of the African Union Agenda 2063, which states the following: "An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women, and youth, and caring for children." Article 11 of the African Youth Charter also highlights the relevance of youth participation. African youth expressed the following concerns:

The consultations revealed several concerns expressed by African youth:

1. There must be more opportunities to acquire skills relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup>-century job market or contribute meaningfully to achieving the African Union Agenda 2063.
2. Millions of African children, adolescents, and youth are out of school or unable to continue their education after primary school, leading to a lack of basic literacy and numeracy skills. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened this situation.
3. African youth need a sense of purpose and agency, connecting them with their communities and the private sector to solve global challenges. This concept should be a core curricular goal across the continent.
4. Conflict continues to disrupt education in Africa, with children and young people being the most affected.
5. Educators need more relevant materials, adequate compensation, and support and respect for students.
6. Too many African youth and schools lack access to technology, and there is a need for more mechanisms to protect students online and provide adequate instruction about online safety.

In conclusion, the consultations revealed several concerns regarding the education transformation in Africa. These concerns highlight the need for reforms in education that promote youth agency, support and respect for students, adequate compensation and resources for educators, and access to technology for African youth and schools.

African youth want to see that Transforming Education in Africa requires a paradigm shift. They are calling upon governments, the African Union, and development actors to transform Africa's education systems in at least five areas in the AU DOTSS framework involving:

- Digital and electricity connectivity of all schools on the continent.
- Online learning to complement classroom learning.
- Teachers become facilitators and motivators of learning who teach children and young people how to learn and motivate them to learn.
- Safety to learn online in schools and communities.
- Skills-focused learning ensures children have relevant foundational literacy, numeracy, and digital skills. They should also have 21st-century problem-solving skills and must leave school with job-specific skills.

African youth have called for creating an African Union and United Nations Youth Council to work on initiatives to implement these recommendations and follow up on the summit outcomes with a document that moves from theory to practice with less talk and more action.

The AU DOTSS framework is an initiative developed by the African Union to tackle crises across the African continent.

In the education sector, DOTSS is an acronym for digital connectivity, online and offline learning, teachers as facilitators and motivators of learning, safety online and in schools, and skills-focused learning. *The framework has been fundamental in the COVID-19 pandemic, with many African countries utilizing DOTSS principles to respond to the outbreak. However, it has broader implications beyond the pandemic and serves as a foundation for responding to other health and education emergencies across the continent.* African youths call on all education sector actors to be committed to multilateral agreements to deliver on their promises to transform education and engage youth as partners.

### **Strengthening the response from science, technology, and innovation.**

The African continent represents 20% of the earth's surface and is home to 1.4 billion people – likely reaching 2.53 billion by 2050. It boasts 60% of the world's arable lands, large swathes of forests, 30% of the world's reserve of minerals, and the youngest population of any continent (World Bank Group, 2022). Nevertheless, despite these riches, it produces only 3% of the global GDP, accounts for less than 3% of international trade (i.e., primary commodities and natural resources), and shoulders 25% of diseases worldwide. The picture is particularly bleak for research and innovation: Africa contributes just 2% of world research output, accounts for only 1.3% of research spending, and produces 0.1% of all patents (World Bank Group, 2021).

The AU's Agenda 2063 and the Common African Position on Agenda 2030 identify science, technology, and innovation (STI) as critical enablers for achieving development blueprints (UNECA, 2018). 2014 saw the adoption of a 10-year Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy (STISA – 2024). African governments should build STI capacity through the policies and processes that guide investment decisions in STI, innovation capacity, and STI products and services.

A lack of investment in science and technology has undermined Africa's economic transformation at the structural level (the shift of workers and resources from low- to higher-productivity sectors) and the sectoral level (the growth of productivity within industries) (UNECA, 2018). This lack of investment has had far-reaching consequences. Without the economic and scientific infrastructure necessary for innovation, the continent has relied on the colonial development model of resource extraction, which is both unsustainable and primarily responsible for its debilitating poverty and aid dependency. These challenges have been compounded by economic fragmentation, as smaller markets constrain the long-term investments and patient capital that would foster innovation and drive technology transfer in the context of globalization. Patient capital refers to long-term investments made by investors or

firms in businesses or projects that require a longer time frame to generate returns on investment. It is often used to support social and environmental initiatives with a tangible, positive impact on society, such as funding sustainable energy projects or providing resources to underserved communities. Patient capital investors are willing to wait a more extended period before expecting returns, often spanning several years or even decades, in exchange for the potential for more considerable, more sustainable gain.

The lack of investment in science and technology in Africa has adversely affected the economy at both the structural and sectoral levels. These consequences include continued reliance on unsustainable resource extraction and aid dependency and limited innovation and technology transfer due to economic fragmentation and lack of patient capital.

Africa's economic transformation has been hindered by a lack of investment in science and technology at both the structural and sectoral levels, as reported by UNECA in 2018 (Cole, 2019; Kiss, 2022). The effects of this underinvestment are far-reaching and include continued reliance on the unsustainable colonial development model of resource extraction, high levels of poverty, and economic fragmentation that constrain long-term investment and patient capital. With the necessary infrastructure for innovation, Africa can foster the growth and development of technology.

## **Key Emerging Issues**

### ***(a) Digitalization***

The digital transformation in African countries presents significant economic growth and social development opportunities. By digitizing their economies, African countries can boost productivity, increase efficiency, and create new jobs in the digital sector (Monga, 2017). Additionally, digital technologies offer innovative solutions to overcome some of the barriers to development, such as limited access to education, healthcare, and financial services. However, challenges like inadequate infrastructure, limited digital skills, and regulatory barriers hinder the adoption and diffusion of digital technologies (Ogunleye, 2019).

Governments and private sector players need to invest in digital infrastructure, such as high-speed internet, digital platforms, and cyber-security, to overcome these challenges and offer opportunities provided by digital transformation. Additionally, national policies should prioritize the development of digital skills and capacity building in the education system and workforce. African countries can also learn from other emerging economies, such as India, China, and Brazil, which have successfully harnessed digital transformation to spur economic growth (Monga, 2017). In conclusion, the digital transformation of African economies presents a significant opportunity to drive development. Still, it requires a concerted effort from stakeholders to overcome the challenges and maximize the benefits.

### ***(b) The state of STIs in Africa***

Despite reorienting its development policies to include STIs at various levels, Africa's STI capacity still needs to improve. In 2015, only 12 African countries out of 141 surveyed ranked among the top 100 innovation achievers in the 2015 Global Innovation Index. Only one of 31 African countries surveyed in the 2016 Network Readiness Index was among the world's top 50 network-ready countries (Makinde, 2018). Africa needs better STI infrastructure and only has a small pool of researchers, limited science and engineering programs, weak intellectual property frameworks, and low joint scientific output relative to the rest of the world. Therefore, the continent still needs to improve its overall STI efforts due to the low investments in STI capacity development. It accounts for about 5% of the global gross domestic product but only 1.3% of global spending on research and development (UNESCO, 2015). Indeed, about 84% of the African countries surveyed in 2016 ranked *low* or *very low* in capacity development outcomes.

### ***(c) STI capacity gaps in Africa***

Africa Capacity Report 2017 shows that STI capacity is one of Africa's biggest challenges. A survey of 44 African countries undertaken by the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) in 2016 to assess capacity needs in STI priority areas showed that African countries consider training as a *high* or *very high* priority area in STIs. Investment in STI development is meager in Africa. African countries are taking a short-term approach to developing STI skills, as evidenced by low public spending on research, development, and scientific infrastructure.

Most African countries need a more robust institutional capacity to develop and sustain STIs because only some public institutions have qualified human resources in science and engineering. African countries must have a more remarkable ability to retain a few qualified scientists and engineers. The migration of skilled African scientists and other experts – the “brain drain” (Tarrósy, 2011) – has further depleted Africa's STI capacity (UNECA, 2016). For instance, from 2007 to 2011, an estimated 450,000 tertiary-educated Africans migrated (UN-DESA & OECD, 2013). Another critical challenge is the lack of accurate data to target STI policies and strategies. The lack of a robust standard set of African STI indicators has constrained the continent's ability to make evidence-based STI decisions. The inability to manage the data affects the ability to update the STI policies and strategies and determine how much to allocate to build STI capacities and frameworks. There is also a vast disparity between female and male participation in research in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and higher and tertiary education.

### ***(d) The crucial role of governments in Africa's STI capacity building***

STI capacity is built around state-of-the-art equipment and other infrastructure that require huge investments that yield little returns but are preconditions for making information and communication technologies (ICTs) affordable and usable. A soci-



ety-wide effort to leverage ICTs requires concerted government efforts. Therefore, governments need to provide clear STI policy guidance.

***(e) Recommended Policy Options for African Governments from ACBF***

STI capacity building rests on African governments' commitment to assume a leadership role as regulators of the economy and provide the necessary support. ACR 2017 recommends several policy options for African governments to consider building their science, technology, and innovation capacity.

- Design gender-sensitive STI policies, bridge the gender gap by promoting women's participation and leadership in STI, and encourage young women and girls to pursue science and engineering programs.
- African governments and the AU should pursue sustainable and innovative funding alliances with bilateral and multilateral donors, governments, private foundations, and businesses.
- Governments should establish partnerships with emerging local firms and startups at the bottom of the pyramid to create financing mechanisms, such as industry funds, association-based financing, and tax incentives to mobilize resources for STI.
- In partnership with the private sector, academia, non-state actors, and civil society organizations, African governments can conduct surveys and diagnostic analyses to identify the critical STI skills essential for economic growth. It is crucial to align skills development with market needs and Agenda 2063 priorities. Emphasis should be on technical and vocational education and training (TVET), including apprenticeships and on-the-job experiences.
- Establish a regional database of critical skills for Agenda 2063 to support STI and create a vast pool for intra-African cooperation using African skills. The ACBF, AU-NEPAD, and other partners like CAFOR can coordinate this initiative with African governments to complement their efforts in STI.
- Africa should curtail the brain drain by developing strategies for retaining, harmonizing, and utilizing its STI capacity by providing incentives (monetary or nonmonetary) to Africans with critical technical skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
- African governments should step up their efforts to develop academic and scientific mobility programs across African and emerging economies.
- African governments should focus on boosting investment in STEM education by incentivizing students to choose STEM fields over the humanities and social sciences. This phenomenon can be achieved through an allocation ratio of 70 STEM students to every 30 students in the humanities and social sciences. In addition, it is crucial to invest in high-quality universities with state-of-the-art laboratories and information and communications technology infrastructure to enhance institutional capacity (ACR, 2017).

## **Building solid partnerships, ensuring shared responsibility, and securing solutions**

The Coalition on Media and Education for Development Africa Forum (CAFOR) is a non-profit membership organization comprising institutions, organizations, experts, and individuals who are committed to ensuring that education systems in Africa are relevant to young Africans with newly acquired skills that correspond with labor market needs on the African continent. The African Union Commission hosts CAFOR at its Addis Ababa headquarters in Ethiopia. CAFOR's mission is to promote communication as a Core Element of Education and Youth Development, focusing on Youth Labor Force Participation (Coalition on Media and Education for Development Africa Forum, 2019).

The vision of CAFOR is to place communication at the center of education, focusing on youth skills development and the labor market in Africa. This domain will include advocacy, capacity building, analysis, research, and documentation of best practices. CAFOR will mainly focus on work and training in areas that equip young people with exceptional skills to meet modern-day challenges. CAFOR already has an energetic African professional workforce of more than 70 members that supports programs within member states of the African Union. This group comprises professionals from many disciplines, including scientists, technologists, social science researchers, education specialists, journalists, business managers, lawyers, youth leaders, teachers, university professors, diplomats, and project and program managers serving various institutions.

The COVID-19 pandemic slowed down many of CAFOR's activities in the recent past. Despite this setback, CAFOR continued to dialogue with various partners. CAFOR will deploy multi-faceted strategies to ensure that African youth are skilled and employable. The core tenants of the strategic framework include the following:

- I. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Africa Union: CAFOR signed a five-year strategic MOU with the AU at the beginning of 2019 (CAFOR, 2019).
- II. Policy and regulatory support: CAFOR will provide technical, strategic, and advocacy support to establish a system to address the regulatory environment on educational reforms for youth to ensure increased employability.
- III. Setting up a continent-wide forum: CAFOR will function as a broker of ideas and set up a knowledge-sharing platform.
- IV. Multi-stakeholder partnerships: CAFOR will assist by promoting such alliances to work on:
  - (a) *Multidisciplinary model*: Partnership between academicians and researchers and between universities and various training institutions to develop better curriculum and pedagogy methods.
  - (b) *PPP model*: Partnership between public and private institutions to provide better facility access.
  - (c) *A partnership between industries* and firms with educational institutions and universities to map supply and demand.

It is within this context that CAFOR abides by the following:

- I. Partners' collaboration:** CAFOR will prepare a sector strategic report covering challenges, reforms undertaken, partnerships needed, best practices from different countries, and required funding.
- II. Support the African Union's Agenda 2063:** CAFOR and its networks are working closely with the various departments of the African Union Commission to popularize Agenda 2063 at the regional and country levels. CAFOR also supports the African Union in working with African institutions such as the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) to strengthen scientific research and innovation through African networks of excellence.
- III. Supporting key continent-wide education strategy:** CAFOR will provide technical, financial, and advocacy support to implement the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) and the Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).
- IV. Support to its members:** CAFOR has a strong network of members from 40 participating countries. An additional 15 countries will join by the end of 2024, covering all 55 member states of the African Union. CAFOR also has an extensive network of more than 1,000 members comprising the media and other professional entities. It intends to disseminate all the initiatives to other experts and professionals who work primarily in the development sector. Strategically, members of CAFOR can support the implementation of various policies through their active membership in the organization. CAFOR also independently supports all its members on multiple initiatives, including policy, regulatory issues, capacity building, advocacy, and development of communication strategies to increase employment for the youth.



▲ Figure 8: CAFOR Roundtable conference on planning for the 2024 year of education in Africa. Source: CAFOR, 2023

**V. Support implementation of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** By implementing its strategy, CAFOR will contribute to directly achieving SDG 4 (Quality Education) and indirectly assist in fulfilling other key SDGs, including SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well Being), SDG 5 (Gender Equality, a CESA objective), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth, another CESA objective), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality).

**VI. Technological Testing of Innovations:** CAFOR will promote new technological innovations that will assist teachers and students in exploring research opportunities.

### **CAFOR Projects**

In 2020, CAFOR developed eleven project concepts intended for implementation over five years until the conclusion of the CESA initiative (CAFOR, 2020). This course of action was in keeping with the MOU between CAFOR and the African Union. However, owing to the delay caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the timeline of nearly all these projects has been extended by an additional three years until 2027.

The eleven projects are as follows:

1. The African Digital Library and Learning Platform
2. The TVET Digital Library and Learning Platform
3. The Digital Teacher Training Initiative
4. The African Learning Platform
5. Quality Education
6. Popularizing the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25)
7. Strengthening Institutional Capacity for the operationalization of CAFOR
8. Education in Emergencies and Conflict Situations
9. The Africa Street Children Pilot Project
10. Training of Journalists and Communication Officers in Ministries of Education in Africa
11. AI for education-focused mental health and well-being

The first four on this list are CAFOR's innovative flagship projects that involve digitalization. Each of these projects assumes a different approach to implementation with unique characteristics. The COVID-19 pandemic and its negative impact on Africa's education systems call on all education stakeholders at the regional and continental levels to act quickly to scale up and implement innovative initiatives that improve the resilience of Africa's education system and ensure continuous learning.



▲ Figure 9: CAFOR team visit to FDRE TVET data center in Addis Ababa in preparation for the CAFOR TVET project. Source: CAFOR, 2023

CAFOR believes that education in Africa must equip learners with agency, purpose, and competencies needed to shape their own lives and contribute to the lives of others in the context of economic and social development. In the first instance, Africa's thinking for the Transforming Education Summit must focus on rapidly reversing the current downward trend for domestic and international resources for education in Africa, focusing on the five thematic tracks discussed earlier. The massive education financing gap on the African continent, the slow recovery from COVID-19, and constrained budgets have resulted from these conditions.



▲ Figure 10: Tegbared TVET Electric engineering workshop visit as CAFOR prepares for 2024. Source: CAFOR, 2023



▲ *Figure 11: CAFOR touring the Tegnared TVET tailoring workshop in Addis Ababa.*  
*Source: CAFOR, 2023*

CAFOR seeks to collaborate with policymakers, academic experts, school networks, teachers, education leaders, students, and social partners to provide an open forum for exchanging ideas, sharing proven and promising practices, keeping up with cutting-edge research, and working towards a new learning ecosystem. Many organizations are already familiar with the consultative process, using it during Africa's emergence within the SDGs through the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa and the formation of CESA. By leveraging these same principles of collaboration and consultation, CAFOR can streamline its processes and achieve its goals more quickly and effectively.

### **Implementation progress**

The MOU established with the African Union aims to foster collaboration between the AUC and CAFOR in order to “enhance the integration of continental and global policy agendas (including Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals, STISA 2024, CESA 16-25, and the TVET Continental Strategy) into sectoral and country-level strategies for Africa's development.”

Because of this, CAFOR needs to work even harder with other organizations on the continent that support education, science, technology, innovation, and youth development to get them to follow the A.U.'s overall vision. This position will also help gain traction for enhancing awareness, ownership, and implementation at country levels and among the key constituencies, especially the African youth.

## **The MOU Progress**

- I. CAFOR has secured new partnerships with numerous countries and agencies around the globe. Governments and agencies are interested in supporting the agreed-upon areas to work on in Africa. CAFOR also welcomed several new members at the country level, bringing the number of African countries active in CAFOR to over 30. The remaining African countries are expected to be inducted into CAFOR's programs by January 2025, eventually including all 55 states of the African Union.
- II. CAFOR's Executive Director organized meetings with the most important members of the diplomatic community and partners of the African Union in Addis Ababa. These were comprised of 21 ambassadors from countries outside of Africa, including Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Hungary, India, Iran, Italy, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates. CAFOR staff also met and discussed the African Union's policy instruments, including the CESA and other African Union agendas, with various representatives accredited by Ethiopia and the African Union. These included UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, USAID, GIZ, KOICA, the Korea-Africa Foundation, and the EU Delegation to the African Union. CAFOR also met with senior delegates from China, France, Kuwait, the League of Arab States, and Education Cannot Wait at UNICEF in New York, USA.
- III. CAFOR is working to enhance partnerships with African-based organizations, including several youth-led organizations, to implement the CESA and other related communication strategies the organization is developing. It has signed MOUs with three youth-led organizations in Ethiopia and has a unique working relationship with Youth Advocates of Ghana.
- IV. CAFOR staff and members participated in more than 60 local and international physical and virtual activities through webinars in several African countries and around the globe. These included conferences, seminars, workshops, and discussion forums focused primarily on education, science and technology, and innovation for youth skills development and employment.

## **The CAFOR strategic plan**

CAFOR developed its five-year strategic plan in 2019 with a proposed minimum annual operational budget of \$15,000,000. Its ten projects for the next five years have an estimated budget of \$350,000,000. As noted, CAFOR has enormous capacity at the field level with highly skilled professionals. These range from university professors to high-level officials in African Government Ministries to business entrepreneurs, senior consultants, and participants in civil society organizations. Within the strategic plan period, CAFOR is seeking to build solid partnerships, ensure shared responsibility, and secure solutions through the following objectives:

- Provide a continent-wide platform for exchanging information, experience, and practices about new technologies and innovations among experts in government ministries, CSOs, NGOs, the media, youth, and communities. CAFOR will promote a community practice involving the youth in agriculture, entrepreneurship, and other vocations to help curb internal and external migration.
- Sensitize and mobilize stakeholders on good communication practices among key stakeholders.
- Build the capacity of media professionals and other interested stakeholders to stimulate robust public debate on education and development issues.
- Promote policy changes and measures to ensure an enabling policy environment for youth to engage in innovative enterprises in Africa.
- Translate ideas into action on the ground by testing technological innovations and institutionalizing what works.
- Promote relationships of trust and meaningful multi-stakeholder partnerships to achieve education goals on the continent.
- Undertake advocacy and lobbying to meet Africa's current economic and social challenges.
- Collaborate with the African Union Commission, the Regional Economic Communities, the United Nations, donors, civil society networks, and other cooperating partners to improve communication, develop education systems, and achieve CESA and SDGs while strongly emphasizing youth.

CAFOR will seek to achieve these objectives with the following strategic activities related to education and skills development for youth in Africa:

- Facilitating research.
- Strengthening stakeholder mobilization and sensitization.
- Supporting capacity-building initiatives.
- Support skills development for youth in emergency and post-conflict situations.
- Engaging in and bolstering lobbying and advocacy efforts.
- Mentoring and fostering collaborations.

### **The Way Forward**

In light of the present circumstances, CAFOR will persist in finding fresh opportunities to establish a platform across the continent. The organization will endeavor to coordinate its efforts with all departments in the ESTI wing of the AUC, as well as additional departments such as those of Political Affairs, Peace and Security, and Social Affairs, which manage topics around skills development for youth and technical and vocational education for women.

CAFOR and its partners will work with policymakers, academic experts, school networks, teachers, education leaders, students, and social partners to provide the space to exchange ideas, compare proven and promising practices, discover cutting-edge research, and contribute to developing a new learning ecosystem. It will



consider the relevance of this framework across the African continent and ensure its consistency with Africa's broader policies that countries can implement.

In science, technology, and business creation, CAFOR will meet the targets of the second ten-year plan of Agenda 2063 and collaborate with African educational institutions to focus more on investing in science and technology. The African Union's Department of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (in which CAFOR operates), as well as the Youth Division within the Department of Women, Gender and Youth, must work with bilateral, multilateral, and non-traditional partners to leverage their contributions to development in Africa via co-financing thematic trust funds and other bilateral initiatives. Work must also continue with the private sector, foundations, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, and academia. Support for technical and vocational training must link to specific needs in the labor market, in both the formal and informal sectors, including the skills required to create small businesses. CAFOR must support programs for women in technical and scientific fields (UNESCO, 2014).

STI capacity building in Africa depends on political will and government commitments to support the process (Bong, 2021). Integrating the capacity to reform economic, social, and political governance is a prerequisite for ensuring STI in Africa's development agendas. However, governments cannot do this alone; they must collaborate with the private sector, civil society organizations, and academia to build mutual trust, accountability, and effective coordination.

CAFOR is organizing a series of working sessions to support the African Union's innovative practices in education, science, and technology in transforming African education, emphasizing TVET implementation to enhance African youth advancement and employment opportunities. The sessions will focus on developing and implementing effective, long-lasting, system-wide transformational strategies for African education and recovery from COVID-19. CAFOR would build resilience and transformation, riding on global momentum.

For the proposed 2024 theme, "Educate an African Fit for the 21st Century", CAFOR will work closely with the AU and its partners to help structure the theme around sub-themes that cover the full range of education and skill development, from early childhood development and education to tertiary and vocational education and learning throughout life. CAFOR will emphasize the role of teachers as crucial agents of transformation, as teachers need to be adequately supported and empowered to play their part in this transformation. ✨

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# CHALLENGES IN THE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY OF NORTHERN GHANA- IMPACTS OF SOYBEAN TRADE ON BAMBARA GROUNDNUT:

## A CASE STUDY

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## Abstract

The global seed trade has reached and conquered Northern Ghana, squeezing out local suppliers. Considering ongoing population growth, rapidly urbanizing communities, changing diets, and vast quantities of imported food products, the endeavours of enterprises that try to reduce the local food production deficit should be more appreciated. Rice, maize, and soybeans are three types of grain that dominate the global seed trade. Furthermore, the natural conditions and vegetation of the sub-tropical region are close to optimal. While rice and maize have been cultivated for a long time, soybeans are a new crop in the semi-arid climate zone of the Guinea-Savannah.

The motivations and ambitions are clear: pushing improved soybean seeds into the traditional farming system of Northern Ghana to meet the zero hunger sustainable development goal while widening the market for western seed producers. In the Ghanaian context, microfinance is built on making customers dependent on services. On the one hand, it is a tool to extend farm sizes through mechanization, fertilizers, and modern cultivation technologies to increase yield; on the other hand, microfinance could cause financial difficulties within society and farmer associations, and it has negative effects on unsupported and unfinanced activities such as cultivating indigenous crops.

## Keywords

*Ghana, agriculture, local farmers, soybean, Bambara Groundnut*

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## 1. Introduction

Developing countries face increasing challenges. After the hardest period of the Covid-19 pandemic, the disruption of global supply chains, the soaring energy and food prices, and skyrocketing inflation resulting from the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the shortage of staple food products – especially cereal – has become a serious problem in many African countries. Moreover, the sharp rise of food prices is exacerbated by the rise of agricultural inputs like fuel and fertilizers as well. Local producers face many difficulties and also the dilemma of whether to pay increasing costs of inputs or accept that yields will decrease in the short term. But they faced this issue in the past as well. They needed to cope with the increasing market pressure of large multinational agrarian companies, especially in the soybean industry. As a result of deregulations and international agreements, national governments cannot directly interfere in global competition (Erdeiné Késmárki-Gally et al., 2015). Transportation as a factor also plays a significant role in competitiveness models (Nagy et al, 2023), and especially it plays in Africa where the modern and efficient transportation infrastructure means the bottleneck in many cases. Additionally, the environmental impacts caused by economic activities and climate change have increasingly necessitated green investments, financed in several countries by green bonds created by financial markets (Sági, 2020). There is no doubt about the role of soybeans as a food and feed product (i.e., sources of protein and oil); however, this means that the local farmers must take risk. The relatively cheap import prices and the appearance and domestic activity of foreign soybean producers in Northern Ghana create stiff competition. The rise of soybean production is a trend globally (see Tables 1-2 and Figure 1) and also in Ghana (Figure 2).

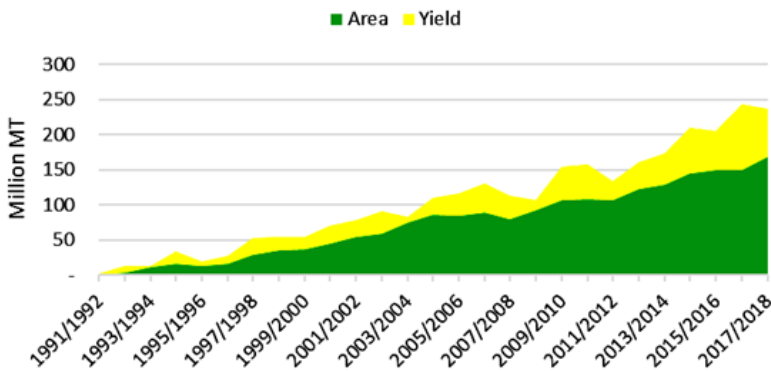
Country	Domestic Production (MMT) (2016)	Percent of World (2016)	Percent Growth (1990-2016)	Average Annual Growth Rate (1990-2016)
United States	117	33%	124%	3.1%
Brazil	114	32%	624%	7.9%
Argentina	58	16%	403%	6.4%
China	13	4%	17%	0.6%
India	12	3%	342%	5.9%
Paraguay	11	3%	720%	8.4%
Canada	7	2%	419%	6.5%
Ukraine	4	1%	4,223%	15.6%
Uruguay	3	1%	8,400%	18.6%
Russia	3	1%	337%	5.8%
<b>World total</b>	<b>352</b>		237%	4.8%

▲ Table 1: Total Domestic Soybean Production and Growth of Production from 1990 to 2016, in the Ten Largest Soybean Production Countries as of 2016.  
Source: USDA FAS, Production, Supply, and Distribution Database (2017)



Country	Area of Soybeans Harvested (Millions of Acres)	Percent of World (2016)	Percent Growth (1990-2016)	Average Annual Growth Rate (1990-2016)
Brazil	84	24%	248%	4.9%
United States	83	24%	46%	1.5%
Argentina	45	13%	286%	5.3%
India	28	8%	345%	5.9
China	18	5%	-5%	-0.2%
Paraguay	8	2%	281%	5.3%
Canada	5	2%	359%	6.0%
Russia	5	1%	214%	4.5%
Ukraine	5	1%	2,007%	12.4%
Uruguay	3	1%	3,474%	14.7%
<b>World total</b>	<b>298</b>		<b>121%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>

▲ Table 2: Total Acres of Soybeans Harvested and Changes in Acres Harvested in the Ten Largest Soybean Producing Countries as of 2016.  
Source: USDA FAS, Production, Supply, and Distribution Database (2017)



▲ Figure 1: Increase in World Soybean Production Due to Changes in Yield and Harvested Area, 1990-2016.  
Source: USDA FAS, Production, Supply, and Distribution Database (2017)

In such a complex and difficult situation, Ghanaian farmers need to choose new alternatives for land cultivation and plant production. Agricultural reforms would serve not only the development of the rural society, but also be a valuable contribution to peace and security in the West Africa (Neszmélyi, 2014). Our study focused on indigenous plant species that local farmers have many years of experience and tradition in producing. These plants may help Ghanaian producers regain their competitiveness and contribute to more environmentally sound, sustainable production compared to soybeans that have a more significant carbon footprint.

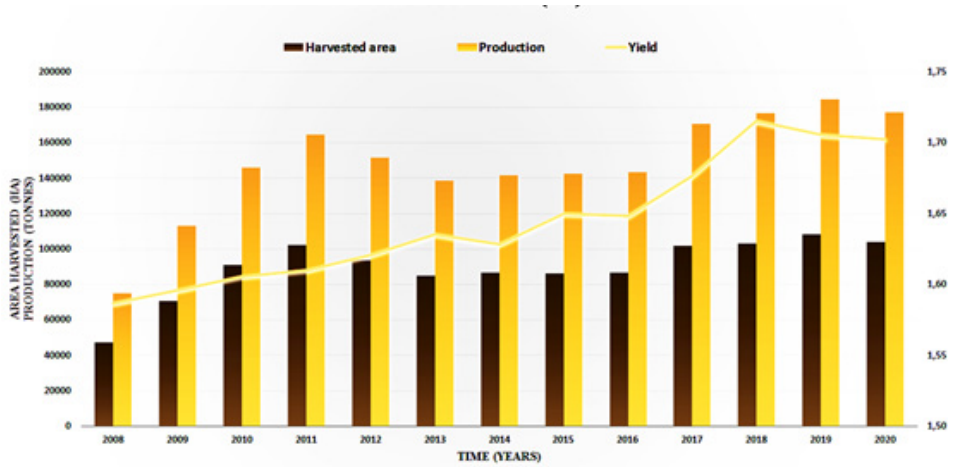


Figure 2: Growing Indicators of Soybean Production in Ghana between 2008 – 2020 (ha).  
Source: FAOSTAT (2017), self-edition

### **Bambara Groundnut**

Bambara groundnut (*Vigna subterranea* (L.) Verdc.) is one of the most underutilized and less studied indigenous crop species in West Africa. However, Bambara is a legume that is still a small part of the traditional African diet. Unfortunately, other crops are more common compared to this conventional one. Due to the increasingly high price of meat, this low-cost legume could serve as a supplemental, affordable, and pure source of protein. In addition to its high protein content of 19%, it also has essential amino acids, trace elements, and an optimal amount of saturated and unsaturated fatty acids (Hlanga et al., 2021; Tan et al., 2020)



Figure 3: Groundnut harvest in Tongo, Upper East Region, Ghana. Bambara was not found in the assortment.  
Source: Taken by the authors

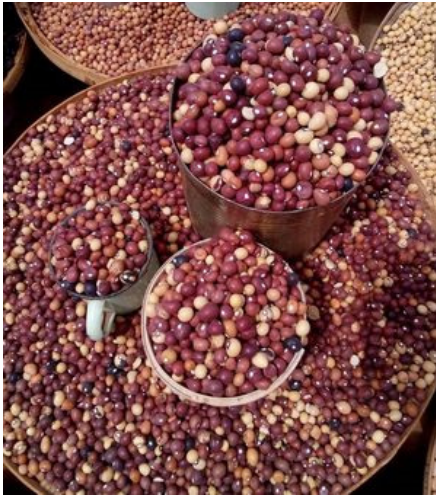


Figure 4: Bambaranut for sale.  
Source: African Products Australia

Since the first Eastern Nigerian botanical description of Bambara Groundnut (Hepper 1963) and into the 21st century, pod- and biomass production potential, nitrogen-fixing capacity, and drought- and insufficient-nutrition tolerance have been topics discussed in scholarly articles (Azam-Ali et al., 2001). Research interest and public knowledge on Bambara nut have been increasing on many continents (Khan et al., 2021) becoming specified and detailed according to geographical sites and research areas (Konate et al., 2020; Yahaya et al., 2022).

## 2. The Objectives of the Research

In the frames of the present study the authors set the following research goals to be achieved.

- (1) To understand the distribution system for seeds and other agricultural inputs within the target communities.
- (2) Identify primary stakeholders and influential actors in the system.
- (3) Explore and describe the current farming model (i.e., farm biodiversity) utilized by the surveyed population.

This article serves as a foundation for future studies. It does not deal with special areas of agriculture like soil science or cropping system nor with economic indicators like productivity or return rates. This paper will not make an argument about the advantages of Bambara beans compared to soybeans. The main goal of the research was to explore and accurately describe the microfinance system for seed production and agriculture in this region of Africa.

## 3. Data Collection and Methodology

Agricultural service models including microfinance and credit lending, mechanization services (Vida & Vasa, 2020; Vasa et al., 2021), and theoretical and technological

skills in the labour force are available in Northern Ghana. While a few non-profit and for-profit organizations compete in this service market, trying to cover communities, districts, and regions results in more bankrupted and abandoned organizations compared to operating ventures.

This farmer survey that we carried out in two different regions of Ghana (i.e., the Upper East Region and the North East Region) between 9 August and 12 in 2021 was an efficient instrument to measure yields, loan taking willingness, and the financial needs of farmers as well as to observe the relationships between service industries, governments, and customers.

We hired three enumerators (census-taker persons) with tertiary education background during the study period and interviewed 79 farmers individually. Leaders of the farmer associations included the following categories:

- heads of associations (7 persons)
- secretaries of associations (7 persons)
- treasurers of associations (7 persons)

These stakeholders have the biggest influence on their group and the most complex knowledge about the association and trends in the agro-market.

We have trained the enumerators on the questionnaire, but they already had previous knowledge about the topic being studied; furthermore, personal relationships with the surveyed communities helped researchers to conduct the study efficiently. In this report, we are using a 5% significance interval as the most preferred probability for agroeconomic analysis.

#### 4. Stage 1: Community Observation

We targeted seven communities: six small communities in the Upper East Region (Korania, Bondunia, Kapania, Upper Gaani, Lower Gaani, New Gaani) and one larger community in the North East Region (Kukua). Because of the homogeneity of the first six communities, we handled them as only one group of farmers under the name of Navrongo. The 49 respondents from Kukua and 30 from Navrongo comprise our surveyed population.

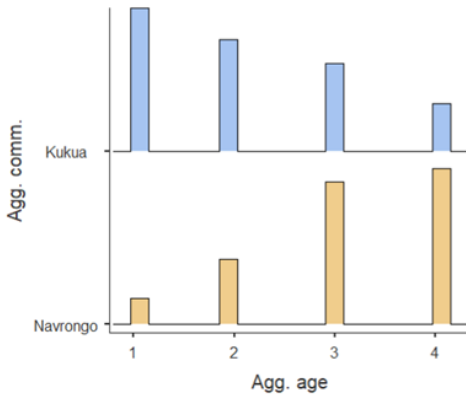
Average age of the whole population is 41.1, ranging between 19 and 71. Aggregation of this highly deviating (standard deviation: 13,6) data set has created four age groups: youth (19-30), younger middle age (31-40), older middle age (41-50), and elders (51 and above). With this aggregation, we have four similar size groups, providing a basis for additional separation and analysis procedures.

Communities	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Kukua	49	62.0%	62.0%
Navrongo	30	38.0%	100.0%

△ Table 3: Respondents, self-collection

Agg. age groups	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
19-30 years (Group 1)	20	25.3 %	25.3 %
31-40 years (Group 2)	19	24.1 %	49.4 %
41-50 years (Group 3)	22	27.8 %	77.2 %
51 years =< (Group 4)	18	22.8 %	100.0 %

▲ Table 4: Whole population aggregated by age groups, self-collection.  
Source: The authors' data collection



▲ Figure 5 - Aggregated age density of the two main farmer groups.  
Source: The authors' compilation

As Figure 5 shows, there is a significant difference between Kukua and Navrongo: while Kukua is a relatively young community, Navrongo's female population is getting older. Therefore, in Kukua we conducted research with the individuals considered young and younger middle-aged, while in Navrongo we focused on aging women groups, where 23.3% of the women were widows.

If we combine conclusions in Figure 5 with data in Figure 6, we can determine that our population is highly reproductive. With the aggregation of responses given for the question related to *number of children*, we have created different three *children* groups, respectively: group 1 (0-2 children), group 2 (3-5 children), and group 3 (6 or more children).

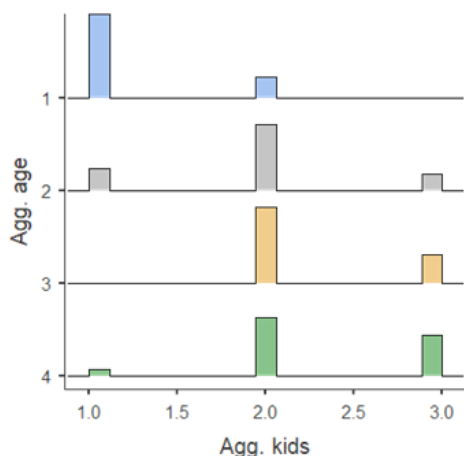


Figure 6: Number of children groups divided by age groups, whole population.  
Source: The authors' compilation

To determine significance, we can run a basic ANOVA-test on children groups to compare them with age groups.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Agg. age	16.2	3	5.391	19.7	<.001
Residuals	20.5	75	0.273		

Table 5: ANOVA – Number of children differentiate by age, whole population.  
Source: The authors' compilation

The test above shows a significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) between age groups in terms of their numbers of children, moreover providing a deeper understanding of farmers' family dynamism. The Tukey post-hoc test illustrated that age groups show differences in terms of family size.

Comparison						
Agg. age	Agg. age	Mean Difference	SE	df	t	$P_{\text{tukey}}$
19-30years	- 31-40 years	-0.7474	0.168	75.0	-4.461	<.001
	- 41-50 years	-1.0727	0.162	75.0	-6.639	<.001
	- 51 years=<	-1.1333	0.170	75.0	-6.670	<.001
31-40 years	- 41-50 years	-0.3254	0.164	75.0	-1.987	0.202
	- 51 years=<	-0.3860	0.172	75.0	-2.244	0.121
41-50 years	- 51 years=<	-0.0606	0.166	75.0	-0.365	0.983

Note. Comparisons are based on estimated marginal means

Table 6: Significant differences between age groups by number of children, whole population.  
Source: The authors' calculation

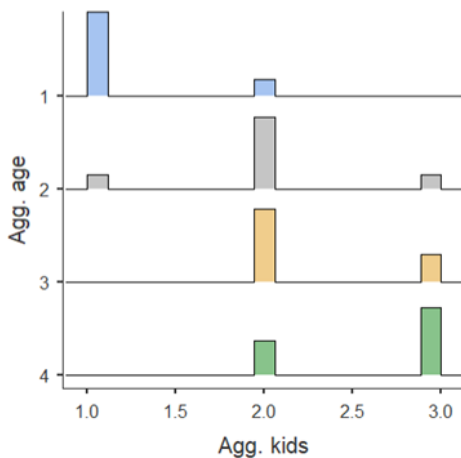
Significant differences ( $p < 0,001$ ) are showing up between the 1st and other age groups (2nd, 3rd, 4th). There are negative differences from the perspective of the 1st group. This means the farmers between the age of 19-30 have fewer children than their older colleagues. Because of the tendencies we see in Figure 5 and Figure 6, as our young farmers become older they are going to have more children than three. This not only generates more people to feed in the communities but also produces potential customers in the market.

Comparison			Mean Difference	SE	df	t	p <sub>tukey</sub>
Agg. age		Agg. age					
19-30 years	-	31-40 years	-0.833	0.168	45.0	-4.96	<.001
	-	41-50 years	-1.106	0.181	45.0	-6.13	<.001
	-	51 years=<	-1.500	0.222	45.0	-6.74	<.001
31-40 years	-	41-50 years	-0.273	0.190	45.0	-1.43	0.485
	-	51 years=<	-0.667	0.230	45.0	-2.90	0.029
41-50 years	-	51 years=<	-0.394	0.239	45.0	-1.65	0.364

Note. Comparisons are based on estimated marginal means

△ Table 7: Significant differences occur in number of children between age groups, Kukua.  
Source: The authors' calculation

This was the whole population, but if we only focus on Kukua, where most of our partners are under 41, we are able to state the same: our community is regenerating itself, providing a solid ground to plan and create a market for our current and future services.



△ Figure 7: Number of children groups divided by age groups, Kukua.  
Source: The authors' compilation

Not only the age distribution, but the gender and religious background highlight differences between the two main groups of our clients. While 93.3% of farmers in Navrongo are women who believe in a Christian god (100%), farmers in Kukua are mainly males (85.7%) and Muslim (100%).



▲ *Figure 8: Household survey, Kukua, 2021.*  
 Source: Taken by the authors

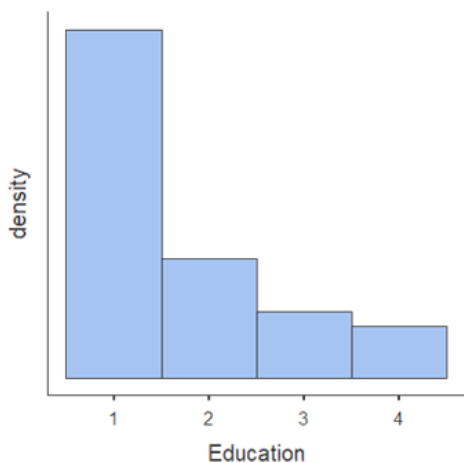
As it is usual in Northern Ghana, more than 50% of our farmers are uneducated formally, lacking basic writing and reading skills. In our surveyed population, illiteracy is similar to the Upper East Region (51,9%) but lower than in the North East Region (64,1%) according to the 2021 Population and Housing Census in Ghana (Government of Ghana, 2021).

Only one person (1.2%) indicated tertiary education at a higher level, and we aggregated him to the secondary high school group.

Educational level	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Non formal	47	59.5%	59.5%
Primary	16	20.3%	79.7%
JHS	9	11.4%	91.1%
SHS, Tertiary	7	8.9%	100.0%

▲ *Table 8: Educational level frequencies, whole population.*  
 Source: The authors' own data collection and calculation





▲ Figure 9: Density of highest reached educational level within the whole population.  
Source: The authors' own calculation

In Ghana, public school system from primary to high school became tuition free in 2017 (Government of Ghana, 2017). This regulation will surely increase the current literacy level and support younger generations to gain basic knowledge. We used the ANOVA test again to identify significant differences of educational levels between age groups.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Agg. age	16.5	3	5.493	6.84	<.001
Residuals	60.2	75	0.803		

▲ Table 9: ANOVA – Educational level difference by age, whole population.  
Source: The authors' own calculation

Comparison							
Agg. age		Agg. age	Mean Difference	SE	df	t	P <sub>tukey</sub>
19-30years	-	31-40 years	-0.111	0.287	75.0	-0.385	0.980
	-	41-50 years	0.782	0.277	75.0	2.824	0.030
	-	51 years=<	0.933	0.291	75.0	3.206	0.010
31-40 years	-	41-50 years	0.892	0.281	75.0	3.179	0.011
	-	51 years=<	1.044	0.295	75.0	3.541	0.004
41-50 years	-	51 years=<	0.152	0.285	75.0	0.532	0.951

Note. Comparisons are based on estimated marginal means

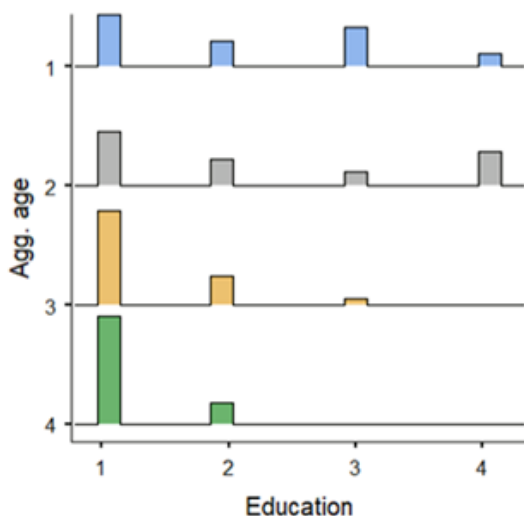
▲ Table 10: Significant differences of educational level between age groups, whole population.  
Source: The authors' own calculation

There is no difference between age group 1 (19-30 years) and age group 2 (31-40 years). For educational level, these two age groups function as one. Their educational level is the same, just like age group 3 (41-50 years) and age group 4 (51 years and above), between which we could not identify a difference. However, there is a significant difference between the younger (19-40 years) and the older groups (41 years and above), the younger group is more educated than the older one. With the regulation discussed above, this trend looks to be continued.

This discussion is important from the perspective of stakeholders. With increasing educational levels, literacy, command of the English language, and basic economic skills are improving, which make rural populations more professional and skilled when planning for the future, calculating loans, and giving them confidence to understand contracts and business situation. If farmers connected to global value chains they are supposed to be formally educated with basic economics, mathematics and language skills, therefore they will be more efficient and successful in the market.



▲ *Figure 10: One-on-one discussions with farmers under the shelter, Kukua, 2021.*  
*Source: Taken by the authors*



▲ Figure 11: Educational level varies between age groups, whole population.  
Source: The authors' compilation

## 5. Stage 2: Farmland Observation

Our two main communities, Navrongo and Kukua, operate different farm models (e.g., communities of Navrongo are located within the Tono irrigation scheme, while farmlands of Kukua are rainfed); furthermore, the available arable land and human capacity of families also vary. We have separated them to provide a realistic and reliable picture about the clients and the business operation of the service provider. In the following section, we provide data in the form of value/person, which are then multiplied by the number of farmers we cooperated with so by this we calculated a reliable estimation.

2019 average numbers, before the provider						
	acres*		bags		yield [bags/a]	
	Navrongo	Kukua	Navrongo	Kukua	Navrongo	Kukua
maize	1.3	4.0	4.7	11.1	3.6	2.8
rice	2.4	0.7	18.5	2.3	7.7	3.3
soybean	0.0	0.6	0.0	2.0	0.0	3.2
cowpea	0.2	1.8	0.3	2.2	1.6	1.2

\*1 acre = 0.4047 hectares - 1 hectare = 2.4711 acre.

▲ Table 11: Yields of different species of crops in 2019.  
Source: The authors' calculation

### 5.1. Rice

The main difference between the communities is their specialization: while a farmer in Kukua cultivates four acres of maize, in Navrongo it is only 1.3 acres per farmers. However, size of rice lands is 2.4 acres in Navrongo, while Kukua has 0.7 acres per farmer.

	Navrongo [acre/ farmer]		Size changes in percentages [%]
	2019	2021	
maize	1.3	1.4	+7.5
rice	2.4	3.1	+27.1
soybean	0.0	0.0	0.0
cowpea	0.2	0.3	+57.1

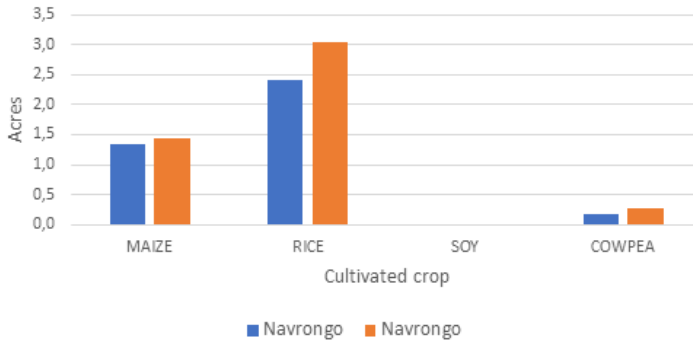
▲ Table 12: Increasing number of cultivated acres, Navrongo.  
Source: The authors' calculation

Tono irrigation scheme provides constantly available fresh water throughout the year, creating opportunity for farmers in Navrongo to plant and harvest twice a year. The harvested 7.7 bags per acre of rice paddy in 2019 shows similarities with the UN FAOStat database with its published Ghanaian yield of 7.67 bags per acre (calculated with 150kg per bag of rice paddy). Kukua's rainfed technology cannot compete with artificial irrigation and does reach 50% of the country's average.



▲ Figure 12: Rice fields close to Navrongo, Tono irrigation scheme, 2021.  
Source: Taken by the authors

**Increasing cultivated acres of different species  
in Navrongo (2019-2021)**



▲ *Figure 13 - Increasing cultivated acres in Navrongo.  
Source: The authors' own compilation*



▲ *Figure 14: Picture Open air desiccation of rice, Tono irrigation scheme, 2021.  
Source: Taken by the authors*

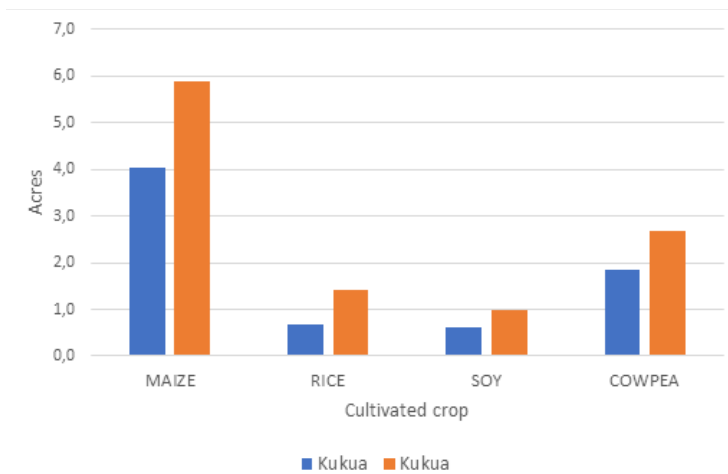


▲ *Figure 15: Picture Rice in bags, Tono irrigation scheme, 2021.*  
*Source: Taken by the authors*

## 5.2. Maize

In Kukua in 2019, the planted area of maize was relatively high (i.e., four acres per farmer), but the yield (2.8 bags per acre) was unbelievable low. UN FAOStat shows 9.75 bags per acre yield in 2019 (calculated with 80kg per bag of maize), but in the interviews farmers stated they will never admit the real quantity of harvested crops. If we multiply the admitted yield by three to get closer to the official data of FAO, it still remains 8.4 bags per acre, and we cannot be certain of the validity of these calculations. Poor quality sandy soil with low nutrient content does not hold water and supply enough quantities of nitrogen, phosphor and potassium (kalium) to boost yields. To have deeper understanding of production and collect more accurate data, we need to organize interviews with the most reliable farmers.

Despite of the quality issues of production that we intend to solve, farmers do invest in production, apply to purchase for land, and believe it is worth it to produce crops. Average maize yield in Kukua in 2019 was around 6.28 bags per acre because of the limiting factors discussed above.



▲ Figure 16: Increasing cultivated acres of different species in Kukua (2019-2021).  
Source: The authors' own compilation

	Kukua [acre/farmer]		Size changes in percentages [%]
	2019	2021	
maize	4.0	5.9	+46.2
rice	0.7	1.4	+107.5
soybean	0.6	1.0	+59.0
cowpea	1.8	2.7	+44.2

▲ Table 13: Increasing number of cultivated acres, Kukua, self-calculation.  
Source: The authors' own calculation

### 5.3. Legumes (Bambara Groundnut, Soybean, Cowpea)

Legume production capability in Navrongo is limited because of the wet ground of the Tono irrigation system. Rice in monoculture is gaining ground, leaving less space for indigenous plants and only room for subsistence farming. In Kukua, however, lands receive more rainfall are ideal for bean and groundnut production. Cowpea is gaining ground because the Southern Ghanaian diet includes this crop instead of the Bambara Groundnut, which is consumed by Northerners. Soybeans have been recently introduced into the market. The planted area for soybeans has increased by 59% within two years. The new wave of large-scale layer and broiler breeding, and the practices of Western- and South-American producers influenced the Ghanaian farmers to plant this important element into the premix (Martey et al., 2019).

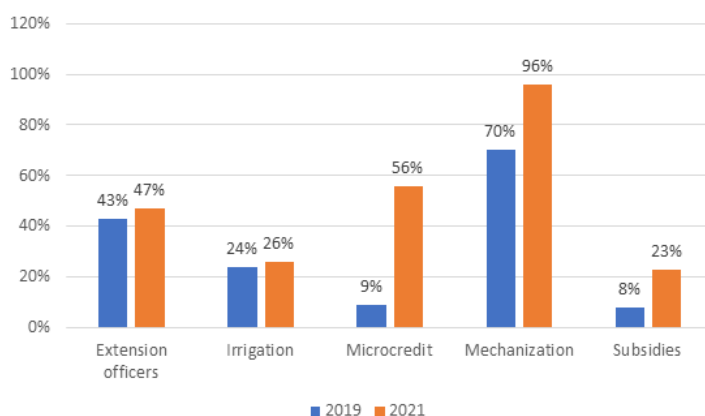
The 57.1% (Navrongo) and 44.4% (Kukua) increases in planted cowpea areas illustrate emerging interest in this legume, and farmers (especially in Kukua) have pointed out the growing demand for and prices of this crop. Another traditional, indigenous legume is the Bambara groundnut with an average 18% protein, high

starch, and moderate oil content. With high resistance against drought and poor soil quality, it seems like an ideal choice for agricultural production within the Savanna climate zone. It may not provide a high oil and protein quantity like soybeans, but other natural benefits including its water holding capacity and extreme resistance make this legume unique and an ideal raw crop for the West African food industry. Bambara cultivation also helps to sustain biodiversity and conserve tradition. Unfortunately, there are no state-led support or regulations and little commercial interest to cultivate these indigenous crops in a long run.

### 6. Stage 3: Agro-service Observation

Maximizing productivity with the least amount of input possible is what farmers and the service provider want to achieve in collaboration. Providing agricultural services to farmers is a complex, difficult process due to logistical and organizational challenges; furthermore, deep and comprehensive theoretical knowledge is essential for efficient operation. In Northern Ghana, the government operated extension officer system is weak and unreliable; subsidised inputs like fertilizers and chemicals are not available in time nor spatially; microfinance offered by commercial banks is difficult for farmers to apply for due to factors like illiteracy, weak economic conditions, and the nature of agriculture. Additionally, the price of tractors and harvesters are too high for individuals. Official and registered farmer associations would be eligible entities to act on these matters, but real improvement has not yet appeared. Referring to the current survey, the service provider has made microcredits, mechanization, and inputs available and affordable to individuals and associations.

**Definition of microfinance:** a system of providing services such as lending money to individuals who are too economically disadvantaged to use banks (Oxford Dictionary, 2022).



▲ Figure 17: Increasing service availability before and after the provider, whole population. Source: The authors' compilation



Availability of microcredits (in the form of cash, ploughing, or inputs) has grown by 47%. The system was able to increase mechanization of ploughing by 26%, which has created not only income for the organization, but free time for those households with children under 20. Seventy five percent of the whole population has at least one child under twenty, and 88% of them said that their children had more time for studying as mechanized ploughing saves time. All participants in the survey (100%) who use tractor services indicated the time and energy saved as a benefit; furthermore, 94% started to plan on expanding their farms.

In Kukua, the availability of subsidised fertilizers and mechanization service increased rapidly. Farmers in Navrongo mostly applied for microcredits and ploughing.

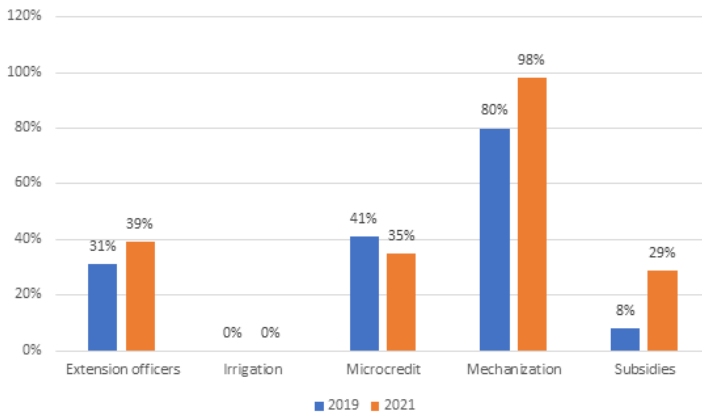


Figure 18: Increasing service availability, before and after the microfinance introduction Kukua. Source: The authors' compilation

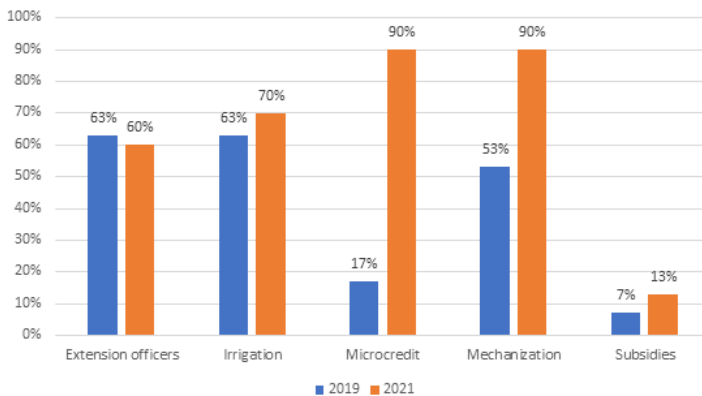


Figure 19: Increasing service availability, before and after the microfinance introduction., Navrongo. Source: The authors' compilation

### *Microfinance System*

Microcredit in May 2021 was available in three different forms: tractor service, input materials, and capital. The relatively high demand for mechanization service along with the bankrupted subsidised fertilizer and seed market have both created challenging situations for the company. Several surveys and published articles illustrate that women are more reliable in fiscal situations (Blanco-Oliver et al., 2021; D’Espallier et al., 2011). The take-payback loans rate of women are higher, while the share of profit and socio-economic growth are more widespread if they are controlled by females. Another study mentions that gender is one of the major factors influencing micro crediting and success when taking loans (Anang et al, 2015).

In Navrongo, farmers ploughed an average of 0.9 acre per farm on credit, while average total farm size was 5.3 acres. Eighty three percent of the population applied for credit in the form of capital, taking 282 GHS individually. This money was free to spend on anything, but our suggestion was to purchase fertilizers. Only seven percent of female clients mentioned using a small portion of money on personal needs, but they did not provide specifics. The majority of them (73%) prefer paying back the loan in cash, and only 17% pay after one month has passed.

In Kukua, tractors ploughed 32% of the total farmland on credit. There was also a big portion of cash to make payments. This survey was not able to measure the lack of pre-information about the business operation model of the organization. We know that 12% of our farmers chose credit, 17% paid in cash, and 71% paid with both cash and credit.

Individuals who were not members of the Farmer Association were not allowed to take a credit-based loan even if they wanted to do so. This regulation helped the association itself to be more stabilized. In the region the average farm size is 9.4 acres, while the members of the Farmer Association cultivate 13 acres in average. For the whole population, assuming variances between “only credit”, “only cash” and the “mixed” group, there are disappointments. The average farm size ranges between 9.4 (cash), 12.8 (mixed), and 14.0 (credit), and there are also slight differences in the educational levels too. However, these results were not sufficient to identify groups with different behaviours. Our main limiting factor was the size of the surveyed population. Further separation would create incomprehensible small groups, so the information to be drawn could not be reliable and representative.

To maximize the credit that farmers can apply for, more efficient regulation is necessary to protect the provider. Unfortunately, from this survey we do not know the exact number of ploughed acres paid by cash.

One hundred percent of the Kukua Farmer Association indicated that they will pay back their credit loans with crops (The authors, 2021), even if backlogs are generated from subsidised fertilizers or mechanization. According to their survey responses, 57% of credits will be paid back within a month, and it is going to reach 97% of repayment within two months. Farmers are aware of credit obligations.

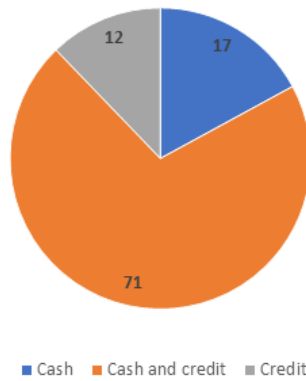


Figure 20: Share of payment methods for ploughing (%), Kukuia.  
Source: The authors' compilation

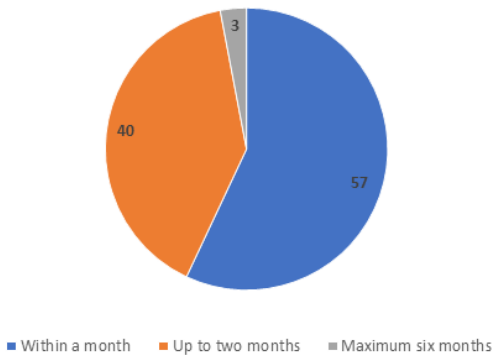


Figure 21: Payment intervals credits after harvest, Kukuia.  
Source: The authors' compilation

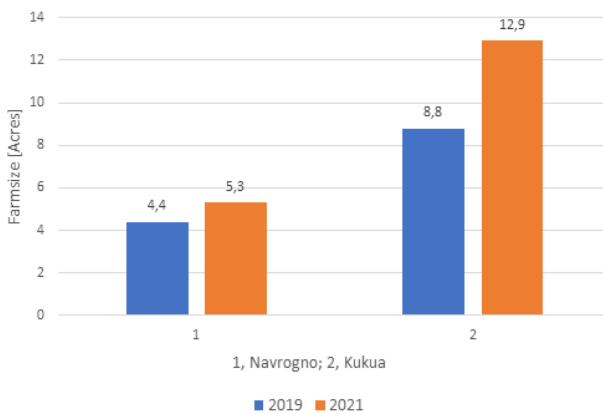


Figure 22: Average farm size in acres in 2019 and 2021.  
Source: The authors' compilation

People invest in lands. Farmers in Navrongo indicated that available farmland is decreasing, especially if it is irrigated. Farmlands are getting further away from households because of the limitations of land use. While most farmers would be interested in expanding their farms, without mechanization of harvesting or hiring more workers, growth is impossible. Some of them mentioned their age as another limiting factor for growth. The basis of stable operation and development is the financial independency and stability (Tóth & Káposzta, 2021). Kukuia is growing. The significant difference between the 2019 and 2021 explains the current situation in West Africa's food market, as well the strengthening role of micro creditors functioning as umbrella organizations for local communities and associations. The 47% growth of cultivated land is just a piece of the whole tendency during the last decade.

## 7. Summary and Conclusions

While our exploratory research points to increasing indicators related to cultivated land, microcredit and agro-service availability in the examined communities, the phenomena of changing land-use, declining biodiversity and urbanization are also occurring in global value chains (Hoekstra & Chapagain 2008; Richards, 2013; Jedwab et al., 2015). Northern Ghana has to increase its own production to meet the emerging demand in food products (e.g., livestock keeping and direct human consumption), but it should not forget about its natural heritage.

Soybeans are a relatively new player in the examined seed market with wide acceptance and internationally well-known standards adopted in cultivation and other uses (Debnath & Babu, 2020; Specht et al., 2015). As a legume, it shares similar values with the indigenous legumes of Northern Ghana such as the Bambara Groundnut, which has been the subject of an increasing number of research articles focusing on agronomy, food processing and market opportunities despite negligible economic interest (Gan, 2020).

In the recent years primary agro-production in Northern Ghana started to get integrated into global agricultural value chains through improved seeds cultivation, purchasing NPK fertilizers and ploughing by second-hand tractors. But the COVID-19 crisis, the Russia-Ukraine War, and the globally high inflation all contributed to a slowdown of growth which turned the focus again towards the domestic production and consumption.

State-led regulation of the seed market, cooperation with international research institutes that prioritize the selection of Bambara varieties, and development of food-processing technologies would serve the well-being of the region and support sustainable opportunities for protein production under semi-arid conditions (Vaskó et al., 2022). ✻

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# 'WE SHALL PROBABLY CALL THE PLACE ZARIA, AS IT IS SUCH A PRETTY NAME' – MEDICAL DIS- COURSE AND TOWN PLANNING IN NORTHERN NIGERIA, 1899-1914

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## Abstract

Early colonial administrations faced multiple challenges in their daily work. In specific areas, administrators reached out to science as a tool to understand and support their decisions. Town planning was an issue that brought together Europeans and Africans, and therefore created common living and working spaces for them. It became an important issue immediately after the conquest of Northern Nigerian territories, especially because a growing number of Europeans started living in the region on a more permanent basis. Town planning often seemed an arbitrary policy, yet, as it is demonstrated in this paper, daily administration reached out to science as helping tool to guide and validate their goals. Segregating Europeans from Africans was a question that very soon became a hotly debated topic, that was supported or rejected by some governors. This contested question shows that colonial policy was not by default racial based, let alone racist.

## Keywords

*Nigeria, history, colonialism, town planning, malaria, science*

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## Introduction

Town planning in early 20<sup>th</sup> century colonial settings was an arbitrary and relatively fast process. More often than not it was influenced by perceived scientific argumentations. In Northern Nigeria this approach was based on medical grounds, where anti-malaria policy strongly influenced initial town planning ideas.

The quotation in the title comes from Governor Bell of Northern Nigeria in 1910 and summarises the arbitrary nature of British ideas about town planning and urban development. The year 1910 marked the tenth year of British rule, and Bell was the second governor to live and fall in the shadow of Lugard, the maker of Northern Nigeria.

The period between 1900 and 1910 was a turbulent and eventful chapter in the history of the lands of northern Nigeria. While the early years saw the initial British conquest of the Sokoto caliphate, the years leading up to the eve of the Great War witnessed the construction of the administration of a blueprint colony for British indirect rule, an idea that lay behind the more important territories of the British Empire. Emphasis was made on the participation of, and the reliance on, the native rulers as integral elements of this conservative attitude toward the 'white man's burden'. The person who was behind this philosophy was Frederick Dealtry Lugard, who was among Britain's best-known imperial creators. The cradle of this policy was Nigeria, more specifically, Northern Nigeria where he created his own vision of what Kathryn Tidrick (1990) has called the rediscovery of the Punjab.

## Northern Nigeria as medical laboratory

Town planning, who should live where and under what circumstances, was among the more important issues the governors addressed in the first 15 years of British rule in Northern Nigeria. Public hygiene, sanitation, and contemporary medical discourses were frequently utilised and relied upon in the process of creating a new settlement. While this discourse turned into a *tool* of power relations once, it often figured as a political trick in the internal rivalries within the colonial administration. The often arbitrary decisions regarding the separation of Europeans and Africans in the colonial environment expressed and accorded with the idea of indirect rule, and were occasionally more than just the idea of who lives where.

Contemporary colonial discourse attributed great importance to fighting diseases that were considered the single largest obstacle to continuous European presence in the tropics. Endemic malaria was the leading disease in European mortality, especially in West Africa. Following Ronald Ross' discovery of mosquitoes' role in malaria transmission, it seemed possible to prevent the spread of the disease. Immediate action followed in a time period where the actual scientific medical discoveries were changing almost daily. Thus around 1900, malaria control had different facets, namely the use of the medicine quinine – the oldest method; mosquito control; and moving away from the infected hosts; or sanitary segregation. It was soon proved that the latter idea represented a dead-end in malaria prevention. Yet, town planning in Northern Nigeria gained most of its influence from this policy. Helen Tilley (2012)



thoroughly writes about the importance and complex interrelation between science and imperialism.

The future separation of Europeans and Africans in northern Nigeria as well as the seeds of Lugard's indirect rule were already revealed at this time. Co-existence between the British on the coast had been a long tradition, while the northern part of the country had rarely seen any serious European penetration apart from the occasional travellers, until the actual British conquest only a few years before the First World War. The most important figure in shaping the British presence was Frederick Lugard. His ideas and opinions strongly influenced the early administration's health and anti-malaria policies. (Home, 2017) Lokoja, the traditional headquarters of the Royal Niger Company (RNC) on the Niger River, close to the confluence of the Benue and the Niger, was abandoned in central Nigeria after Lugard took over the Company's leadership. He supported his argument by saying that the close proximity of native dwellings presented problems that could not be solved other than moving away from the site. (Kubicek, 1969: 151-152) Lokoja's reputation was ill-famed because of its unhealthy conditions that were based on a complex set of reasons, including irregularly used quinine prophylactic, which led to the prevalence of blackwater fever, a dreaded phenomenon of lonely European station life. Lokoja was described as a "straggling row of bungalows" and as "Blackwater Crescent", referring to the prevalence of re-infected malaria. (Larrimore, 1908: 8-9) The place itself was situated on the Niger River, in the form of a small settlement where public buildings and residential premises lay close together, and where Europeans and Africans lived next to one another. This, of course, reflected the RNC policies where the separation of the two would have been totally against the ideas of trade and commerce. Lugard did not like the appearance of the settlement. One reason was that further upstream, a smaller part of the town populated by Africans, polluted the river water. (PP, 1902: 6) His additional arguments maintained that moving away the native settlement was necessary in order *"to do away with the pollution of the water, and with other evils such as the proximity of a haven for thieves and prostitutes, the infection of mosquitoes with malarial germs, and the unsanitary conditions inevitable around a large native town."* (Ibid.) Further north-west of Lokoja, Zungeru was thought to be the ideal settlement for the British military and the administrative body in northern Nigeria. Lugard initiated, and eventually enacted, legislative measures that provided a basis for his centralised policymaking, utilising the principle of segregation. In 1900, the Cantonment Proclamation was enacted, which reserved the right for the High Commissioner to use land for its administrative cantonments wherever it seemed necessary and to make regulations to prevent the occurrence of diseases. In the proclamation, Lugard also reserved the right to enforce orders on the basis of sanitation. (Northern Nigerian Gazette 1900) An Order of Lugard in 1906 extended the cantonment zone to a half-mile radius around all cantonments. In effect, this meant that no native settlements were allowed to exist within half a mile of administrative centres. This was extended to Lokoja in 1904, Zungeru in 1907, and Ilorin in 1910. (Northern Nigerian Blue Book) Through these legal measures,

sanitation and public hygiene became important political tools that were especially significant in town planning.

In Zungeru, he intended to create an administrative capital for the future northern territory, following his ideas of segregated European and African settlements. Lugard's idea of segregation originated in his Indian experiences. This was already recognised by his contemporaries at the Colonial Office, who commented that segregation is "a novelty altogether in West Africa if not in Africa, and is a result of Col. Lugard's Indian experiences." (Colonial Office (CO), 1899, 446/8. Public Record Office, London) As a temporary solution in Lokoja during the first years, Lugard advocated his all-attentive policy to the construction of houses as well as laying out buildings. In 1900, he ordered the removal of the native town from the vicinity of European bungalows. These (i.e. the European houses), in addition, were to be reconstructed on higher grounds '*with an aspect to catch the prevailing breeze*'. (*Annual Report Northern Nigeria 1900-1901*: 27) The emphasis on the breeze could suggest the survival of the nineteenth-century idea of miasmatic theory of diseases, an idea that faded away very slowly especially in West Africa. (For the slow notion of this fading miasmatic theory, see Máthé-Shires László, 2001. For a later period, in general about malaria, see Worboys, 1994) All these actions were one-time solutions as Lugard intended to select a new capital and move away from the Lokoja site entirely. Surveys were taking place at the time to discover, what was thought to be the most suitable location. The importance of this location, and the selecting of the actual site for the future administrative capital, was among Lugard's most pressing problems. (*Annual Report Northern Nigeria 1900-1901*: 8) It must be remembered that the military campaign was not finished, and his troops were also being tied down in the ongoing Ashanti war.

After some careful observations and surveys, Lugard personally selected a site on the Kaduna River, where the distance from the river '*will ...be great enough to free it from the mosquitoes*'. Although his emphasis was based on sanitary principles, it nevertheless must be recalled that the site was far from any populated place and would have required the construction of a steam railway.

The capital was moved in the summer of 1901 to Zungeru. (Heussler, 1968: 26) In 1902, several buildings were completed at the new station, including a bridge, a government house, a native hospital, a gaol, police and military barracks, and eight houses for European civil officers. (PP 1904 LVII. [Cd. 1768] No. 409. *Annual Report Northern Nigeria 1902*: 86-87) In addition to all of this, a light railway was constructed that led to the settlement from the river. Although not stated in detail, the Public Works Extraordinary expenditure between 1901 and 1902 was over £ 64,000. (Ibid: 113) In 1903, the costs of construction at Zungeru reached £ 78,665. (PP 1905 LII [Cd.2238] No. 437. *Annual Report Northern Nigeria 1903*: 32)

The early administration of the new territories required frequent camping among, and the touring of Europeans that eventually turned many resting stations into temporary administrative settlements most often manned by a few officers. (Heussler, *The British*, 147-169) The northern Nigerian out-station system was in full operation

by 1905, following the principle of segregation as advocated by Lugard's sanitation policy, which included a required 400-yard distance from every native settlement. (PP 1907 LIV [Cd. 32285] No. 526. *Annual Report Northern Nigeria 1905-06*: 96-97) By 1906, the basic outlines for administrative settlements had been laid down which enabled the government to concentrate on '*...the eradication of malaria ... as part of the routine sanitary work.*' (PP 1908 LXIX [Cd. 3729] No. 551. *Annual Report Northern Nigeria 1906-07*)

The relatively tough circumstances of the out-stations, along with neglected cases of malaria, often led to the occurrence of blackwater fever. In 1908, according to the Annual Report, there were a higher number of cases among officials than in the Gold Coast, although the number in the coastal colony was almost three times higher. Malaria prevention, segregation, and the usage of quinine were mentioned, in addition to building some mosquito-proof houses in the cantonment of Lokoja. (PP 1910 LXIV [Cd. 4964] No. 633. *Annual Report Northern Nigeria 1908-1909*: 14-15) It was mostly to these measures that the gradual decrease in European malaria cases was attributed. As the report summarised, the number of European residents increased from 322 in 1904 to 499 in 1908 while the registered malaria cases decreased from 515 to 307. (Ibid: 14) The 'native' problem in endemic malaria and public sanitation were still considered when the report said '*The sanitation of the native towns away from the various provincial headquarters leaves much to be desired, but native habits are difficult to change.*' (Ibid: 15) At the same time, it was admitted that there was no possibility for the assessment of African death rates, except among those who were treated in hospitals, either at Lokoja or Zungeru. Whereas the estimated population of the territory was 7,100,000, the number of cases treated in 1908 were 744 admitted patients and 2,368 outpatients. (Ibid: 10) Small-pox vaccination, a significant element of closeness to Africans' bodies, was in the same year 3,380, and only extended again to government employed Africans. (Ibid: 15) In 1909, a sanitation survey began among the native villages in the close neighbourhood of the out-stations. (PP 1911 LI [Cd. 5467] No. 674. *Annual Report Northern Nigeria 1909*: 17) This programme continued in 1910, when with the help of sanitation officers, new native villages were built. In the same year, a commercial quarter was built at Zungeru, where again, the 400-yard distance from neighbouring native settlements was taken into consideration during its construction. (PP 1912-13, LVIII [Cd. 6007] No. 704. *Annual Report Northern Nigeria 1910-1911*)

While Governor Girouard followed Lugard's footsteps between 1906 and 1909 (due to the fact that he was a railway engineer and was engaged in the construction

**After some careful observations and surveys, Lugard personally selected a site on the Kaduna River, where the distance from the river 'will ...be great enough to free it from the mosquitoes'.**

of the railway line), Henry Hesketh Bell, the former head of British administration in Uganda between 1906 and 1909 tended to have somewhat different views. Heussler argues that both of them acted in the shadow of Lugard's, having to option but accept the high degree of autonomy of his residents. (Heussler, *The British*, 38-39) He again tried to relocate the administrative capital of the territory to Zaria. (*Bell Papers Synopses, 1900-1924 (For family)*) Bell arrived in Nigeria in late 1909 and in two months he advocated the removal of the capital. (See comments dated on 18<sup>th</sup> February 1910. Available at the Royal Commonwealth Society Archives, University Library, Cambridge.) He personally designed a town plan for the new capital in late 1910 that included '*broad avenues, an abundance of open spaces, a uniform size of building plot and easy access to latrine conveniences.*' (Ibid, December 1910) His contemporary letters reveal a higher degree of enthusiasm when he wrote to his auntie that 'You can imagine what a delight it will be to me to lay out all the squares and avenues, and the streets, that will be required, and you may be sure that I will do it on a pretty big scale. (sic)' (Bell to his Auntie, 27<sup>th</sup> February 1910) Much of the native part of Lokoja was destroyed by a fire in early 1910 that allowed Bell to implement his 'sanitary' ideas in another location as well. (Ibid. Bell to his Auntie, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1910) What is important to note about these initiatives is that Bell was aspiring for the amalgamation project of the northern and the southern parts of Nigeria, which was eventually facilitated by Lugard after his return to the country. Town planning was not simply a colonial sphere of power relations, as was the case with Lugard, but here it became a symbol of internal rivalry between different high-ranking politicians. The images of a 'big scale' project suggest that Bell wanted to prove something and leave behind a mark that would differentiate his name from Lugard's. The associations of enormous responsibilities of '*being an absolute ruler of a territory, as big as France, with a population of nearly ten millions*', '*maintaining that 'Such power has never, since, been exercised by any British Colonial Governor'*' all reveal this unique situation, a sort of ultimate 'white man's burden'. (Ibid. Synopses December 1910)

### **Nigeria, 1912-1914**

Frederick Lugard upon returning to Nigeria in 1912, started the amalgamation of the distinctly different northern and southern parts of the country. The different traditions of colonial administration also represented themselves in the region's medical and sanitation policies. Lugard, at the same time, had his own ideas and was intending to implement or at least initiate them. The capital scheme was probably his most grandiose plan where he extensively relied on the principle of segregation. His plan was to remove the capital from the south in Lagos, to the north, where he would have built an administrative cantonment for Europeans. This scheme would have become the ultimate representation of the principle of segregation.

Upon the amalgamation of northern and southern Nigeria, the principle of northern segregation was put forward by Lugard. It was represented in the debate over the future location of the capital of the colony. It is worth following since it provides

an elaborated insight into the ideal representation of segregation, which had been formulated in the earlier years in northern Nigeria. Lugard's capital scheme would have been the administrative formulation of Hill Station, a European urban settlement with its full administrative power, but located as far away from Africans as possible.

During the 1906 amalgamation of the southern protectorate and the colony of Lagos, it was already suggested that the capital should be removed because it had an unhealthy reputation. The time span given for the move was ten to twenty years with no new location being proposed. Lugard however had more precise ideas. The correspondence and Lugard's proposals can be found in the Confidential Print Africa (West), No. 1005. Document No. 3. CO 879/113. On one hand, he proposed that a 'small central capital' should be created by moving the northern administration centre from Zungeru to the future town of Kaduna. The proposal in 1913 represented a very important matter since the northern branch of the railway was not yet complete nor had the plans for the line been completed. Kaduna would have become – as it in fact did – the railway centre of the north. Kaduna was to become the ideal colonial administrative centre where only the British administrators and their trained northern clerks would be working, the latter living at a comfortable distance where they would go to spend their nights. In fact, Lugard went as far as stating that he would be opposed to the establishment of any centre close to densely populated areas. He said that *'It [i.e. the future site of Kaduna, M.L.] is within 50 miles of Zaria, a large native centre and market for supplies, but not too [sic] close to it'*. (Ibid., Enclosure 2) What he meant by "too close" can be estimated by his earlier policies on cantonments and out-stations.

When describing the actual settlement, a site was suggested for European reservation, a separate site for European traders near the railway, and a native settlement quarter for native clerks. On the opposite bank of the river, there was supposed to be a railway settlement probably serving the Europeans who were not officials and the native populations. At the request of the governor, some preliminary surveys were conducted which were aimed at finding a site which was naturally free of insect-causing diseases, especially trypanosomiasis and malaria. Based on these aspects and the type of soil – which was rocky around Zungeru and *'renders gardening and beautifying of the place impossible.'* (Ibid., Enclosure 4) – the other new site was suggested as suitable for the future settlement. Some further observations commenced later in 1913, locating the site at the crossing of the river Kaduna. (Africa (West), No. 1005. Document No. 49) What is interesting about this survey is its actual aim; Lugard was trying to locate the proposed future administrative capital

**During the 1906 amalgamation of the southern protectorate and the colony of Lagos, it was already suggested that the capital should be removed because it had an unhealthy reputation.**

of Nigeria with the scheme of removing the centre from the south, especially from Lagos, to the north which was, and for some time, still remained a sort of military garrison.

At the same time, Lugard suggested the removal of the administrative centre from Lagos to an island a few miles south which was later to become present-day Ikoyi. (Africa (West), No. 1005. Document No. 1 and 12) It was argued that the sanitation of Lagos, with a recent outbreak of yellow fever, posed a menace to the European population. He elaborated his view in a secret memo to the CO, stating that the removal of the administrative capital was the opinion of an 'Unofficial Member of Council' (probably the reason for the secrecy of the note) who had been informed that '*the unofficial European community, in consequence of the yellow fever epidemic, are becoming alive to the necessity of segregation, and of living apart from the native community*'. (Africa (West), No. 1005. Document No. 37) Lugard added that this was in conjunction with his plan to buy up the land that was used by Africans and form a segregated area. (Ibid.)

The removal of the capital of Nigeria to Kaduna did not happen, while the plan to form an exclusively European island in Lagos was eventually realised. The role of Lugard in forming the town planning of colonial Nigeria is unquestionable. It is important to note, however, that his argumentation was based on the original principle of sanitary segregation.

He also proposed drastic sanitary measures along the line of segregation in the trading settlements of the Delta, especially Warri, and Forcados. (Lugard to CO, 19<sup>th</sup> June 1914, Confidential Print Africa No. 1013 Doc. 172., CO 879/114) The long-standing opposition of trading communities was yet again the focus of sanitation, as these places had the highest number of non-officials proportionally in the southeast around this time. Lugard eventually did not succeed in separating the businessmen from their stores and shops but that was partially due to the coming of the war which had a serious impact on future construction. Also, the above-mentioned settlements could be considered as 'old towns' which would have thus limited space for future buildings and an anticipated sanitary corridor. This fact was even recognised by William Simpson who, at the time, was one of the major supporters of segregating Europeans from Africans. (*Minutes of the 71<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Board*, 6<sup>th</sup> October 1914, Confidential Print Africa No. 1026 Doc. 73., CO 879/115) Lugard announced his views in London also. When the Advisory Board interviewed governors from West Africa, Hugh Clifford, during the same meeting, argued against the application while Lugard argued for it. It was probably the first event when high-ranking officials openly debated the issue and its applicability. (*Minutes of the 68<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Board*, 21<sup>st</sup> July 1914, Confidential Print Africa No. 1026 Doc. 15., CO 879/115) Clifford's opposition to segregation was to present itself once more, during his governorship in Nigeria following his appointment in 1919. Segregation died away from contemporary colonial discourse in West Africa, as people similar to Hugh Clifford appeared in the administration, thus bringing a new and totally different approach to British colonial presence.

## Conclusion

Town planning was an important aspect of early colonial period in Northern Nigeria. The growing number of Europeans living permanently in the region necessitated augmented and nuanced government policies. Governors had strong influence on colonial policies, and more often than not, their decisions – as illustrated by the quote about naming a new settlement by Governor Bell – were arbitrary. Yet, when it came to actual argumentation, the contemporary colonial administrators looked to scientific conclusions supporting their ideas. Even though it seems from aspect an almost openly racist idea, segregating Europeans from Africans had its own scientific argumentation at the time, and thus, seemed to justify arbitrary decisions. Yet, even pro-consuls, like Lugard reached to science to understand the challenges their administration was facing. Therefore, it is hard to argue that they were openly racist in their thinking. ✨

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