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Democratic Consolidation and Electoral Integrity in Sierra Leone: A Two-Decade Analysis of Electoral Observation Reports (2002–2023)

By Chernor Mohamadu Jalloh

University of Sierra Leone

Abstract- This study critically interrogates the role of electoral observation missions in Sierra Leone's democratic consolidation process from 2002 to 2023. Drawing on a longitudinal analysis of reports from ECOWAS, the European Union, The Carter Center, and National Election Watch (NEW), the research employs a qualitative document analysis framework to uncover thematic patterns, institutional responses, and reform outcomes. The findings reveal consistent observer emphasis on transparency deficits, participation gaps, legal ambiguities, and electoral security concerns. However, despite methodological advancements in observation, a persistent implementation gap hampers systemic reform. The study concludes that while electoral observers have contributed to procedural improvements and civic engagement, their impact remains constrained by political inertia and institutional fragility. Recommendations include formalizing mechanisms for uptake of observer recommendations, enacting campaign finance reforms, safeguarding ECSL independence, and empowering domestic observers. This research underscores the urgent need to bridge the gap between diagnostic clarity and structural transformation in Sierra Leone's democratization journey.

Keywords: electoral observation, Sierra Leone, democracy, ECOWAS, EU, NEW, carter center, electoral reform.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since the cessation of its brutal civil war in 2002, Sierra Leone has embarked on a complex and ongoing journey toward democratic consolidation. Central to this transition is the electoral process, which has come to function not only as a mechanism for the selection of political leadership but also as a critical barometer of institutional resilience in a post-conflict setting (IDEA, 2019). As in many nascent democracies, the perceived credibility of elections in Sierra Leone has been profoundly shaped by the presence and evaluations of both international and domestic electoral observation missions (EUOM, 2019).

Over the past two decades, entities such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Union (EU), The Carter Center, and Sierra Leone's own National Election Watch (NEW) have played pivotal roles in observing the

country's elections and providing comprehensive assessments. These observation reports, often grounded in rigorous empirical evidence, offer a longitudinal perspective on Sierra Leone's evolving democratic landscape—highlighting milestones such as reforms in voter registration and increased levels of civic participation, alongside enduring challenges concerning transparency, inclusivity, and electoral justice (Carter Center, 2023).

Nevertheless, despite the volume and consistency of documented challenges and well-articulated recommendations, critical questions persist regarding the extent to which electoral observation has catalyzed meaningful and systemic reform. The recurrence of core deficiencies—ranging from opacity in result tabulation and intimidation of observers to the persistent underrepresentation of marginalized groups—raises pressing concerns about the responsiveness of electoral institutions and the broader architecture of democratic accountability (Wai, 2015). Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to synthesize and critically interrogate the cumulative contributions of electoral observation missions between 2002 and 2023, with the aim of assessing their tangible impact on democratic consolidation in Sierra Leone.

a) Problem Statement

Despite more than two decades of sustained electoral observation in Sierra Leone, a persistent disconnect remains between the systematic identification of electoral deficiencies and the implementation of substantive reform measures. Observer missions—most notably those conducted by ECOWAS, the European Union (EU), The Carter Center, and the National Election Watch (NEW)—have consistently highlighted critical challenges, including limited transparency in vote tabulation, inadequacies in electoral dispute resolution mechanisms (Carter Center, 2010) and the continued exclusion of women and other marginalized groups from the electoral process (Castillejo, 2009, Koko, 2013, Cater Center, 2012). However, these recurrent issues have endured across successive electoral cycles, indicating a troubling inertia in institutional responsiveness.

This enduring gap between observation and reform reflects a deeper structural problem: the failure to translate empirical findings and recommendations into

actionable policy and systemic change. Such an implementation deficit not only erodes the credibility of electoral processes but also poses a fundamental threat to the broader trajectory of democratic consolidation in the country. Accordingly, there is an urgent need to interrogate not merely the content of electoral observation reports, but more critically, their actual influence—or conspicuous lack thereof—on institutional transformation and policy reform in Sierra Leone.

b) *Research Objectives and Questions*

In light of the enduring disconnect between electoral observation and the implementation of meaningful reforms in Sierra Leone, as outlined in the preceding problem statement, this study seeks to systematically interrogate the role and impact of electoral observer missions over the past two decades. By grounding the analysis in empirical reports and institutional trajectories, the research aims to clarify not only what has been observed and recommended, but also how such insights have—or have not—translated into democratic progress. The following objectives and questions guide the inquiry.

i. *Research Objectives*

1. To critically examine the thematic patterns, core findings, and policy recommendations presented in electoral observation reports on Sierra Leone's elections from 2002 to 2023.
2. To evaluate the extent to which observer missions—particularly those led by ECOWAS, the European Union, The Carter Center, and National Election Watch—have influenced electoral governance, institutional reform, and public trust in democratic processes.
3. To analyze the persistent challenges identified across electoral cycles, and to explore the institutional, political, and structural factors shaping the implementation—or non-implementation—of observer recommendations.

ii. *Research Questions*

1. What are the recurring themes, critical findings, and recommendations highlighted in electoral observation reports on Sierra Leone between 2002 and 2023?
2. In what ways have observation missions by ECOWAS, the EU, The Carter Center, and NEW contributed to shaping electoral integrity, institutional accountability, and democratic legitimacy in Sierra Leone?
3. What structural or political barriers have hindered the adoption of observer recommendations, and how might strategic policy interventions enhance the effectiveness and impact of electoral observation moving forward?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

a) *Introduction*

Electoral observation has become a defining feature of democratic consolidation, particularly in post-conflict societies across sub-Saharan Africa (Dodsworth et. al., 2020, Manesh, 2013). In the case of Sierra Leone, where elections have served not only as mechanisms of political representation but also as instruments of peacebuilding and institutional resilience, electoral observation—both international and domestic—has played a crucial role (UNDP, 2023, Beetham, 1994). This literature review critically examines the theoretical foundations, regional practices, and empirical outcomes of electoral observation, with a specific emphasis on Sierra Leone's post-conflict electoral cycles (Kamara & Koroma, 2022). Drawing upon scholarly literature, policy reports, and comparative case studies, it evaluates the contributions and limitations of key observer missions, including those by ECOWAS, the European Union (EU), The Carter Center, and the National Election Watch (NEW).

b) *Theoretical Foundations of Electoral Observation*

The conceptual basis for electoral observation is rooted in the broader theoretical constructs of *democratic accountability* and *electoral integrity*. As Norris et. al (2014) contends, electoral integrity encompasses adherence to internationally accepted standards, including transparency, inclusiveness, legal fairness, and procedural legitimacy. Electoral observation, therefore, functions as an external mechanism for validating these standards, often enhancing public trust and deterring electoral malpractice (Hyde, 2013, Hyde & Marinov, 2013).

The *Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation* (2005)—endorsed by over 50 global organizations, including The Carter Center and the EU—establishes the normative framework for impartial, long-term, and methodologically rigorous electoral assessment (Merloe, P. 2008, UN 2005). These principles advocate for sustained engagement and institutional respect for sovereignty, while reinforcing universal democratic norms. At the regional level, frameworks such as the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001) mandate member states to facilitate observation missions and uphold minimum democratic standards (ECOWAS, 2001). The African Union (AU) similarly promotes such norms through its own election observation guidelines, thus reflecting a continental commitment to democratic consolidation (AU, 2002).

c) *Electoral Observation in Post-Conflict Democracies*

In post-conflict democracies, electoral observation serves both a *procedural* and *symbolic* function (Kühne, 2010). As Bratton and van de Walle (1997) observe, elections in such contexts transcend

mere electoral mechanics—they symbolize national reconciliation and institutional renewal. Observers in these fragile settings not only monitor procedural compliance but often act as *de facto peacebuilders*, seeking to mitigate political tensions and legitimize transitional institutions (O'Driscoll et. al, 2025).

However, the efficacy of observation is frequently constrained by politicized institutions, fragile legal systems, and contested electoral environments. In Sierra Leone, Momoh & Javombo (2022) emphasizes that the lingering effects of the civil war continue to influence political behavior, institutional credibility, and public trust in the electoral process. Observers must therefore navigate complex realities marked by electoral violence, judicial partiality, and entrenched regional polarization (Maphunye, 2023). The literature suggests that while observers may play a *dual role*—both evaluative and mediative—their influence is often contingent on access, impartiality, and the political will of domestic actors to implement recommendations.

d) International Observation Missions in Sierra Leone

i. ECOWAS

The *Economic Community of West African States* (ECOWAS) has maintained a steady electoral presence in Sierra Leone since the 2002 elections. Its missions, guided by regional democratic charters, have emphasized electoral stability, peaceful participation, and democratic norms. According to Bolaji (2015), ECOWAS observers tend to focus on the *macro-political environment*, including campaign equity, media access, and conflict prevention mechanisms. In its 2023 *election observation report*, ECOWAS acknowledged the relatively peaceful nature of the elections but raised salient concerns regarding the opacity of the vote tabulation process and the marginalization of certain groups. These criticisms echoed earlier findings from its 2007 and 2012 reports, which also documented logistical inefficiencies, voter intimidation, and gaps in electoral legislation (Bittiger, 2007, ECOWAS, 2012, ECOWAS, 2023). However, despite its normative authority, ECOWAS's ability to *enforce reforms* remains limited, relying primarily on diplomatic persuasion rather than coercive or binding mechanisms (Vanheukelom, 2017, ECDPM, 2023).

ii. European Union (EU)

The *European Union* has deployed several comprehensive Election Observation Missions (EOMs) to Sierra Leone, offering some of the most methodologically robust and technically detailed evaluations. Kulkova (2020) notes that EU observation frameworks are holistic, encompassing pre-election assessments, electoral day scrutiny, and post-election dispute resolution.

The EU's 2023 *final report* identified systemic irregularities in vote tabulation and restricted access to polling data. It further highlighted media bias and

unequal campaign conditions—findings that echoed concerns raised in the 2012 and 2018 missions, pointing to a persistent pattern of *unaddressed structural deficiencies*. Although the EU routinely issues *action-oriented recommendations*, their *domestic uptake remains limited*, impeded by *institutional inertia*, weak enforcement mechanisms, and fluctuating political commitment (Ronceray, 2017).

iii. The Carter Center

The *Carter Center* distinguishes itself through its *conflict-sensitive and rights-based* approach to electoral observation. Its missions in Sierra Leone emphasize legal transparency, civic engagement, and inclusive participation. In its 2023 report, the Center commended high voter turnout and peaceful polling conditions but raised concerns about ballot shortages, late openings, and the lack of transparency in result tabulation. Significantly, the Center underscored the importance of publishing polling station-level results and enhancing dispute resolution frameworks. Its prioritization of inclusivity—particularly regarding women, youth, and persons with disabilities—resonates with global best practices and reaffirms the normative imperative for *inclusive electoral governance* (Carter Center, 2023).

e) Domestic Observation: National Election Watch (NEW)

The National Election Watch (NEW), a coalition of domestic civil society organizations, plays a pivotal role in Sierra Leone's electoral ecosystem. Distinct from international observer missions, NEW operates with grassroots proximity, enabling it to provide real-time, community-embedded monitoring throughout the electoral cycle. This local positioning allows NEW to detect micro-level irregularities—such as subtle voter suppression, intimidation of observers, and localized disruptions—that may elude international missions. Notably, reports from the 2018 and 2023 general elections document cases of irregular tallying procedures, obstruction of observer access, and restricted availability of official results (NEW, 2023). These findings frequently corroborate international assessments, thereby reinforcing the credibility and legitimacy of both domestic and external observation efforts.

Despite its credibility, NEW faces a range of structural and operational challenges, including limited funding, political pressure, and threats to the safety of its observers. Nevertheless, its sustained presence and commitment to democratic integrity have significantly contributed to electoral transparency, civic engagement, and accountability (NDI, 2023).

Since 2002, Sierra Leone has held five successive general elections (2002, 2007, 2012, 2018, and 2023), each marked by the active participation of electoral observers—domestic and international alike. At

least one, if not all, of the four principal observation actors has deployed during each cycle, offering varied yet complementary perspectives on the conduct of

elections. Figure 1 presents the timeline of these observation missions as follows:

Election Year	ECOWAS	EU	The Carter Center	NEW
2002	√	×	√	√
2007	√	√	√	√
2012	√	√	√	√
2018	√	√	√	√
2023	√	√	√	√

This continued participation has fostered long-term observation and institutional knowledge, essential for spotting systemic flaws and tracking reforms.

Figure 1: Domestic & Observation Missions

f) Comparative Perspectives: West Africa and Beyond

Sierra Leone's challenges are emblematic of broader regional trends. Across *West Africa*, electoral observation has proven instrumental in legitimizing transitions and deepening democratic norms (Chinye, 2023; Wai, Z. 2015). Jinadu (2014) outlines five persistent challenges confronting Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) in the region: institutional autonomy, electoral financing, dispute adjudication, stakeholder inclusivity, and professional integrity.

Comparative experiences in *Ghana* and *Nigeria* suggest that robust domestic observation can exert meaningful influence on electoral reform and citizen confidence. However, as Aliyu and Ambali (2021) caution, the *efficacy of observer missions* is often mediated by institutional strength and prevailing political dynamics. In contexts of institutional fragility, observer findings are routinely ignored or selectively implemented. The Carter Center and EU's broader work in *Liberia*, *Kenya*, and *Zimbabwe* (Maunganidze, 2016) affirms common themes: the necessity of legal reform, the potential of digital tools for transparency, and the importance of safeguarding observers (Carter Center, 2023). These insights bear relevance for Sierra Leone's electoral future.

g) Critiques and Limitations of Electoral Observation

While electoral observation is widely considered a cornerstone of electoral legitimacy, the practice is not immune to critique. Hackenesch (2015) warns against the "*ritualization*" of observation, wherein missions become ceremonial rather than transformative. Others argue that observers may unintentionally *legitimize flawed elections* by offering qualified endorsements despite procedural irregularities (Kelley, 2012). In Sierra Leone, the cyclical recurrence of problems—such as opaque result tabulation, weak legal enforcement, and exclusionary practices—raises critical questions about the *actual impact* of observation. The low rate of recommendation implementation underscores a '*disconnect between diagnostic reporting and actionable reform*' (Kelley, 2012). Moreover, the politicization of observer narratives, often instrumentalized by ruling or

opposition factions, can further undermine observer legitimacy.

h) Emerging Trends and Innovations

In response to evolving challenges, observer missions are adopting *technological innovations* and expanding their methodological tools (Peace Direct, 2023). NEW (2023) has incorporated *real-time digital dashboards*, enhancing transparency and data accessibility. The Carter Center's *Digital Threats to Democracy Initiative* now monitors online disinformation, hate speech, and other digital threats to electoral integrity. There is also growing recognition of the need for *pre-election observation*, focusing on campaign finance, media freedom, and voter registration accuracy—areas where manipulation often precedes polling day (Carter Center, 2020). Additionally, emerging partnerships between domestic and international missions have improved coordination and increased the legitimacy of findings (Bush & Prather 2022).

The extant literature offers a robust foundation for understanding electoral observation in Sierra Leone and its regional parallels. As exhibited, dominant themes include the imperative of transparency, inclusivity, legal reform, and observer protection.

III. METHODOLOGY

a) Research Design

This study employs a qualitative document analysis framework to interrogate electoral observation reports pertaining to Sierra Leone's five general elections conducted between 2002 and 2023. Given the descriptive richness and evaluative nature of the data—comprising official reports produced by observer missions—a qualitative methodology is particularly well-suited for capturing the thematic nuances, discursive patterns, and normative judgments embedded in these texts (Naeem et. al. 2023). In order to discern patterns over time, the research adopts a cross-election comparative approach, facilitating the systematic identification of recurring challenges, evolving practices, and institutional responses (Bann et.al. 2020). This longitudinal lens enables a structured comparison

across electoral cycles and observer organizations, with the objective of assessing the degree to which electoral observation has contributed to meaningful institutional transformation ([Bray et al. 2014](#)).

b) Data Collection

Primary data was obtained through purposive sampling of publicly accessible observation reports authored by the following electoral monitoring bodies:

- *ECOWAS: Election Observation Mission Reports* (2002–2023).
- *European Union (EU): Final reports and preliminary statements*.
- *The Carter Center: Post-election assessments and observer mission summaries*.
- *National Election Watch (NEW): Situation Room reports, election-day updates, and comprehensive final summaries*.

To provide additional context and ensure methodological triangulation, the study also consulted a range of secondary data sources, including peer-reviewed academic literature, official documentation from the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL), and relevant legal statutes governing electoral processes ([Momoh, 2021](#)).

c) Analytical Framework

The analysis employed thematic coding and categorization techniques to systematically extract and interpret the qualitative content of the selected reports ([Gibbs, 2007](#)).¹ The coding scheme was informed by both the existing literature on electoral integrity and empirical observations drawn from the reports themselves ([Özden, 2024](#)).² Five core analytical dimensions were used to guide the analysis:

1. *Transparency*: Processes related to voter registration, result tabulation, public access to electoral data, and the presence and mobility of observers.
2. *Participation*: Inclusiveness of the electoral process, with a focus on women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups.
3. *Legal Reform*: Strength and clarity of the legal and institutional framework, effectiveness of electoral dispute mechanisms, and responsiveness to observer recommendations.

4. *Conflict Prevention*: The extent to which observer missions identified, reported, or helped mitigate electoral tensions, violence, or intimidation.
5. *Observer Engagement*: Degree of access granted to observers, treatment of domestic monitors, and the perceived legitimacy or influence of observation missions on institutional accountability and public trust.

Each report was carefully analyzed using this thematic lens, allowing the researcher to extract qualitative evidence and organize it chronologically and comparatively across election cycles.

d) Cross-Election Comparative Approach

To capture temporal shifts and institutional learning—or lack thereof—the study mapped thematic findings across five electoral cycles: 2002, 2007, 2012, 2018, and 2023. Each election year was analyzed based on the following parameters:

- Key issues and priorities emphasized by each observer mission.
- Areas of consensus or divergence among international and domestic observers.
- Patterns of repetition or resolution in the recommendations provided.
- Evidence of institutional reform, stagnation, or regression in response to observation.

This comparative approach allowed for the identification of longitudinal trends in Sierra Leone's electoral governance and provided a foundation for assessing the cumulative impact of electoral observation on democratic consolidation ([Dodsworth, 2020](#)).

IV. FINDINGS AND THEMATIC ANALYSIS

a) Transparency in Electoral Processes

Transparency is universally acknowledged as a foundational element of electoral integrity. As [Norris \(2014\)](#) asserts, transparency not only fosters public trust but also allows stakeholders—voters, political actors, civil society, and the international community—to verify that electoral outcomes are a legitimate reflection of the popular will. Expanding on this, [Norris's transparency-accountability-compliance nexus \(2017\)](#) posits that transparency mechanisms are instrumental in cultivating institutional compliance with democratic norms, thereby reducing opportunities for manipulation and enhancing the normative legitimacy of elections.

In the context of Sierra Leone, observation reports from 2002 to 2023 consistently point to opacity in vote tabulation and limited access to disaggregated polling station results as persistent shortcomings. While some technological innovations—such as biometric voter registration and improved access for observers at polling stations—have been introduced, their impact has been undermined by the continued non-publication of

¹ [Gibbs, G. R. \(2007\). Analyzing qualitative data: Thematic coding and categorizing. In *Analyzing Qualitative Data* \(pp. 38–55\). SAGE Publications, SAGE Research Methods platform](#)

² [Özden, M. \(2024\). Content and thematic analysis techniques in qualitative research: Purpose, process, and features. *Qualitative Inquiry in Education: Theory & Practice*, 2\(1\), 64–81](#)

polling station-level results, most notably in the 2018 and 2023 electoral cycles (Carter Center, 2023). This lack of granular data visibility erodes public confidence and hampers independent verification.

According to electoral accountability theory, robust transparency mechanisms—such as open data portals, real-time tabulation dashboards, and public results dissemination—are essential for curbing political corruption and bolstering electoral legitimacy (Resimić & Bergin, 2024). However, in Sierra Leone, the *implementation gap* remains significant. While transparency-related recommendations have been issued consistently across electoral cycles, institutional uptake has often been *inconsistent or merely symbolic*. In this regard, Norris and Nai (2017) also offers a cautionary note: *“Transparency also has a dark side, threatening trust, privacy, and security... Several conditions determine the success of transparency policies in strengthening electoral integrity.”* This insight underscores the *complexity of transparency in fragile democracies*, where poorly implemented policies can inadvertently deepen mistrust or expose vulnerabilities.

b) *Participation and Inclusivity*

Inclusive participation is central to any meaningful democratic process (Akwetey & Mutangi, 2022). The theory of inclusive political participation emphasizes that democracy transcends the mere act of voting; it demands equitable access to the political process for all segments of society, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities (International IDEA, 2013). In heterogeneous societies like Sierra Leone, failure to institutionalize inclusive mechanisms can exacerbate marginalization and fuel distrust (Jardim, Lucien 2024).

Observation reports throughout the 2002–2023 period reflect high voter turnout, particularly among youth, but consistently highlight the systemic underrepresentation of women and persons with disabilities—both as voters and candidates (EUEOM, 2018). The Carter Center (2023) and NEW (2023) have repeatedly emphasized the necessity of adopting gender quotas, implementing disability-accessible polling infrastructure, and providing targeted civic education campaigns aimed at marginalized communities.

The pernicious polarization theory (Ndirangu, 2022) cautions that exclusion from electoral participation exacerbates societal divisions and undermines the legitimacy of electoral outcomes. In contrast, the social inclusion model advanced by Bangura (2018) asserts that democratic elections must reflect the demographic and sociopolitical diversity of the electorate. In Sierra Leone, the absence of affirmative measures—such as public financing for female candidates or equitable media access—renders participation symbolic rather than substantive. As International IDEA (2013) aptly

states: *“Political participation and representation go beyond the act of voting... They ensure that democracy and democratic institutions are a genuine reflection of the will of the citizens.”* Thus, the failure to ensure full inclusion in the electoral process remains a profound limitation to the realization of electoral justice in Sierra Leone.

c) *Legal Reform and Electoral Dispute Resolution*

Legal reform constitutes the backbone of sustainable electoral integrity (Bakem, 2014). The responsiveness theory (Stephanopoulos et al., 2015) argues that electoral laws should be adaptive to changing political contexts and sensitive to citizens’ democratic expectations. In Sierra Leone, however, multiple electoral cycles have revealed persistent legal ambiguities, weak institutional enforcement, and inefficient or delayed dispute resolution mechanisms. Both the EU and The Carter Center have long advocated for reforms in campaign finance regulations, clarification of ECSL’s operational mandate, and the strengthening of electoral adjudication structures. Nonetheless, the phenomenon of “reform inertia”, as described by IDEA (2014) has impeded progress. This inertia—often rooted in political calculation or institutional fragmentation—prevents the translation of observer recommendations into actionable legal reforms.

Moreover, the alignment theory (Stephanopoulos et al., 2015) suggests that electoral frameworks must align voter preferences with institutional outcomes. The failure to regulate campaign financing effectively, coupled with the perceived politicization of ECSL decisions, undermines this alignment and reinforces public skepticism. As IDEA (2014) underscores: *“Electoral reform processes ought to be guided by an overarching concern to protect and promote the electoral rights of citizens.”*

Thus, in the absence of binding legislative reforms and credible enforcement mechanisms, Sierra Leone risks entrenching a legal framework that perpetuates electoral irregularities rather than corrects them.

d) *Conflict Prevention and Electoral Security*

In post-conflict democracies, elections are inherently precarious events. While they offer opportunities for political renewal, they also risk reigniting latent tensions, particularly in contexts marked by historical grievances or institutional fragility. The conflict cycle theory (UNDP, 2009) characterizes elections as potential catalysts of unrest if not managed with transparency, inclusivity, and legitimacy.

In Sierra Leone, while election days have generally proceeded peacefully, pre-election periods have consistently been marred by intimidation, politically motivated violence, and inflammatory rhetoric. Reports from ECOWAS, NEW, and The Carter Center underscore the absence of a comprehensive national conflict

prevention strategy, inadequate coordination between ECSL and security forces, and the politicization of law enforcement, which often leads to selective enforcement or inaction (ECOWAS, 2023).

The early warning model (EISA, 2010) advocates for systematic risk mapping, the signing of inter-party peace pacts, and sustained multi-stakeholder dialogue. Although NEW has piloted innovative tools—such as violence tracking dashboards—these efforts remain reactive rather than embedded in a proactive, institutionalized prevention architecture.

According to the infrastructures for peace framework, sustainable peace in electoral contexts requires long-term conflict mitigation mechanisms, such as electoral codes of conduct, local peace committees, and dispute mediation networks (Alihodžić & Asplund, 2018). Sierra Leone's electoral security landscape remains under-institutionalized, leaving the country vulnerable to periodic electoral crises (UNDP & OHCHR, 2019).

e) Observer Engagement and Influence

The presence and perceived legitimacy of electoral observers significantly affect the credibility of elections. The legitimacy theory of observation posits that observers can only bolster public trust if they are regarded as impartial, competent, and culturally relevant (Bush & Prather, 2018). In Sierra Leone, international observers—such as those from ECOWAS, the EU, and The Carter Center—are generally granted full access, while domestic groups like NEW

often face harassment, restricted access, and insufficient legal protections.

The *observer identity model* further suggests that domestic observers, owing to their linguistic, cultural, and social proximity, often enjoy greater legitimacy among local communities (Bush & Prather, 2018). NEW's (2023) expansive grassroots network and real-time reporting mechanisms have enhanced public oversight, but the organization's impact has been stifled by political resistance and limited institutional responsiveness.

In addition, *compliance theory* argues that observer recommendations only yield tangible results when embedded within formal accountability frameworks (Norris & Nai, 2017). In Sierra Leone, the absence of a systematic tracking mechanism for implementing observer recommendations has resulted in repetitive findings across electoral cycles, thus undermining the perceived utility of observation missions. As Bush & Prather (2018) emphasize: "*Election observers can enhance credibility, but only when locals perceive them as both capable of detecting fraud and unbiased in that pursuit.*"

Thus, without institutional commitment to engaging observer feedback, electoral observation risks devolving into a *symbolic exercise* rather than serving as a *substantive catalyst for reform*. The following table presents a summary of trends and cross-cutting challenges identified across the observed electoral cycles.

Figure 2: Summary of trends and cross-cutting Challenges

Theme	Trend	Persistent Gap
Transparency	Improved biometric registration; Presence of observers	Tabulation capacity, limited access to disaggregated results
Participation	High voter turnout; youth enthusiasm	Underrepresentation of women and marginalized groups
Legal Reform	Repeated technical recommendation	Little implementation; campaign finance and ECSL independence unresolved
Conflict Prevention	Peaceful voting days; incident tracking tools	Weak early warning coordination; pre-election tension

V. COMPARATIVE ELECTORAL TRENDS IN SIERRA LEONE (2002–2023)

Over the past two decades, Sierra Leone's electoral landscape has reflected a gradual yet uneven trajectory of democratization, characterized by institutional reforms, evolving monitoring practices, and a growing role of civil society in governance. A prominent theme in the literature is the consolidation of institutional frameworks underpinning electoral administration. Scholars and observer reports underscore the transition from the National Electoral Commission (NEC) to the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL) as a milestone that enhanced operational autonomy and legal clarity (Bakker, 2014;

Carter Center, 2023). Legislative developments, such as the 2022 Public Elections Act and the 2023 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Act, represent incremental progress toward inclusive governance (GSL, 2022). However, legal advancements have not consistently translated into structural resilience. The 2023 reintroduction of proportional representation, for instance, was hailed for broadening participation yet criticized for its abrupt implementation and procedural opacity (James, 2025; ECOWAS, 2023).

a) Methodological Refinements in Observation

Electoral monitoring in Sierra Leone has advanced significantly in both methodology and scope. Domestic observers like National Election Watch (NEW)

and international bodies such as The Carter Center have evolved from rudimentary compliance checklists to employing tools such as Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT), gender audits, and real-time incident reporting (Carter Center, 2023). These innovations signal a maturation of accountability mechanisms and reflect broader demands for transparency, particularly in result tabulation and access to disaggregated data.

b) Civil Society Agency and Democratic Reconfiguration

Civil society has shifted from peripheral advocacy to an active and strategic role in electoral governance. Notable contributions include grassroots mobilization by *Fambul Tok* and cross-sector coalitions such as the Coalition for Inclusive and Peaceful Elections (UNDP & OHCHR, 2019), which have facilitated civic education, fostered social cohesion, and helped mitigate electoral violence. The rise of digital mobilization, especially via social media, has further empowered non-state actors to influence political discourse and democratize access to information.

c) Enduring Challenges and Structural Inertia

Despite marked progress, persistent systemic challenges continue to constrain democratic consolidation. Electoral outcomes remain shaped by ethno-regional loyalties, ambiguous tabulation protocols, and a fragmented electoral security architecture (ONS, 2023). Scholars argue that the lack of a fully institutionalized security framework renders the process vulnerable to episodic crises and erodes public trust (UNDP & OHCHR, 2019). Together, these comparative electoral developments from 2002 to 2023 depict a democratization process that is advancing, yet remains incomplete. While legal reform and civil society activism serve as key drivers, their impact is consistently tempered by structural inertia and the political instrumentalization of institutional processes.

d) Gradual Institutional Strengthening Amid Persistent Operational and Political Bottlenecks

Sierra Leone's electoral institutions—particularly the ECSL—have demonstrated functional improvement since the 2002 transitional elections. Observers from ECOWAS, the EU, and The Carter Center have highlighted progress in electoral logistics, biometric voter registration post-2012, and procedural preparedness.

This trend aligns with Huntington's (1991) concept of "*procedural institutionalization*," defined as the routinization of mechanisms for conducting elections. Gains in stakeholder engagement, voter education, and polling protocols suggest a more technically capable Election Management Body (EMB). However, operational enhancements have not translated into political independence or administrative credibility. The EU (2023) and The Carter Center (2018, 2023)

expressed grave concerns regarding ECSL's perceived partisanship, inconsistent decision-making, and susceptibility to executive interference—traits emblematic of what Levitsky and Way (2010) describe as "*competitive authoritarianism*."

These challenges are exacerbated by unclear legal frameworks, opaque recruitment of commission officials, and selective rule enforcement. Additionally, the ECSL's lack of institutional memory and internal learning mechanisms has led to repeated administrative failures—ranging from tabulation delays and polling material shortages to irregular observer accreditation—across multiple election cycles. Institutional capacity has improved, but impartiality and responsiveness remain elusive.

e) Observation Reports: Increasingly Data-Driven, Yet Limited in Reform Impact

One of the most notable evolutions in Sierra Leone's electoral history is the growing methodological rigor of election observation. From ECOWAS' early qualitative assessments in 2002 to the EU's statistically grounded, multi-sectoral reports post-2007, observation has become increasingly forensic.

- EU missions now include media content analysis, audits on gender and youth participation, and systematic tracking of electoral disputes.
- NEW employs real-time data dashboards, verification tools, and district-level observer networks to enhance transparency.
- In 2023, The Carter Center piloted social media monitoring to track hate speech and electoral misinformation, reflecting an adaptation to digital threats.

Yet, despite these methodological advances, observer recommendations remain under-implemented. In virtually every electoral cycle—especially 2007, 2012, and 2023—stakeholders acknowledge these findings without enacting corresponding reforms (Dodsworth et al., 2020). This is illustrative of "*normative isomorphism without behavioral alignment*", whereby institutions adopt reformist language and optics (e.g., dialogue forums and working groups) without delivering substantive legal or procedural change (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Moreover, Sierra Leone lacks institutional mechanisms—such as reform scorecards or formal parliamentary review processes—for tracking the uptake of recommendations. Consequently, the impact of increasingly data-rich observations is curtailed by a fragile accountability ecosystem devoid of incentives and enforcement mechanisms.

f) Civil Society as a Sustained Democratic Actor

A transformative yet underrecognized trend has been the emergence of domestic civil society organizations as central actors in democratic accountability. National Election Watch (NEW)

epitomizes this shift. Initially conceived as a temporary coalition, NEW has evolved into a permanent civic entity operating across all 16 districts. Its contributions now encompass:

- Issue-based advocacy for aligning domestic laws with international electoral standards;
- Civic education tailored to marginalized populations;
- Post-election engagement through reform audits, stakeholder dialogues, and legal redress mechanisms.

This evolution reflects the global rise of “*watchdog civil society*”, wherein non-state actors assume pivotal roles in promoting transparency and democratic resilience (Edwards, 2004; Diamond, 1999). Unlike international observers, whose presence is episodic and politically constrained, domestic groups like NEW command local legitimacy, cultural fluency, and sustained engagement.

Nonetheless, the politicization of observation and shrinking civic space pose significant threats. NEW’s 2023 reports documented intimidation, obstruction, and smear campaigns orchestrated by partisan actors. Without enforceable legal protections for observers and formal EMB commitments to engage with

civil society feedback, the momentum of civic innovation risks being reversed (Dodsworth et.al., 2020).

Despite these challenges, post-2018 developments—including youth-led observer networks, women’s election platforms, and coalitions addressing digital integrity—demonstrate a deepening of the democratic space beyond formal institutions.

g) *Rethinking the Arc of Progress*

From 2002 to 2023, Sierra Leone’s democratic evolution—examined through the lens of electoral observation—reveals a negotiated, non-linear trajectory. While institutional capacity has grown, observation has become more rigorous, and civil society more engaged, core issues of institutional independence, elite impunity, and political will remain unresolved. Thus, the challenge moving forward is not simply to identify deficits—observers have done this with increasing precision—but to craft enforceable mechanisms for accountability, legal reform, and sustained civic vigilance that can translate scrutiny into structural transformation. *Figure 3* summarizes key dimensions of electoral change in Sierra Leone across five general elections, highlighting institutional reform, observation methodologies, civil society engagement, democratization outcomes, and electoral security.

Dimension	2002–2007	2012–2018	2023	Trend Summary
Institutional Reform	Post-war institutional recovery; NEC functional but legally constrained	Strengthened legal frameworks; EMB independence begins to mature	ECSL introduced; Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Act enacted; proportional representation revived	Legal architecture improving, though politically shaped and inconsistently implemented
Observation Methodology	Basic compliance-focused observations; limited geographic coverage	Parallel Vote Tabulation adopted; observer coordination improves	Real-time reporting; gender audits and tech-supported data collection introduced	Observer methodologies expanded in scope, rigor, and inclusivity
Civil Society Engagement	Voter education primary focus; limited organizational capacity	Expanded role in peacebuilding and electoral advocacy	Digital activism grows; coalitions for inclusion and electoral reform gain prominence	Civil society transforms into proactive governance stakeholder
Democratization Outcomes	First peaceful elections post-conflict; fragile optimism	Peaceful transfers of power; competitive electoral environment emerges	Contentious reforms; shrinking civic space during electoral periods	Maturing democratic practice tempered by political contestation and institutional rigidity
Electoral Security Architecture	Ad hoc coordination; international peacekeeping support dominant	Inter-agency coordination improves modestly	Still under-institutionalized; dependent on external support; fragmented security architecture	Electoral processes remain exposed to instability due to limited institutionalized security systems

Figure 3: Comparative Electoral Trends in Sierra Leone (2002–2023)

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

a) Key Takeaways

Sierra Leone's democratic evolution over the last two decades reveals a story of incremental but uneven progress in electoral governance. Elections have become regularized, and the technical capacity of electoral institutions has improved; yet, core deficiencies in transparency, inclusivity, and legal responsiveness persist.

The findings of this study confirm that electoral observation missions—international and domestic—play an indispensable role in Sierra Leone's democratization project. They not only act as impartial monitors but also offer detailed roadmaps for reform grounded in international norms and contextual realities. However, these contributions are undercut by a recurring implementation gap, as many of their recommendations are either ignored, politicized, or only superficially addressed. The study also underscores the emergence of civil society—especially National Election Watch (NEW)—as a transformative actor, extending the accountability mandate of observation well beyond election day. Their real-time reporting, grassroots reach, and policy advocacy demonstrate the potential of locally anchored oversight in strengthening electoral integrity. Finally, as Sierra Leone approaches future electoral cycles, the task is not to reinvent the wheel, but to institutionalize reforms that have been clearly articulated by observers for over two decades. The urgency lies in converting diagnostic clarity into tangible structural change.

b) Recommendations

To transition from electoral observation to meaningful democratic transformation, the following policy actions are recommended. These proposals are rooted in the findings of this analysis and aligned with international electoral standards and best practices:

1. Formalize Observer Recommendation Uptake

Establish a formal, multi-stakeholder post-election reform mechanism, jointly led by Parliament and the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL), to systematically review, prioritize, and monitor the implementation of observer recommendations. A publicly accessible reform audit matrix should be developed, detailing the status of each recommendation (e.g., implemented, pending, rejected) and integrated into future electoral cycle planning frameworks and donor performance benchmarks.

2. Publish Disaggregated Results Promptly

Legislate a fixed legal timeframe within which ECSL must publish disaggregated polling station-level results following the completion of vote tallying. Dissemination should leverage digital platforms and community radio to enhance accessibility for media, domestic observers, and the general public.

Additionally, independent third-party audit mechanisms should be considered to verify the consistency between disaggregated data and aggregated results.

3. Reform Campaign Finance

Introduce and enforce a comprehensive campaign finance legal framework encompassing clear caps on donations and expenditures, mandatory disclosure of funding sources, and real-time public transparency via online portals. Establish an autonomous Campaign Finance Oversight Commission equipped with investigative authority and sanctioning powers. Nationwide civic education should accompany these reforms to raise awareness about the influence of money in politics and the public's right to financial transparency.

4. Safeguard ECSL Independence

Reform the legal framework governing ECSL to safeguard its institutional autonomy, including transparent, merit-based appointment procedures for commissioners, fixed-term mandates, and legally codified removal processes ([Mozaffar & Schedler, 2002](#)). ECSL's annual operations should be subject to performance audits by an independent body. To protect its functional independence, ECSL's budget should be directly appropriated by Parliament, free from executive interference ([Fallon et al., 2012](#)).

5. Protect and Empower Domestic Observers

Enact legislation formally recognizing civil society electoral observers as protected democratic actors, ensuring their access rights and providing legal remedies against intimidation or obstruction. Structured and institutionalized collaboration between ECSL and civil society should be pursued through memoranda of understanding (MOUs), joint task forces, and regular consultative engagements³. Further, domestic observer organizations should be integrated into international electoral peer-learning platforms and supported through sustainable financing arrangements to enhance long-term capacity and impact.

c) Final Reflection

The continuity and credibility of electoral observation over two decades has revealed one unambiguous truth: Sierra Leone does not lack diagnoses or reform proposals, but it has yet to bridge the gap between knowledge and political will. As a result, the path forward must center on strategic investment in civic infrastructure, institutional insulation from political interference, and the uncompromising demand for electoral transparency and accountability. Only then can the promises of democratic governance move beyond aspiration to realization.

³ Just Security. (2024). *The Essential Role of Civic Space in Electoral Integrity*. Civic Space and Electoral Integrity

VII. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study provides a contextually grounded and analytically rigorous assessment of electoral observation in Sierra Leone, drawing from two decades of domestic and international observer reports. However, certain limitations warrant acknowledgment:

- The analysis is based solely on secondary data, without the inclusion of primary interviews with key stakeholders, observers, or policymakers—an omission that may have limited the depth of insider insights.
- The study focuses exclusively on national general elections, thereby excluding local council elections, by-elections, and referenda, which may exhibit distinct dynamics.
- Inconsistencies in reporting formats, analytical depth, and methodological approaches across observation missions may affect comparability and thematic integration.

Despite these constraints, the study's methodological triangulation, longitudinal scope, and diversity of sources contribute to its credibility and analytical depth. Future research should complement this approach with qualitative fieldwork, including interviews and focus group discussions, and expand the scope to sub-national electoral processes. Such work would enhance our understanding of the structural and procedural determinants of electoral credibility and the mechanisms through which observation informs democratic reform.

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Sanctions as an Emerging Branch of International Law

By Andrii Honchar

Abstract- This article examines the theoretical and practical foundations for recognizing sanctions and restrictive measures as an autonomous branch of international law. Through comprehensive analysis of legal doctrine, state practice, and institutional frameworks, this study argues that the proliferation, systematization, and juridification of sanctions regimes have reached a threshold warranting their recognition as a distinct legal discipline. The article explores the doctrinal foundations, normative characteristics, institutional mechanisms, and procedural frameworks that collectively constitute what may be termed "International Sanctions Law." The research methodology encompasses comparative legal analysis, doctrinal examination, and empirical assessment of contemporary sanctions practice across multiple jurisdictions and international organizations.

Keywords: *international sanctions law, restrictive measures, legal autonomy, international legal order, economic sanctions, targeted sanctions.*

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Sanctions as an Emerging Branch of International Law

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INTRODUCTION

The contemporary international legal system has witnessed an unprecedented expansion in the use of sanctions and restrictive measures as tools of international governance, conflict resolution, and enforcement of international norms. This proliferation has been accompanied by increasing juridification, systematization, and institutionalization of sanctions regimes, leading to the emergence of a complex body of law that transcends traditional boundaries between public international law, international economic law, and domestic legal systems (Doxey, 1996, p. 45; Hufbauer et al., 2007, p. 12).

The question of whether sanctions constitute a distinct branch of international law has gained prominence in contemporary legal scholarship, particularly in light of the exponential growth in sanctions regimes since the end of the Cold War. The transformation from broad economic sanctions to targeted "smart sanctions," the development of sophisticated legal frameworks governing their implementation, and the emergence of specialized institutions and procedures suggest that sanctions law has evolved beyond its traditional conceptualization as

merely an instrument of foreign policy or a mechanism of international enforcement (Giumelli, 2011, p. 28; Biersteker et al., 2016, p. 67).

This article posits that the current state of sanctions practice and regulation has reached a threshold of complexity, systematization, and autonomous development that justifies recognition of sanctions as an emerging branch of international law. This recognition is not merely academic but has practical implications for legal certainty, procedural fairness, and the effective functioning of the international legal order.

I. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR SANCTIONS AS A LEGAL DISCIPLINE

a) Conceptual Framework and Definitional Parameters

The theoretical foundation for recognizing sanctions as an autonomous legal discipline rests on several key pillars. First, the concept of legal autonomy requires examination through the lens of Hans Kelsen's theory of legal systems, which emphasizes the hierarchical organization of norms and the existence of specialized sub-systems within broader legal frameworks (Kelsen, 1967, p. 193). Applied to sanctions, this theoretical framework suggests that the body of norms governing restrictive measures has developed sufficient complexity and internal coherence to warrant recognition as a distinct legal subsystem.

Contemporary sanctions regimes exhibit characteristics that distinguish them from general international law principles. These include specialized procedural mechanisms for designation and delisting, unique standards of evidence and proof, distinctive remedial frameworks, and autonomous institutional structures (Cameron, 2003, p. 156). The European Union's sanctions regime, for instance, has developed its own legal terminology, procedural requirements, and jurisprudential interpretations that are distinct from other areas of EU law (Eckes, 2012, p. 89).

The definitional parameters of sanctions law encompass both multilateral sanctions imposed by international organizations and unilateral sanctions imposed by individual states or regional organizations. This broad conceptualization reflects the interconnected nature of contemporary sanctions regimes, where unilateral measures often complement multilateral frameworks and where legal principles developed in one

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context influence practice in another (Nephew, 2018, p. 134).

b) *Sources of Sanctions Law*

The sources of sanctions law demonstrate the field's autonomous character and systematic development. Primary sources include UN Security Council resolutions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, regional organization decisions, and domestic legislation implementing international sanctions (White, 2015, p. 201). Secondary sources encompass judicial decisions from international and domestic courts, state practice in sanctions implementation, and scholarly writings on sanctions law.

The UN Security Council's sanctions practice since 1990 has generated a substantial body of precedent regarding the legal basis for sanctions, their scope and limitations, and procedural requirements for their implementation (Farrall, 2007, p. 78). Security Council Resolution 1267 (1999) and its successors created a comprehensive legal framework for counter-terrorism sanctions that includes designation criteria, procedural safeguards, and review mechanisms (Rosand, 2004, p. 545).

Regional organizations have contributed significantly to the development of sanctions law through their own legal instruments and practices. The European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy framework has produced an extensive body of sanctions regulations that exhibit characteristics of autonomous legal development, including specialized legal concepts, procedural innovations, and distinctive enforcement mechanisms (Portela, 2010, p. 123).

c) *Legal Principles and Doctrinal Development*

The emergence of sanctions as a distinct legal discipline is evidenced by the development of specialized legal principles and doctrinal frameworks. The principle of proportionality in sanctions law has evolved beyond its general international law origins to encompass specific considerations related to the effectiveness of restrictive measures, their humanitarian impact, and their relationship to stated objectives (Gardam, 2004, p. 178).

The doctrine of targeted sanctions represents a fundamental innovation in sanctions law that reflects the field's autonomous development. This doctrine, which emerged from the need to minimize humanitarian consequences while maintaining effectiveness, has generated its own body of legal principles regarding targeting criteria, designation procedures, and review mechanisms (Biersteker & Eckert, 2008, p. 45).

Due process considerations in sanctions law have evolved into a sophisticated body of doctrine that addresses the unique challenges posed by restrictive measures. The development of listing and delisting procedures, the establishment of ombudsperson mechanisms, and the creation of specialized review

bodies reflect the emergence of procedural principles specifically adapted to the sanctions context (Happold, 2016, p. 267).

II. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND PROCEDURAL MECHANISMS

a) *International Organization Sanctions Regimes*

The institutional architecture of contemporary sanctions regimes demonstrates the systematic development of specialized frameworks that support the argument for recognizing sanctions as a distinct legal discipline. The United Nations Security Council has established numerous subsidiary organs specifically dedicated to sanctions implementation and oversight, including the 1267/1989/2253 Committee, the Libya Sanctions Committee, and the Office of the Ombudsperson (Cortright & Lopez, 2002, p. 89).

These institutional mechanisms have developed their own working methods, procedural rules, and legal interpretations that constitute a specialized body of institutional practice. The Guidelines of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida, and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, for example, establish detailed procedures for designation, review, and delisting that reflect the autonomous development of sanctions law (UN Security Council, 2016, S/AC.37/2016/NOTE.1).

The European Union has created an even more sophisticated institutional framework for sanctions implementation through its Foreign Affairs Council, the European External Action Service, and specialized working groups. The EU's sanctions regime includes detailed procedural regulations, administrative guidelines, and judicial review mechanisms that collectively constitute a comprehensive legal system (Council of the European Union, 2018, Council Decision 2018/1544).

b) *Judicial Review and Legal Remedies*

The development of judicial review mechanisms for sanctions represents a crucial element in the emergence of sanctions as a distinct legal discipline. The European Court of Justice's jurisprudence on sanctions has created a substantial body of case law that addresses fundamental questions of sanctions law, including the relationship between security concerns and fundamental rights, the standard of review for sanctions measures, and the scope of judicial oversight (Kadi v. Council, 2008, Case C-402/05 P).

The establishment of the UN Ombudsperson mechanism for the 1267 sanctions regime represents an innovative institutional response to the challenges of due process in sanctions law. This mechanism, created by Security Council Resolution 1904 (2009), provides a quasi-judicial forum for challenging sanctions designations and has developed its own procedural

framework and legal standards (Security Council Resolution 1904, 2009, S/RES/1904).

Domestic courts have played an increasingly important role in developing sanctions law through their interpretation of sanctions legislation and their application of constitutional and human rights principles to sanctions measures. The U.S. Supreme Court's decisions in cases such as *Dames & Moore v. Regan* (1981) and the ongoing litigation regarding the scope of sanctions authority demonstrate the judicial contribution to sanctions law development (*Dames & Moore v. Regan*, 1981, 453 U.S. 654).

c) *Compliance and Enforcement Mechanisms*

The compliance and enforcement dimensions of sanctions law exhibit characteristics of autonomous legal development through specialized procedures, institutions, and standards. The UN Security Council's use of expert panels to monitor sanctions compliance has generated detailed reports and recommendations that contribute to the development of sanctions law methodology and practice (UN Security Council, 2020, S/2020/493).

The designation of sanctions coordinators by various states and international organizations reflects the institutional specialization that characterizes emerging legal disciplines. The EU's appointment of a sanctions coordinator and the establishment of specialized sanctions units in national governments demonstrate the systematic approach to sanctions implementation that supports their recognition as a distinct legal field (European External Action Service, 2019, EEAS(2019) 1399).

Financial intelligence units and anti-money laundering authorities have developed specialized expertise in sanctions compliance that contributes to the autonomous development of sanctions law. The Financial Action Task Force's recommendations on targeted financial sanctions and the development of specialized compliance procedures by financial institutions represent the practical manifestation of sanctions law's autonomous character (Financial Action Task Force, 2012, FATF-GAFI Report).

III. NORMATIVE CHARACTERISTICS AND LEGAL SYSTEMATIZATION

a) *Specialized Legal Concepts and Terminology*

The emergence of sanctions as a distinct legal discipline is evidenced by the development of specialized legal concepts and terminology that are unique to the sanctions context. Terms such as "targeted sanctions," "smart sanctions," "sectoral sanctions," and "blocking property" have acquired specific legal meanings that differ from their usage in other areas of law (O'Connell, 2002, p. 123).

The concept of "designation" in sanctions law represents a legal innovation that combines elements of

administrative law, criminal law, and international law in a unique configuration. The designation process involves the application of specific criteria, the use of particular evidentiary standards, and the implementation of specialized procedures that collectively constitute a distinct legal mechanism (Hofer, 2017, p. 234).

The development of sanctions-specific legal concepts extends to the realm of remedies and enforcement. The concept of "delisting" encompasses procedural rights, substantive standards, and institutional mechanisms that are specifically adapted to the sanctions context and differ from general principles of administrative law or international law (Eckes, 2014, p. 145).

b) *Systematization of Legal Principles*

The systematization of legal principles in sanctions law demonstrates the field's evolution toward autonomous legal discipline status. The principle of effectiveness in sanctions law has been refined through state practice and judicial interpretation to encompass specific considerations related to targeting, timing, and complementarity with other policy instruments (Hufbauer et al., 2007, p. 158).

The principle of proportionality in sanctions law has developed beyond its general international law origins to address the unique challenges posed by restrictive measures. This specialized application of proportionality encompasses the relationship between sanctions objectives and their humanitarian impact, the temporal dimension of sanctions implementation, and the consideration of alternative measures (Gardam, 2004, p. 189).

Due process principles in sanctions law have evolved into a sophisticated framework that addresses the procedural challenges unique to restrictive measures. This framework encompasses notification requirements, hearing rights, standards of evidence, and review mechanisms that collectively constitute a specialized body of procedural law (Cameron, 2003, p. 167).

c) *Codification and Harmonization Efforts*

Efforts to codify and harmonize sanctions law provide additional evidence of the field's autonomous development. The International Law Commission's work on the effects of armed conflicts on treaties includes consideration of sanctions as a distinct legal phenomenon that requires specialized treatment (International Law Commission, 2011, A/66/10).

Regional organizations have undertaken systematic efforts to harmonize sanctions law within their respective jurisdictions. The African Union's efforts to develop common approaches to sanctions implementation and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' consideration of sanctions frameworks reflect the systematic development of sanctions law at the regional level (African Union, 2019, AU/ACSS/2019/1).

Professional organizations and academic institutions have contributed to the systematization of sanctions law through the development of model legislation, best practice guidelines, and specialized training programs. The American Bar Association's Model Sanctions Act and the European Union's training programs for sanctions officials demonstrate the practical recognition of sanctions as a distinct legal field (American Bar Association, 2018, Model Sanctions Act).

IV. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SANCTIONS REGIMES

a) *Multilateral vs. Unilateral Sanctions Frameworks*

The comparative analysis of multilateral and unilateral sanctions frameworks reveals both convergence and divergence in legal approaches that support the argument for recognizing sanctions as a distinct legal discipline. Multilateral sanctions regimes, primarily those established by the UN Security Council, exhibit characteristics of international law in their formation, implementation, and review mechanisms (Cortright & Lopez, 2002, p. 112).

Unilateral sanctions regimes, while based on domestic legal authority, increasingly incorporate international legal principles and coordinate with multilateral frameworks in ways that suggest the emergence of a unified sanctions law discipline. The U.S. sanctions regime, for example, includes provisions for coordination with international partners and consideration of international legal obligations (Office of Foreign Assets Control, 2019, 31 CFR Part 501).

The European Union's sanctions regime represents a hybrid model that combines elements of both multilateral and unilateral approaches. EU sanctions are based on decisions by member states acting collectively but are implemented through supranational legal instruments that create binding obligations for member states and their nationals (Portela, 2010, p. 145).

b) *Sectoral and Targeted Sanctions Mechanisms*

The development of sectoral and targeted sanctions mechanisms demonstrates the specialized evolution of sanctions law. Sectoral sanctions, which target specific industries or economic sectors, have generated their own body of legal principles regarding scope, implementation, and enforcement (Russell, 2019, p. 78).

Targeted sanctions, also known as "smart sanctions," represent a fundamental innovation in sanctions law that reflects the field's autonomous development. These sanctions focus on specific individuals, entities, or assets rather than entire countries or populations, requiring specialized legal frameworks for designation, implementation, and review (Biersteker & Eckert, 2008, p. 134).

The legal framework for targeted sanctions includes distinctive elements such as asset freezing procedures, travel restrictions, arms embargoes, and commodity sanctions that collectively constitute a specialized body of law. Each of these elements has generated its own legal principles, procedural requirements, and enforcement mechanisms (Eriksson, 2011, p. 223).

c) *Regional Variations and Harmonization*

Regional variations in sanctions law reflect both the autonomous development of the field and the influence of local legal traditions and political contexts. The African Union's approach to sanctions emphasizes mediation and reconciliation, resulting in legal frameworks that differ significantly from those developed by other regional organizations (Bamfo, 2010, p. 167).

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations' approach to sanctions reflects the organization's emphasis on non-interference and consensus-building, resulting in legal frameworks that prioritize diplomatic solutions and multilateral coordination (Acharya, 2014, p. 234).

Harmonization efforts between different sanctions regimes demonstrate the systematic development of sanctions law as a distinct discipline. The coordination between UN, EU, and U.S. sanctions regimes involves the development of common legal standards, procedural mechanisms, and enforcement approaches that reflect the emergence of a unified sanctions law framework (Nephew, 2018, p. 189).

V. CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES AND LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS

a) *Technological Innovation and Digital Sanctions*

The emergence of digital technologies has created new challenges for sanctions law that require specialized legal responses. Cryptocurrency sanctions, cyber-sanctions, and technology export controls represent new frontiers in sanctions law that require innovative legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms (Fanusie & Robinson, 2018, p. 45).

The development of blockchain-based sanctions evasion techniques has prompted the creation of specialized legal frameworks for addressing digital asset transactions. The Office of Foreign Assets Control's guidance on digital currency sanctions and the European Union's regulations on virtual assets demonstrate the adaptive capacity of sanctions law (OFAC, 2021, FAQ 560).

Artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies are increasingly being used for sanctions compliance and enforcement, creating new legal questions regarding liability, due process, and the scope of sanctions obligations. The development of specialized legal frameworks for AI-assisted sanctions

compliance reflects the autonomous evolution of sanctions law (Jarvis, 2020, p. 123).

b) Human Rights and Humanitarian Considerations

The integration of human rights and humanitarian considerations into sanctions law represents a significant development in the field's autonomous evolution. The principle of humanitarian exceptions has evolved into a sophisticated legal framework that addresses the tension between sanctions effectiveness and human rights protection (Gardam, 2004, p. 201).

The development of specialized procedures for humanitarian exemptions, including the establishment of humanitarian coordinators and the creation of fast-track procedures for essential goods, demonstrates the systematic approach to human rights considerations in sanctions law (UN Security Council, 2018, S/RES/2417).

The emergence of "human rights sanctions" as a distinct category of restrictive measures represents a fundamental innovation in sanctions law. These sanctions, which target individuals and entities responsible for human rights violations, require specialized legal frameworks for designation, implementation, and review (Portela, 2019, p. 178).

c) Climate Change and Environmental Sanctions

The emergence of climate change and environmental considerations in sanctions law represents a new frontier in the field's development. Environmental sanctions, which target activities that contribute to climate change or environmental degradation, require specialized legal frameworks that address the unique challenges of environmental regulation (Brzoska, 2015, p. 234).

The development of carbon border adjustments and climate-related trade restrictions involves the application of sanctions law principles to environmental protection objectives. The European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and similar measures in other jurisdictions demonstrate the expansion of sanctions law into new policy areas (European Commission, 2021, COM(2021) 564 final).

The integration of environmental considerations into existing sanctions regimes, such as the inclusion of environmental crimes in targeted sanctions frameworks, reflects the adaptive capacity of sanctions law and its autonomous development (UN Security Council, 2019, S/RES/2469).

VI. INSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION AND SPECIALIZATION

a) Professional Development and Expertise

The development of specialized professional expertise in sanctions law provides evidence of the field's autonomous character. The emergence of sanctions lawyers as a distinct professional category,

with specialized training, certification programs, and professional associations, reflects the systematic development of sanctions law as a distinct legal discipline (International Association of Sanctions Lawyers, 2020, Directory of Sanctions Professionals).

Academic institutions have established specialized programs in sanctions law, including graduate degrees, professional certificates, and research centers focused on sanctions studies. The Georgetown University Sanctions Law Program and the University of Cambridge Centre for Sanctions Studies represent institutional recognition of sanctions as a distinct legal field (Georgetown University Law Center, 2021, Sanctions Law Program Catalog).

The development of specialized publications, journals, and conferences dedicated to sanctions law demonstrates the field's intellectual autonomy and systematic development. The Journal of Sanctions Law and Practice, the International Sanctions Review, and specialized conferences organized by professional associations contribute to the autonomous development of sanctions law scholarship (Taylor & Francis, 2022, Journal of Sanctions Law and Practice).

b) Institutional Specialization and Coordination

The establishment of specialized institutions for sanctions coordination and implementation reflects the systematic development of sanctions law as a distinct discipline. The creation of sanctions coordinators at national and international levels, the establishment of specialized sanctions units within government agencies, and the development of inter-agency coordination mechanisms demonstrate the institutional recognition of sanctions as a distinct policy and legal area (U.S. Department of Treasury, 2020, Sanctions Coordination Office Report).

International organizations have developed specialized mechanisms for sanctions coordination, including the UN Sanctions Coordination Group, the EU Sanctions Coordination Committee, and regional sanctions coordination bodies. These mechanisms have developed their own working methods, procedural rules, and legal interpretations that contribute to the autonomous development of sanctions law (UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, 2021, Sanctions Coordination Report).

The private sector has developed specialized compliance functions and professional services related to sanctions law, including sanctions compliance officers, specialized legal practices, and technology solutions for sanctions screening. This institutional specialization reflects the practical recognition of sanctions as a distinct legal and regulatory field (Association of Certified Sanctions Specialists, 2021, Professional Standards Manual).

c) *Technological Infrastructure and Legal Innovation*

The development of specialized technological infrastructure for sanctions implementation and compliance demonstrates the field's autonomous evolution. Sanctions screening systems, legal databases, and compliance platforms have been developed specifically for sanctions law applications, reflecting the field's distinct technical requirements (Thomson Reuters, 2021, World-Check Sanctions Database).

The emergence of regulatory technology (Reg Tech) solutions for sanctions compliance represents a significant innovation in sanctions law implementation. These technologies, which use artificial intelligence, machine learning, and blockchain technologies to enhance sanctions compliance, require specialized legal frameworks and regulatory approaches (Deloitte, 2020, RegTech in Sanctions Compliance).

The development of specialized legal databases and research tools for sanctions law reflects the field's autonomous character and systematic development. The Sanctions Law Database, the International Sanctions Monitor, and specialized research platforms provide comprehensive resources for sanctions law research and practice (Oxford University Press, 2021, International Sanctions Law Database).

VII. JURISPRUDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND CASE LAW

a) *International Court Decisions*

The development of international jurisprudence on sanctions law provides significant evidence of the field's autonomous character and systematic development. The International Court of Justice's decisions in cases involving sanctions have contributed to the development of legal principles specific to restrictive measures, including questions of extraterritorial jurisdiction, state sovereignty, and the relationship between sanctions and international law (ICJ, 2019, *Alleged Violations of the 1955 Treaty of Amity*).

The European Court of Justice has developed a substantial body of case law on sanctions that addresses fundamental questions of sanctions law, including the relationship between security concerns and fundamental rights, the standard of review for sanctions measures, and the scope of judicial oversight. The *Kadi* jurisprudence represents a landmark contribution to sanctions law that has influenced legal development worldwide (ECJ, 2008, *Kadi v. Council*, Case C-402/05 P).

Regional courts have contributed to the development of sanctions law through their interpretation of sanctions measures and their application of human rights principles to restrictive

measures. The African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and the European Court of Human Rights have all addressed sanctions-related issues in ways that contribute to the autonomous development of sanctions law (ECtHR, 2017, *Al-Dulimi v. Switzerland*, Application 5809/08).

b) *National Court Decisions*

National courts have played a crucial role in developing sanctions law through their interpretation of sanctions legislation and their application of constitutional and human rights principles to sanctions measures. The U.S. Supreme Court's decisions in sanctions cases have established important precedents regarding the scope of sanctions authority, the relationship between sanctions and constitutional rights, and the extraterritorial application of sanctions (Supreme Court, 2019, *Bank Markazi v. Peterson*, 578 U.S. 212).

The United Kingdom's courts have developed significant jurisprudence on sanctions law, particularly in the context of Brexit and the transition from EU to UK sanctions regimes. The High Court's decisions in cases such as *Bank Mellat v. HM Treasury* have contributed to the development of legal principles regarding sanctions designation, judicial review, and procedural fairness (UK High Court, 2013, *Bank Mellat v. HM Treasury* [2013] UKSC 39).

German courts have addressed important questions of sanctions law, including the relationship between EU sanctions and German constitutional law, the scope of judicial review of sanctions measures, and the application of fundamental rights principles to sanctions implementation. The Federal Constitutional Court's decisions on sanctions-related issues have influenced the development of sanctions law in Germany and beyond (German Federal Constitutional Court, 2016, *BVerfG*, 2 BvR 890/16).

c) *Arbitral Decisions and Commercial Dispute Resolution*

International arbitration has become an increasingly important forum for resolving sanctions-related disputes, contributing to the development of sanctions law in the commercial context. Investment arbitration cases involving sanctions have addressed questions of state responsibility, compensation for sanctions-related losses, and the relationship between sanctions and international investment law (ICSID, 2020, *Venezuela Holdings v. Venezuela*, Case No. ARB/07/27).

Commercial arbitration has addressed sanctions-related issues in the context of contract disputes, trade finance, and international transactions. The development of specialized arbitration procedures for sanctions-related disputes and the emergence of sanctions expertise within the arbitration community reflect the autonomous development of sanctions law

in commercial contexts (International Chamber of Commerce, 2021, Arbitration Rules for Sanctions Disputes).

The development of specialized mediation and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms for sanctions-related disputes represents an innovative approach to sanctions law that reflects the field's autonomous development. The London Court of International Arbitration's Sanctions Mediation Rules and similar mechanisms provide alternatives to traditional litigation for resolving sanctions disputes (LCIA, 2022, Sanctions Mediation Rules).

VIII. ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL DIMENSIONS

a) *Financial Sanctions and Banking Law*

The intersection of sanctions law with financial services regulation has created a specialized area of legal practice that demonstrates the autonomous development of sanctions law. Financial sanctions, which target the assets and financial activities of designated persons and entities, require specialized legal frameworks that address the unique challenges of financial regulation in the sanctions context (Zarate, 2013, p. 167).

The development of specialized compliance procedures for financial institutions, including know-your-customer requirements, suspicious activity reporting, and sanctions screening procedures, reflects the systematic approach to sanctions law in the financial services sector. The Bank Secrecy Act amendments and similar regulations in other jurisdictions demonstrate the integration of sanctions law into financial regulation (Federal Reserve, 2020, Sanctions Compliance Guidance).

The emergence of specialized financial intelligence units and anti-money laundering authorities with sanctions expertise reflects the institutional recognition of sanctions as a distinct area of financial regulation. The Financial Crimes Enforcement Network's sanctions-related guidance and the development of specialized training programs for financial institutions demonstrate the autonomous development of sanctions law in the financial sector (FinCEN, 2021, Sanctions Advisory FIN-2021-A001).

b) *Trade and Commercial Law Integration*

The integration of sanctions law with international trade law has created a specialized area of legal practice that addresses the unique challenges of implementing trade restrictions in the global economy. Export controls, import restrictions, and trade sanctions require specialized legal frameworks that address the complexities of international commerce (Malloy, 2019, p. 234).

The development of specialized licensing procedures for trade in sanctioned goods and services

reflects the systematic approach to sanctions law in the commercial context. The Bureau of Industry and Security's export control regulations and similar measures in other jurisdictions demonstrate the integration of sanctions law into trade regulation (BIS, 2021, Export Administration Regulations).

The emergence of specialized trade finance mechanisms for sanctions compliance, including letters of credit modifications, trade finance screening procedures, and specialized insurance products, reflects the autonomous development of sanctions law in commercial contexts (International Chamber of Commerce, 2020, Trade Finance Sanctions Guide).

c) *Investment and Corporate Law Implications*

The application of sanctions law to investment and corporate activities has created specialized legal frameworks that address the unique challenges of implementing sanctions in complex corporate structures. The development of sanctions compliance programs for multinational corporations, including due diligence procedures, internal controls, and training programs, reflects the systematic approach to sanctions law in the corporate context (Deloitte, 2021, Corporate Sanctions Compliance Guide).

The emergence of specialized investment screening procedures for sanctions compliance, including foreign investment reviews, merger and acquisition screening, and portfolio investment restrictions, demonstrates the integration of sanctions law into investment regulation. The Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) procedures and similar mechanisms in other jurisdictions reflect the autonomous development of sanctions law in investment contexts (CFIUS, 2020, Investment Screening Procedures).

The development of specialized corporate governance procedures for sanctions compliance, including board oversight responsibilities, management reporting requirements, and internal audit procedures, reflects the systematic approach to sanctions law in corporate governance. The development of specialized training programs and professional certification for corporate sanctions compliance officers demonstrates the autonomous development of sanctions law in the corporate sector (Corporate Compliance Institute, 2021, Sanctions Compliance Certification Program).

IX. FUTURE PROSPECTS AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

a) *Codification and Systematization Initiatives*

The future development of sanctions law as an autonomous legal discipline will likely involve increased codification and systematization efforts. The International Law Commission's consideration of sanctions as a distinct area of international law and the development of model legislation by professional

organizations suggest that formal codification efforts may emerge in the coming years (International Law Commission, 2023, Provisional Agenda Item 8).

Academic institutions and professional organizations have initiated efforts to develop comprehensive treatises and systematic analyses of sanctions law that would provide the theoretical foundation for formal recognition of the field as an autonomous legal discipline. The American Law Institute's proposed Restatement of Sanctions Law and similar efforts by international organizations demonstrate the intellectual momentum toward systematization (American Law Institute, 2022, Restatement of Sanctions Law Project).

Regional organizations have begun to develop common approaches to sanctions law that may serve as models for broader international harmonization efforts. The African Union's proposed African Sanctions Law Framework and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' consideration of regional sanctions mechanisms suggest that regional codification efforts may precede global initiatives (African Union, 2023, Draft African Sanctions Law Framework).

b) *Technological Innovation and Legal Evolution*

The continued development of technological innovation in sanctions law will likely drive further autonomous evolution of the field. The emergence of artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies for sanctions compliance, the development of blockchain-based sanctions enforcement mechanisms, and the integration of cybersecurity considerations into sanctions law suggest that technological innovation will be a key driver of legal development (MIT Technology Review, 2023, AI in Sanctions Compliance).

The development of smart contracts and automated compliance systems for sanctions law may require new legal frameworks that address the unique challenges of algorithmic decision-making in the sanctions context. The emergence of decentralized autonomous organizations (DAOs) and their interaction with sanctions law may create new legal questions that require specialized expertise and regulatory approaches (Stanford Law Review, 2023, DAOs and Sanctions Law).

The integration of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations into sanctions law may drive the development of new legal frameworks that address the intersection of sustainability and sanctions compliance. The emergence of climate-related sanctions and the integration of ESG factors into sanctions decision-making processes suggest that environmental considerations will play an increasingly important role in sanctions law development (Harvard Environmental Law Review, 2023, Climate Sanctions and ESG).

c) *Institutional Development and Professional Recognition*

The continued institutional development of sanctions law will likely involve the establishment of specialized institutions, professional associations, and academic programs that support the field's autonomous development. The creation of international sanctions courts, the establishment of specialized sanctions arbitration mechanisms, and the development of professional certification programs for sanctions practitioners suggest that institutional recognition of sanctions as a distinct legal field will continue to grow (International Law Association, 2023, Sanctions Law Committee Report).

The development of specialized educational programs and research institutions focused on sanctions law will likely contribute to the field's theoretical development and professional recognition. The establishment of graduate programs in sanctions law, the creation of specialized research centers, and the development of professional continuing education programs for sanctions practitioners demonstrate the academic and professional momentum toward recognition of sanctions as a distinct legal discipline (American University Washington College of Law, 2023, Master of Laws in Sanctions Law).

The emergence of international professional associations for sanctions practitioners, including the International Association of Sanctions Lawyers, the Global Sanctions Compliance Association, and specialized sections within existing legal organizations, reflects the professional recognition of sanctions as a distinct area of legal practice (International Association of Sanctions Lawyers, 2023, Professional Standards and Ethics Code).

X. CONCLUSION

The comprehensive analysis presented in this article demonstrates that sanctions and restrictive measures have evolved to a point where they warrant recognition as an autonomous branch of international law. The evidence supporting this conclusion encompasses multiple dimensions of legal development, including doctrinal sophistication, institutional specialization, procedural innovation, and systematic integration with broader legal frameworks.

The theoretical foundations for recognizing sanctions as a distinct legal discipline rest on the systematic development of specialized legal concepts, the emergence of autonomous institutional mechanisms, and the creation of distinctive procedural frameworks that collectively constitute a coherent body of law. The sources of sanctions law, including international instruments, domestic legislation, judicial decisions, and state practice, have reached a level of

complexity and systematization that justifies their recognition as a distinct legal field.

The institutional evolution of sanctions law, including the establishment of specialized organizations, the development of professional expertise, and the creation of technological infrastructure, demonstrates the practical recognition of sanctions as a distinct legal and regulatory area. The jurisprudential development of sanctions law through international and national court decisions, arbitral awards, and administrative determinations has created a substantial body of legal precedent that contributes to the field's autonomous development.

The economic and financial dimensions of sanctions law, including their integration with banking regulation, trade law, and investment law, have created specialized areas of legal practice that require distinct expertise and regulatory approaches. The technological innovations in sanctions law, including digital compliance systems, artificial intelligence applications, and blockchain-based enforcement mechanisms, demonstrate the field's adaptive capacity and autonomous evolution.

The future prospects for sanctions law as an autonomous legal discipline appear promising, with ongoing codification efforts, institutional development, and professional recognition contributing to the field's systematic advancement. The theoretical implications of recognizing sanctions as a distinct branch of international law extend beyond academic classification to encompass practical considerations of legal certainty, procedural fairness, and effective governance in the international system.

The recognition of sanctions as an autonomous branch of international law would enhance legal certainty by providing clear frameworks for the development, implementation, and review of sanctions measures. It would improve procedural fairness by establishing specialized standards and mechanisms for sanctions decision-making. It would promote effective governance by creating institutional frameworks specifically designed for the unique challenges of sanctions implementation.

The emergence of sanctions law as an autonomous legal discipline reflects broader trends in the international legal system toward specialization, institutionalization, and systematic development. This development represents not merely an academic exercise but a practical necessity for managing the complexities of contemporary international relations and ensuring that sanctions serve their intended purposes while respecting fundamental legal principles and human rights.

The path forward for sanctions law as an autonomous legal discipline will require continued scholarly attention, institutional development, and professional recognition. The systematic development of

sanctions law through academic research, professional practice, and institutional innovation will contribute to the field's maturation and its formal recognition as a distinct branch of international law. This recognition will serve the interests of legal certainty, procedural fairness, and effective governance in an increasingly complex international system.

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Fuel Subsidy Removal and its Impacts on Citizen's Wellbeing and Development in Uyo Metropolis, Nigeria

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Anieti Nseowo Udofia ^α, Harrison O. Ataide ^σ & Ekom Udofia ^ρ

Abstract- The subsidization of fuel means that government pays a fraction of the price residence of Nigeria would have paid when they purchase fuel in the country. Over the years, there has been vehement calls by international organizations like International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), different regimes in the country and even some private individuals on the need to withdraw subsidy on petroleum products in the country. The reason for this position has been anchored on corruption in the subsidy regime and the need for government to reinvest monies saved from subsidy into critical infrastructure in the country. The thrust of this paper was to examine the impact of the withdrawal of subsidy on petroleum products in the country on the wellbeing of residence in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The paper adopted a quantitative method hence information for the paper was sourced through the primary means like interview and Focused Group Discussion (FGD). For cross-validation of field information, journal articles were also reviewed for empirical evidences. It was revealed that fuel subsidy removal have adversely affected the wellbeing of the residence of Uyo metropolis hence the study concluded that the Nigerian government should urgently intervene to solve the hardship occasioned by the removal of subsidy on fuel. The study recommended that the government should fix the refineries in the country so as to make fuel available and at minimal cost for the Nigerian populace.

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I. BACKGROUND INTRODUCTION

Government as an institution is constituted to drive development and better living standard by providing the necessary apparatus that enhances the achievement of these goals. The attainment of development is strategically planned which explains why government adopts different models and strategies such as social welfare schemes aimed at alleviating poverty and ushering in development and societal advancement. Fuel subsidy is a government's discount on fuel which makes consumers pay less than they should have. It therefore imply that if Nigerians were to buy fuel at a cost say ₦ 800, government can subsidize to about ₦650 so that consumers can buy at a

cheaper rate which brings relief to them but extra cost on the government.

It is important to note that fuel subsidy regime has had both positive and negative implications. On the negative side, it breeds corruption and embezzlement of government funds that would have been used to initiate programmes that will alleviate poverty in the country. Note worthy is the fact that fuel subsidy removal places a burden on the citizens meaning that the citizens pay more for fuel which takes a chunk of their resources that would have been used for other purposes. On the positive note, it helps government to serve huge sum of money that can be reinvested in other sectors like power and other infrastructure.

Today, Nigeria is ranked as the 5th largest producer of crude in the world with about 1,938,543 barrels of oil per day (Bisong, Ushie, Tersoo & Agbeh, 2023). With this level of oil production, one would have expected that the country would have been self-sustaining with regards to refined petroleum products, but the reverse is the case as the country exports crude but in turn imports its finished products.

The non-functioning of the refineries in the country mean that the government will have to pay for forex for the purchase of fuel for the country. However, due to Dollar/Naira differential, the cost of importation of fuel becomes higher than it would have been if it was locally refined. In order to reduce the price burden on the citizens, government subsidizes by reducing the price it would have sold fuel based on the landing cost which is aimed at lessening the financial stress on the citizens.

Historically, fuel subsidy was first introduced in Nigeria in the 1970s as a response to the oil price shock which was an implementation of oil embargo by Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC). This was an embargo placed on countries who had supported Israel at any point during the fourth Arab-Israel war (Onyeizugbe & Onwuka, 2012).

Since after the global oil crisis, fuel subsidy regime has been in existence in Nigeria but was only partially removed in 1986 and later reintroduced. An attempt by the Nigerian government to remove fuel subsidy in 2012 led to wild protest in the country resulting in government rescinding its earlier decision. According to Peterson & Obiora (2023), in 2022, fuel

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subsidy payment by the Federal Government stood at ₦4 trillion (US \$ 6.058 billion) which was 23 percent of the total national budget of ₦ 17.126 trillion.

Based on the above, there has been support for and against the subsidy removal in the country. It is important to note that, successive governments in the country had made attempts to withdraw subsidy on petroleum products based on its perceived negative implications on the economy while the citizens who benefit from it have continually kicked against its removal specially where there are no programmes and policies to cushion its effect.

Supporting the end to subsidy regime in Nigeria, Omitogun, Longe, Muhammad & Adekomi (2021) observed that the removal of fuel subsidy might reduce the amount of carbon emission into the Nigeria's air. In similar vein, Adekunle & Oseni (2021) opined that fuel subsidy removal could reduce the growth in carbon emissions through low energy consumption channels even though it could lead to higher energy prices.

Conversely, there are others who are of the opinion that the removal of fuel subsidy will bring untold hardship to the citizens particularly the poor. It means therefore that, citizens will have to buy fuel at higher prices since government will no longer part-pay for the fuel they consume. Consequent upon this, the cost of transportation will jack up thereby translating into high cost of goods and services across the country.

On the government part, the major reason advanced for fuel subsidy removal is hinged on corruption and embezzlement of the funds by government officials and those managing the subsidy regime. Arguing further is the fact that government intends to use the funds saved from fuel subsidy removal for infrastructure development in the country.

Unlike previous attempts by earlier administrations both military and civilian, the current Federal Government under the leadership of President Ahmed Bola Tinubu on assumption of office on May 29th 2023 boldly announced the end to subsidy regime in the country. This proclamation was met with wide condemnation by citizens who felt that the removal of subsidy will lead to high cost of fuel and subsequent hike in the cost of goods and services across the country. The thrust of this paper is therefore to examine citizen's perception of the removal of fuel subsidy on their wellbeing in Uyo Metropolis, Nigeria.

II. STUDY AREA

Uyo is the capital city of Akwa Ibom State which was created out of Cross River State on 23rd September, 1987. Being the headquarters of the state, it harbours a lot of residents, the government house and major business out fits. It is the commercial nerve centre of the state. The city of Uyo lies approximately between 4°52'N

and 5°01'N and longitude 7°47'E and 8°03'E of the Greenwich meriden.

The study area is very central to all other Local Government areas which make it over populated due to migration from rural areas to the capital city for better living condition. Being a capital city, most of its lands have been taken by the government for development purposes hence there are no enough land for agriculture which makes most of the residents of the city to buy most of their food items from farmers within the neighbouring local communities.

The city is bounded by Ibesikpo, Uruan, Itu, Ibiono Ibom and Abak Local Government Areas. It consist of level-to-gently undulating sandy plains with rivers, though not many but the available ones are far apart. Soil erosion is prevalent in the area especially where gulying takes place. The drainage network in the upland part of Uyo is not dense, as rivers are few and distant apart.

The decision to choose Uyo as the study area is justified by the fact that it accommodates people whose life depends on the business they do that requires them to put on generating set in the absence of light from the national grid. Apart from that, the city accommodates a wider population of persons in the state.

III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Many sectors of the Nigerian economy have been highly subsidized for many years now. The subsidized sectors include amongst other fuel, education, electricity, forex etc. The regime of subsidy in Nigeria became institutionalized following the Price Control Act in 1977 which made it illegal for some products and services to be controlled by the government.

On a general note, the concept and idea of subsidy has been very beneficial to the citizens of Nigeria but its administration has been confronted with high level of mismanagement leading to corruption resulting in a call for its removal by many administrations until it was finally removed by the current administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. However, there has been a lot of arguments in support and against the removal of subsidy on Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) in Nigeria.

In the work of Fathurrahman, Kat & Soytaş (2017) on simulating Indonesian Fuel Subsidy Reform, the research revealed that, the reallocation of subsidy payments to low-income households could slow down economic development but improve social welfare. The argument by government is that, the introduction of subsidy may result in infrastructure deficit because the money invested into subsidy would have helped the government solve some critical infrastructure problems while on the other hand, subsidy benefits the citizens

especially the poor because it means they will buy fuel at a cheaper rate which also lead to reduction in the prices of goods and services.

In a study by Omotosho (2019) which focus was to analyze the interplay between price shocks, fuel subsidies and their effects on macro-economic stability in Nigeria. The study revealed that oil price shocks have substantial and enduring impacts on the country's economic outputs, accounting for approximately 22% of its variations over a four-year period. This mean that the variation in price especially the one that is upward may result in hardship amongst the citizens.

The result of a research conducted by Onuoha (2023) on the removal of fuel subsidy and its impact on the economy revealed that there is an increase in the cost of transportation, increase in food prices and a general increase in the prices of other essential commodities. This implies that some households without substantial income will definitely suffer from stagnation.

Reporting on the removal of gas subsidy in Malaysia, Chatri (2014) assessed its economic-wide effects and discovered that the removal of subsidy led to an increase in the price of electricity followed by other economic sectors and a decrease in Gross Domestic Product. This research findings seems to fall in line with the discovery in Nigeria that the consumption of fuel reduced drastically consequent upon the subsidy removal and the immediate surge in the price of the commodity.

Commenting on the environmental impact of fossil fuel, Erickson, Down, Lazarus & Koplow, (2017) held that the removal of tax incentives and other fossil fuel supper policies could fasten the attainment of the G20 climate commitments. This research is important because it revealed that fossil fuel can be detrimental to health hence the removal of subsidy and attendant low consumption can be beneficial to the environment and human health.

Fuel subsidy removal programmes are very sensitive to economic structure and level of development in a society. It is evident that more successful countries have taken a phase or slow approach. Also important to note is the fact that many advanced countries have engaged in conscious research prior to implementation and followed by rigorous steps to the policy making and implementation. It therefore implies that any policy in this direction should be planned to avoid adverse or negative implications on the citizen's wellbeing.

IV. RATIONALE FOR SUBSIDY REMOVAL

The eventual subsidy removal on fuel by the Federal Government of Nigeria on May 29th, 2023 by the current administration did not come as a surprise because administrations before the current one have

always expressed the desire to withdrawal subsidy on fuel but they never had the will power to execute the policy. The removal of subsidy by government came with some cogent rationale such as curbing of corruption in the oil and gas sector by the administrators of the subsidy regime. It has always been the position of government that when subsidy is removed, the monies realized will be reinvested in critical government infrastructure.

According to the World Bank report (2022), Nigeria's total revenue in 2000 was USD 10.8 billion. By 2010, this amount increased to USD 67.9 billion. Yet the Nigerian government has spent over USD 30 billion on fuel subsidies over the past 18 years. (Oyedele, 2023). Based on the above report and others attributed to such challenges like corruption, there has been a sharp decline in the availability of funds for infrastructure in so many sectors of human endeavour.

Report from the Debt Management Office in Nigeria showed that the country's public debt stock has increased geometrically as government has to borrow ₦ 1 trillion to finance fuel subsidy in 2022. However, to be more specific, the following could be deduced as reasons for subsidy removal in Nigeria viz:

1. *Corruption:* The term has been variously defined. It is involved with unwholesome practice in the society with its attendant negative effects. According to Uwak & Udofia (2016), corruption involves improper behaviour of public office holders such as enriching themselves, friends and loved ones to the detriment of the general public. Corruption as an act has dealt a big blow to the Nigeria's economy as monies meant for development are siphoned by a few individuals for personal gains. Because of the paucity and weakness in oversight of the process, fuel subsidy payment has allowed unethical and corrupt practice such as the inflation of landing costs and padding of fuel import bill. However, the solution to the corruption in the subsidy regime according to government is the removal of subsidy so that corruption activities surrounding it can end.
2. *Shortage of Supply:* Before the end to the subsidy regime, Nigerians used to queue up to buy fuel because of scarcity caused by non-availability of the product and non-availability of forex for the transaction. It is also good to note that, the lower than market-clearing price causes scarcity. It discourages producers and suppliers from entering the market and it involves excessive consumption. On the other hand, the fact that the neighbouring economies operate on a market-clearing prices also encourages the smuggling of the subsidized products of Nigeria.
3. *Spending at Expense of Infrastructure Development:* Considering the volume of money invested into the fuel subsidy, it is assumed that if that amount of

money is channelled into infrastructure renaissance, the country's infrastructural facilities would have been better than what it is today. According to Oyedele (2023), over USD 30 billion was invested into subsidy. However, the argument is that, if such amount is directed towards infrastructure in the country, things would have been better. Fuel subsidy diverts part of the resources for development purposes towards consumption (Onyeizugbe & Onwuka, 2012). Asare, Reguant, Saab & Sacchetto (2020) argued that the removal of subsidy will provide additional resources to the government to shift resources for government to respond with intervention to address COVID-19 crisis.

4. *Stress on Government's Finance:* The high amount of funds expended on the fuel subsidy adversely affects or stresses the economy or put in another way, the financing of fuel subsidy makes government to sometimes go into borrowing. The ever-growing fuel subsidy bill continues to hit deep into government's resources. With revenue shortage, fuel subsidy payment means the government will need to borrow to invest in other sectors. This position is supported by Asare, Reguant, Saab & Sacchetto (2020) who held that resources invested into fuel subsidy has stressed the finance of the country and that the money expended would have been used for other development adventure of the country.

It is important to note that, in the course of this review, some scholars have identified the benefits of fuel subsidy to Nigerians and therefore called for a more transparent approach to its management. For instance, Omitogun, Longe, Muhammad & Adekomi (2021) explained that the removal of fuel subsidy might reduce the amount of carbon emission in the Nigerian economy.

Similarly, other studies have also identified the negative sides of fuel subsidy removal. This aligns with Umeji & Eleanya (2021) who said that Nigerian oil wealth has not translated into improved living condition of the people. In the same manner, Ovaga & Okechukwu (2022) argued that fuel subsidy breeds corruption in Nigeria because corrupt people have been working against the success of government refineries and generally sabotage the efforts of government in the oil sector for their activities to continue.

V. RESEARCH METHOD

The study of this nature which is to examine the effect of a policy on the populace is investigative in nature hence the method suitable for adoption is the quantitative method Okpa (2022). The survey research design was adopted for the study. The term 'survey' is commonly applied in research method designed to

collect data from a specific population, or a sample from that population. It typically utilizes questionnaire as well as other survey information collection methods like Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and interview. For this study, interview and Focused Group Discussion were utilized to get needed information from the respondents. This research design also provides information concerning the degree of relationship between the variables being studied. This design was considered suitable for the study because the study examined the relationship between fuel subsidy and citizen's wellbeing in Uyo metropolis.

Also justifying the adoption of interview and Focused Group Discussion is the fact that some of the respondents may not be literate enough to answer questionnaire questions or be able to write. Therefore, the suitable information gathering method is interviews in which both English and native languages were used depending on the respondent's level of education.

Focused Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted in a group of 5 comprising 10 households in Uyo and Key Informant Interview (KII) on transporters and business owners within the capital city. The respondents were purposively selected since they possessed the characteristics needed by the researcher to gather the needed information. Therefore, there were 5-10 members in each of the FGD conducted between 20th and 26th November 2023 in Uyo Capital City. In the KII interview, we purposively selected Akwa Ibom State Transport Company (AKTC), God is Good Motors and Ibom Air.

Within the business sector, 5 supermarket owners, 5 eatery owners and about 10 petty traders were randomly selected and interviewed for possible responses on how the removal of subsidy has affected people's purchasing power and its effects on their turnover and profit margin.

Aside from the above instruments used basically to get primary information, the secondary sources such as official publications, internet sources, journal articles, government sources and newspapers were used to cross-match the information derived from the field survey. Therefore, these various approaches helped the researcher to gather the enormous information needed to analyze the effects of fuel subsidy removal on the wellbeing of citizens of Uyo metropolis.

The regime of fuel subsidy witnessed the government's intervention by paying part of what the citizens would have paid as they purchase Premium Motor Spirit (PMS). However, with the attendant negative and unpleasant activities resulting in the embezzlement of funds and other unwholesome practices as regards the subsidization of fuel price, the current administration in Nigeria on May 29th 2023 on inauguration day announced the withdrawal of fuel subsidy thereby allowing the law of demand and supply to determine the price.

Notwithstanding the points and ideals behind the removal of subsidy by the government, the Nigerian citizens have been badly affected as they now buy fuel at a very exorbitant rate compared to what was before the removal. The wellbeing and survival of Nigerians especially the middle and lower classes have been affected.

The above observation is in line with the responses gathered from travellers interviewed at Akwa Ibom State Transport Company (AKTC) and God is Good Motors in Uyo metropolis. When asked if they are affected by the rise in the cost of fuel which has affected the cost of transportation, all the passengers interviewed agreed that the increase in pump price of fuel has significantly increased the cost of transportation thereby reducing their travel frequency.

One of the travellers who is a business woman bares her heart out and complained that the cost of transportation has affected her business as she no longer enjoy the patronage she used to enjoy when the cost of transportation was manageable. The comment of the passengers falls in line the research findings of (Bisong, Tersoo & Philip 2023).

It is important to note that, the impact of the removal of subsidy on fuel is not only on the travellers but also on the transport companies. The above observation was arrived at when the operational manager of God is Good Motors categorically stressed that since the removal of fuel subsidy, the number of passengers has reduced resulting in a sharp decline in the profit margin of the company. According to him, before the removal of fuel subsidy, the company's buses that travels to Abuja and Lagos was always 5 to 7 in a day but have reduced to about 2 daily and sometimes 1. This shows that fuel subsidy removal have reduced people's travelling frequency thereby leading to a decline in the transport company's profit margin.

In order to investigate further the effect of the fuel subsidy on transportation, two passengers at the Akwa Ibom State International Airport where interviewed. Their response showed that the cost of airfare has drastically increased making passengers to minimize their travel rate. One of the passengers maintained that he now pays up to ₦360,000 for a local flight to and from Lagos. This also goes to validate the opinion of one of the road users interviewed at AKTC and God is Good Motors on the 21st and 27th of April 2024 respectively.

On its effects on businesses, the removal of fuel subsidy has negatively affected business owners leading to high running cost and an increase in the amount needed to buy goods to restock. One of the supermarket owners along Ibrahim Babangida Way (IBB) in Uyo metropolis lamented about the high cost of running generator set to power his supermarket. In his words, I spend ₦10,000 to ₦15,000 daily on fuel since

the removal of subsidy on petrol. He pointed out that before the removal, on a daily, he buys fuel at about ₦5,000 daily.

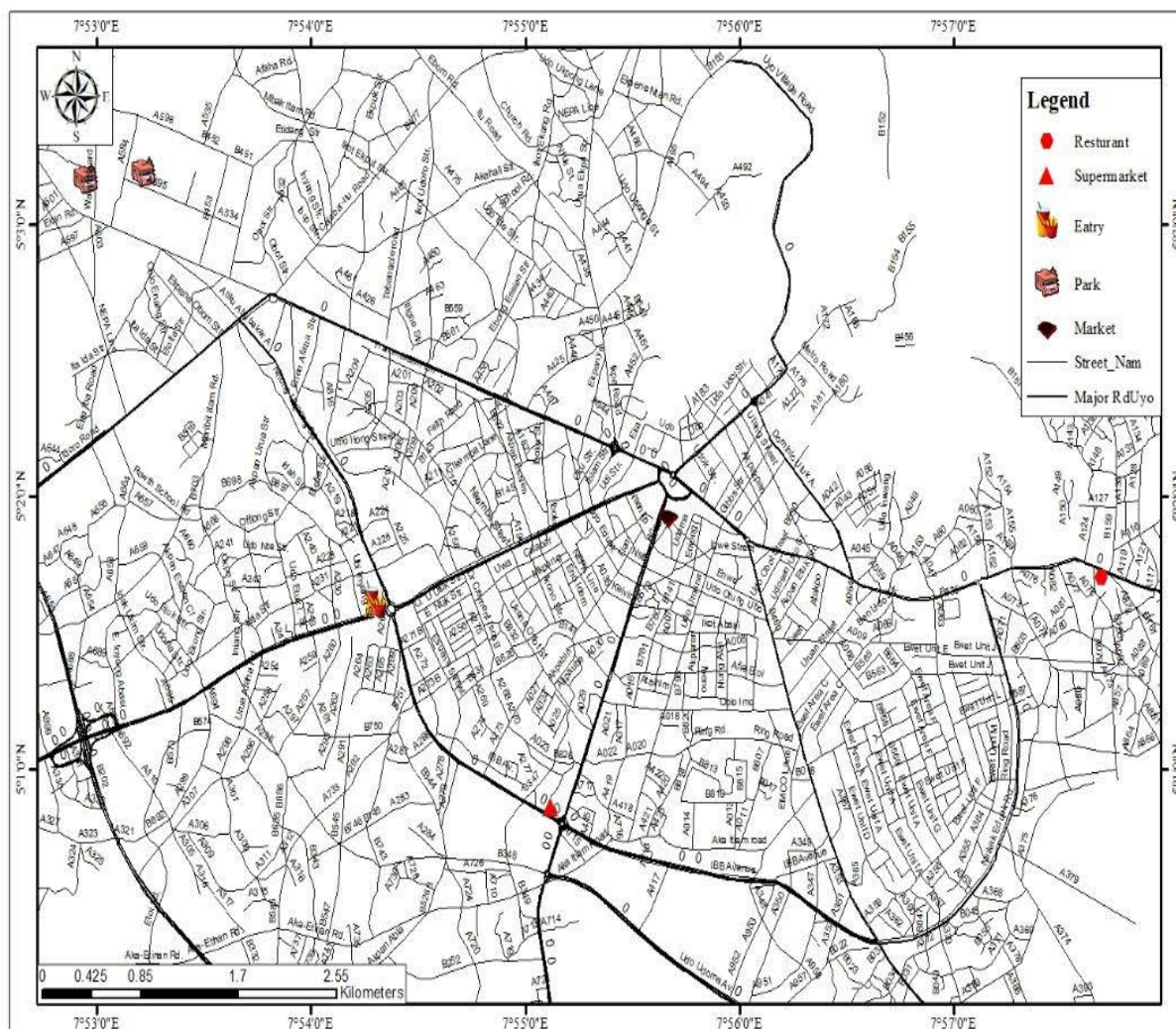
Another supermarket owner along Abak Road in Uyo capital city narrated his experience since the removal of subsidy. He said that in order not to continue to spend so much on fuel for his generator, he had to set up a solar plant to subsidize his spending on fuel.

On how fuel subsidy has affected owners of Eateries and restaurants in the city of Uyo, one of the owners of the eateries along Abak Road in Uyo lamented that the rate of turnover has reduced because many people no longer eat out because of the high cost of food at the stores. In his view, people prefer to use the little money they have to cook at home for general house consumption than spend so much eating at restaurants.

Also, in line with the observation of other business owners, the owner of one restaurant in the metropolis along Nwaniba Road in Uyo complained that she spends so much to buy fuel that will power her generator daily and it has inadvertently reduced her profit margin as part of her income goes into fuel purchase for power supply. My profit in the business was better under fuel subsidy regime than now that it has been removed according to her.

Investigation on the effect of subsidy removal on wellbeing revealed that since subsidy was removed on fuel, petty businesses have suffered marginal losses as patronage has reduced. These were the responses of some street sellers interviewed along Etuk Street and Shelter Afrique Market (Oron Road) on the 10th of February, 2024. The sellers lamented that since the removal of subsidy, patronage have reduced leading to low profit and hence making life difficult for them as their livelihood and sustenance depends on the daily sales they make on the streets.





Source: Author's conception

Figure 1: Map of Uyo Metropolis showing study locations

Focused Group Discussion

A Focused Group Discussion was initiated to further gather information on the effect of the removal of subsidy from fuel on some residence of Uyo metropolis. The discussion was divided into 5 groups of 10 families, that is 2 families in a group. The discussion went thus:

Group I: How has fuel subsidy removal affected the feeding of your family members?

Responses: A member of the group who is a civil servant with the state civil service complained that since the removal of subsidy on fuel, his savings have drastically reduced because he pays more for food, clothing, transportation and general upkeep for the house. He went further to say that, feeding three times a day has been very challenging. A second respondent who is a trader at the Uyo Main Market said that the removal of fuel subsidy has affected her family in the sense that they had to withdraw their children from a particular private school that charges about ₦50,000 per term to the one they are now paying ₦20,000 per term.

The two families unanimously agreed that the subsidy removal have made them spend more on feeding and that they sometimes eat 1-0-1 meal structure a day.

Group II: How has fuel subsidy removal affected your movement and that of your family members?

Responses: The first respondent who is a teacher with the State Secondary School Board said that he had to sale his only car since he does not have the needed funds to maintain and fuel it. Therefore, he uses tricycle and has also decided to withdraw his children from a school far off their residence to a one close to them. Responding, a member of a second family in the group bares her mind on the fact that she does not move around anyhow now-a-days because of the cost of transportation. According to her, the family used to go for holiday visit every August to a family in Lagos but as it is, the cost of transportation from Uyo to Lagos is now ₦36,000 on road as against ₦15,000 before the removal of fuel subsidy.

Group III: Is the subsidy removal to the interest of government or citizen?

Responses: Responding to the question, a lecturer with the Akwa Ibom State University averred that the removal of subsidy on fuel would have been beneficial if the government was able to reposition the country's refinery to full capacity. He went further to say that the fuel subsidy removal has saved money for the government and also reduced corruption that was in the subsidy regime. A member of the second family in the group said that the current subsidy removal regime benefits the government more because ordinary citizens are suffering as fuel is sold at a very high cost thereby making life difficult for the people.

Group IV: Would you advise government to reintroduce fuel subsidy?

Response: Respondent I said no to the question on the grounds that if government is serious in removing subsidy and making fuel available at a reduced cost, they should ensure that the refineries in the country are working. According to him, the money that would have been spent on subsidy would have gone into infrastructure development. The second respondent within the group was of the opinion that government should reintroduce fuel subsidy because the level of hardship is biting. In his words, it is only when the refineries are working that government should think of removing subsidy. In his words, government is not sincere.

Group V: Do you think it was the right time for subsidy to be removed from fuel?

Responses: In my own opinion, it was not the right time to have announced the removal of subsidy on fuel. This is because the announcement came on the day of inauguration of this current administration. The current government should have put necessary machineries in place and ensure that the refineries in the country are working so that fuel can be gotten at affordable rate before removing subsidy. The second person who responded also aligned his thoughts with that of the first person and stated that the government took that decision in haste and that with the current situation of things, it was not the right decision as there are complaints about hardship across the country occasion by the hasty removal of fuel subsidy in the country.

VI. DISCUSSION

Analysis of the response on the effect of fuel subsidy removal on the wellbeing of residents in Uyo metropolis reveals a high rate of hardship occasioned by the removal of subsidy on fuel resulting in high cost of fuel and higher cost of living in Uyo metropolis viz-a-vis Nigeria.

Interview conducted on passengers in the state own transportation company Akwa Ibom State Transport

Company (AKTC) and a privately own company, God is Good Motors (GIS) showed that passengers turnout drastically reduced because of high cost of transportation. It was revealed that the transport companies no longer make the kind of returns they used to because of the high running cost as a result of low patronage.

On the impact of the subsidy on air travellers, investigation revealed that the high cost of airfare has significantly affected the number of passengers who travel by air in Uyo capital city. This is because the cost of airfare has skyrocketed from ₦75,000 in 2023 to about ₦150,000 (one way). Further investigation showed that some passengers rather than use air transport, resort to using road so as to save money for other important commitments. According to those interviewed, they decide to use air transportation only when it is very pressing and urgent to move from Uyo to other cities like Lagos or Abuja. It shows therefore that, the fuel subsidy removal affects both the rich and poor but at different dimensions. This also aligns with Peterson & Obiora (2023) research on implications of fuel subsidy removal in the Nigerian economy.

The effect of the removal of subsidy on fuel also had significant impact on businesses in the city of Uyo. This assertion was arrived at when supermarkets, eateries and petty business owners were interviewed on how the removal of subsidy has impacted on their businesses. Those interviewed revealed that since the removal of subsidy, they have spend more on fuel for their generator and this led to a reduction in their income level. One of the respondents revealed that, he had to spend ₦5,000,000 to install solar power in his supermarket. Also, the petty business owners said that they were unable to buy plenty goods for sale since the patronage is very low. Therefore, if the fuel price is reduced, the profit margin of the business owners would have improved.

Analysis of the FGD on families structured into five groups revealed that the removal of subsidy on fuel have seriously affected the feeding routine of families within the city. This is because the cost of transportation has led to high cost of food items in Uyo vis-à-vis Nigeria. Therefore, the reduction in fuel prices will result in the concomitant reduction in food prices and consequent better feeding condition for people in Uyo.

On the issue of movement from one location to the other, the respondents in group II of the FGD opined that they have sold their cars and resorted to the use of commercial tricycle and even have to withdraw their wards from schools afar to the ones that are close to their area of residence. This means that, a reduction in fuel price or a return of fuel will improve the transportation condition of the residence of Uyo metropolis.

With regards to subsidy removal on whose interest, respondents in group III unanimously agreed

that if the subsidy removal was well planned, it would have yielded the much needed result. The respondents accused the current administration in the country for hastily removing subsidy on fuel without necessarily putting machineries in place to ensure that the refineries in the country work in full capacity. They also agreed that the subsidy removal is beneficial to the government because it reduces corruption in the oil sector thereby giving government more money. It means therefore that, fuel subsidy would have been beneficial to the citizens if the refineries were working and fuel sold at a cheaper price.

The fourth group of the FGD were asked if it is advisable to reintroduce subsidy, the first respondent said no only if the government can put the refineries in the country to working capacity. It implies that all things being equal, fuel subsidy removal would have yielded positive returns if the refineries were all working.

The last group of discussants were asked about the timing of the fuel subsidy removal. The responses of two persons who responded to the question posed were that the current administration should have put the necessary arrangement before removing subsidy on fuel. They recommended the fixing of the refineries as a solution to the fuel crisis issues in the country. It could be deduced therefore that, proper arrangements and planning would have made fuel subsidy removal positively impactful.

VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Subsidy removal on fuel at the beginning of this administration on the 29th of May 2023 marked the end of a long term proposed fuel subsidy removal by the Nigerian government. However, despite the justification by government and its agencies on the need to withdraw the subsidy, the general wellbeing and welfare of the people have been greatly affected as fuel now sales as high as ₦750 compared to ₦250 that it was sold before 29th May 2023.

This current situation have invariably brought hardship and lack to many households resulting in the glamour in some quarters for the return to the subsidy regime or the immediate fixing of the refineries by the Nigerian government as a permanent solution. This research was therefore set out to investigate the impact of fuel subsidy removal on the wellbeing of residents of Uyo metropolis. Arising from the findings of this paper, the following recommendations are hereunder outlined.

1. Government of the country should urgently put machineries in place to fix the country's refineries. By so doing, there will be no need to import fuel because there would have been enough fuel for local and even international market.
2. The Federal government should encourage local refining of petroleum products which will result in

product availability and subsequent crashing of the fuel prices.

3. As an interim measure, before the refineries are properly fixed, government should invest heavily in public transportation through the purchase of buses, trains and the rehabilitation and construction of new roads across the country to enhance ease of movement.
4. People who were involved in fuel subsidy fraud should be identified and prosecuted to serve as deterrent to others who may want to steal or embezzle funds in the petroleum sector as well as other sectors in the country.

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APPENDIX I

Interview Guide

Travellers (Passenger)

1. Is there any difference between the cost of transportation before and after fuel subsidy removal? If there is, how does it affect your travel frequency?

Transport Companies

2. What is the profit margin of your company when you compare the two periods (before and after subsidy removal)?

Supermarket/Eatery Owners

3. How is your spending on power supply in your business since the removal of subsidy on fuel?
4. How is your profit margin before fuel subsidy and after the removal of fuel subsidy?

Petty Businesses

5. How is your sale since the removal of fuel subsidy?
6. Are you able to buy enough goods for sales?

Focused Group Discussion (FGD)

1. How has this fuel subsidy removal affected the feeding of your family members?
2. How has fuel subsidy removal affected your movement and that of your family members?
3. It the subsidy removal to the benefit of government or citizens?
4. Would you advise government to reintroduce fuel subsidy in the country?
5. Do you think it was the right time for subsidy to be removed from fuel in Nigeria?

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The Swahili Language in the Context of the Geopolitics of Languages on the African Continent

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Abstract- One of the most outstanding characteristics of the African continent is its multilingual nature. It is estimated that around 2,000 languages are spoken across the African continent, many of which are highly dissimilar from one another. This vast linguistic diversity gives rise to a wide range of cultural identities among the social groups who speak them, while also contributing to numerous power rivalries across different territories. In Africa, both colonial and indigenous languages can be identified, creating a geopolitical dynamic in which colonial languages often prevail, despite efforts to reaffirm native ones. When discussing the geopolitics of language, it is essential to consider both the human groups that speak specific languages and the territories they inhabit. Among the indigenous languages showing significant signs of reaffirmation, Swahili stands out. It has undergone a steady process of diffusion, not only throughout the African continent, but also into countries on other continents.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This article aims to analyse the status of the Swahili language within the context of language geopolitics on the African continent. To do so, it first explores the multilingual reality of Africa, then defines the concept of language geopolitics, and then analyses the dynamics on this continent. The article concludes by focusing on the specific case of Swahili within this context.

The contribution of this article is significant, as it helps illustrate a key aspect of the complex reality of the African continent — home to 54 independent states, each with its own unique context and internal dynamics. The geopolitics of language is undoubtedly a compelling branch of geopolitical studies, as it examines languages both as markers of group identity and as sources of power rivalries within territory.

II. THE LINGUISTIC REALITY OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

In short, the linguistic landscape of the African continent is highly complex. This complexity stems from the fact that approximately 2,000 languages are spoken across the continent (Harvard University, 2025; Lodhi, 1993; Nurse, 2001;). It is striking that countries such as Cameroon have nearly 300 languages; Chad, 120; the

Ivory Coast and Ethiopia, 70 each; and Senegal, 35, among others.

However, the complexity lies not only in the number of languages but also in their distinctiveness of one another. Generally, African languages can be divided into two main groups: colonial languages and indigenous languages. Colonial languages were introduced by foreign powers during conquest and colonisation and have remained in use, both orally and in writing, over time. Today, they serve as official languages in several countries. In contrast, indigenous languages developed and evolved within African territories (Bustince, 2002), and many are currently undergoing processes of reaffirmation.

Languages such as Arabic — spread through the expansion of Islam in the 7th century across North Africa — belong to the first group, as do Spanish, French, English, and Portuguese, which were introduced during the 19th-century European colonization of African territories. Currently, English is official in 23 African countries, French in 19, Arabic in 11, Portuguese in 4, and Spanish in 1.

Indigenous African languages are typically grouped into seven linguistic families: Afroasiatic (also known as Canaanite-Semitic), Nilo-Saharan, Niger-Congo, Bantu, Khoisan, Kordofanian, and Austronesian (Leclerc, 2005; Leclerc, 2023). Of these, Afroasiatic languages dominate the north, northeast, and northwest regions, while Bantu languages prevail in the central and southern parts. Kordofanian languages are the least widespread, found mainly in the central-west region of Sudan.

Concerning to this, Ouane and Glanz (2011) state that "...African languages are treasures that have yet to be discovered, valued and used." Similarly, Nseme (2007) adds: "...African languages serve as privileged means for Africans to circulate information, acquire knowledge, and empower citizens, enabling them to become true agents of their development, that is, of the progressive mastery of their environment in the broadest sense of the term."

III. ABOUT THE GEOPOLITICS OF LANGUAGES

The geopolitics of languages refers specifically to the role that linguistic elements play in power rivalries within territories, because languages, in addition to being tools of communication and carriers of cultural

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heritage, are also elements that unite people and reinforce collective identity (Giblin, 2002).

When discussing the geopolitics of languages, it is essential to consider the social groups that speak particular languages and the territories they inhabit, or of which they are part as constitutive elements. Thus, when reflecting on the vast number of existing languages, we must draw a parallel with the groups who speak them and the rivalries that either exist or may emerge between them (Momba, 2014).

In this sense, the concept of cleavage is helpful for understanding the geopolitics of languages. Cleavage refers to a societal division based on a specific issue, typically expressed through group affiliation, interests, opinions, or voting behaviour. Examples include right wing–left wing, nationalist–regionalist, rural–urban or Catholic–Protestant cleavages.

Thus, linguistic cleavages arise when sectors of the same society speak different languages, thereby forming distinct identities and social groups. As Gourdin (2015) argues, through language human beings express a vision of the world shaped by their historical, economic, political and cultural context.

Language, then, becomes a distinctive marker of nationality or ethnicity, and as it is tied to a group identity within a specific territory, it becomes a factor that contributes to power rivalries—an inherently geopolitical issue. Therefore, discussing the predominance of a language within a territory is, in effect, addressing the dominance of the social group associated with that language.

Language dominance can lie at the heart of conflict, especially when one country seeks to exert influence over another through the systematic promotion of its language. Evidence of this is the worldwide promotion of English, French, Russian, Mandarin and Portuguese, using extensive and powerful communication networks.

Language can also function as a tool of resistance. In contexts of conflict, social groups may defend and promote their language as a means of opposing external domination, highlighting the central role of linguistic identity. A notable example is the promotion of Ukrainian in Ukraine as a form of resistance to Russian influence, which has historically been exerted through the spread of the Russian language across Ukrainian territory (Bories, 2014).

Another illustrative example of the geopolitics of language can be found in the western Balkans—the former Yugoslavia—where Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Slovenia, Kosovo, and North Macedonia now exist as independent states. As Dérens and Rico (2017) explain, the first four countries each claim a distinct official language—Croatian in Croatia, Serbian in Serbia, Bosnian in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegrin in Montenegro. The curious thing is

that these four languages share Serbian as a standard base, despite being identified differently, as Serbian-Croatian or Bosnian-Serbian-Croatian.

In this context, in March 2017, a group of Balkan intellectuals presented a document advocating for a common language during an event in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The proposal sparked some opposition, particularly from the Croatian side. Notably, both the Archbishop of Zagreb, Josip Bozanić, and the President of Croatia at the time, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, suggested that the initiative concealed hegemonic ambitions on the part of Serbia.

IV. GEOPOLITICAL DYNAMICS OF LANGUAGES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

Returning to the idea that languages are associated with social groups which, in turn, are linked to territories and power rivalries, we now turn to a general analysis of the geopolitical dynamics of languages on the African continent.

In this sense, we consider the two major linguistic blocs into which this part of the world is divided, characterised by a dialectical relationship marked by interaction, complementarity, and, at times, rivalry. On one side, we find the bloc of implanted languages. They are associated with territories that were historically conquered and colonised. As a result, they became official languages used for administrative, economic, educational and communicational purposes. These are the cases of languages such as Arabic, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

On the other hand, there is the block of languages we have called indigenous. These languages are currently undergoing a process of reaffirmation due to the growing recognition they are receiving. In many countries, they have acquired significant importance. This is the key geopolitical development at this stage. Specifically, it refers to the reaffirmation of indigenous African languages within the broader context of decolonisation. This process began on the continent in the mid-1950s. It carries profound implications for the strengthening of collective identity and social cohesion. These languages are increasingly used in political, economic, educational, and communication spheres (Mhaka, 2022).

In this regard, Ndumbe (2006) states the following: "(...) Africans must reappropriate their languages, making them the fundamental vehicle of their thoughts, their creations, their educations, their dreams, their visions of the world. It is not a simple question of language. It is a question of survival of the nation, of collective dominion, of the destiny of a people. It is a question of development thought and generated by a nation for its flourishing."

To illustrate the above, several examples can be mentioned, which give a general idea of how the

geopolitical dynamics of African languages are occurring. Of course, if we want to have a deeper appreciation of this phenomenon, much more extensive research would have to be done.

Perhaps the most emblematic case is that of the Swahili language (Portillo, 2007). When Julius Nyerere founded the African National Union of Tanganyika in 1954, he asserted that Swahili would serve as a foundational instrument in the struggle for the independence of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. This linguistic unification later played a crucial role in the formation of the United Republic of Tanzania in 1964.

The objective was for Swahili to function as a unifying instrument of communication and identity in a country such as Tanzania, where the population spoke over one hundred different languages. This marked the beginning of a process of swahilization within Tanzanian society. Swahili, already established as the lingua franca in both Tanganyika and Zanzibar—and even beyond their borders—played a pivotal role in fostering national cohesion. The language itself emerged from historical migratory movements of populations from what are now Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo toward the eastern coast of Africa, where they came into sustained contact with Arab, Chinese, Greek, Indian, and Persian traders.

As the processes of independence and decolonisation progressed across Sub-Saharan Africa, the Swahili language gradually gained official recognition by African governments and academic institutions across Africa, North America, Asia and Europe. Its dissemination intensified over time, to the extent that current estimates suggest there are now more than one hundred million speakers of this Bantu language.

Another illustrative example of the reaffirmation of indigenous African languages can be found in the cases of Kinyarwanda and Kirundi. These languages are remarkably similar, as thoroughly analyzed by Gasarabwe (1992). Kinyarwanda holds official status in Rwanda, while Kirundi is the official language of Burundi. Both countries, located in the East African region, share a colonial history marked by French and Belgian rule, through which the influence of the French language was inherited.

In recent years, the influence of the French language has significantly diminished in both Rwanda and Burundi. Political leaders such as Paul Kagame in Rwanda and Évariste Ndayishimiye in Burundi have actively promoted the use of Kinyarwanda and Kirundi, respectively, as primary means of communication with their citizens (Bosco, 2023). Within the East African context, both leaders employ Swahili, while in broader African and international settings, they alternate between English and French. Notably, President Paul Kagame has explicitly distanced himself from the French

language, in response to France's controversial role in the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

In the case of Madagascar—an African nation situated in the Indian Ocean—the official languages are currently Malagasy and French. Following the election of Didier Ratsiraka as president in 1975, the country initiated a sociopolitical and linguistic reform known as malagasyisation (Leclerc, 2023a). This process centred on the integration of the Malagasy language and culture into national life, particularly through its systematic incorporation into the educational system. The reform began at the primary level and gradually extended into secondary and tertiary education. Broadly defined, malagasyisation is a sociocultural process aimed at promoting and reinforcing Malagasy identity within the population. It seeks to valorise the language, values, traditions, and cultural heritage of Madagascar (La Langue Française, 2023).

It is essential to highlight that malagasyisation occurred in the context of a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary process promoted by the Malagasy Revolution Party (Avant-garde pour la Révolution Malagache), founded by Didier Ratsiraka himself. Ratsiraka served as President of Madagascar from 1975 to 1993, and again from 1997 to 2002.

On the other hand, within the framework of the recent geopolitical transformations occurring in West Africa, a particularly illustrative example is the adoption of a new constitution in the Republic of Mali in July 2023 (Laurent, 2023). The original draft of this constitutional reform was initiated under the leadership of Assimi Goïta, leader of the military uprisings of 2020 and 2021 and currently rules this African country.

Among the most important aspects of this new constitution is the removal of French as an official language, downgrading it to the status of a working language. In its place, thirteen indigenous Malian languages were designated as official: Bambara, Bobo, Bozo, Dogon, Fula, Hassania, Kassonke, Maninke, Miyanka, Senufo, Songhay, Soninke, and Tamashek.

Of these indigenous Malian languages, Bambara stands out as the most widely spoken, particularly in the southern region of the country, where approximately 90% of the population is concentrated. This area is predominantly inhabited by the Bambara ethnic group and includes the capital city Bamako.

In this regard, it is worth noting that Assimi Goïta addresses the Malian population in Bambara, as he did during his meeting with members of the Malian diaspora in Russia at the Russia–Africa Summit held in Saint Petersburg in July 2023.

A similar development to that observed in Mali has taken place in Niger, within the broader context of the Association of Sahel States. In this country, French has ceased to be the official language and has been relegated to the status of a working language. In its

place, Hausa has been designated the official language (Resumen Latinoamericano, 2025). Spoken by the majority of Niger's population, this Afroasiatic Chadic language is widely used not only in Niger but also in northern Nigeria and other West African countries.

In Nigeria, a country with a population exceeding 200 million, English serves as the official language. However, it is estimated that nearly 500 indigenous languages are spoken within its borders. Among these, three are regionally predominant: Hausa in the northern region, Yoruba in the southwest, and Igbo in the southeast. In 2022, the government approved a new national language policy mandating the use of local languages in primary education, with English introduced at the secondary level (Al Jazeera, 2023). The policy aims to promote and enhance the preservation and use of all Nigerian languages.

Conversely, concerning to Wolof, Gueye (2022) published an article emphasising the need to elevate the status of Senegal's national languages, noting that although French is the official language, it is spoken by only approximately one-third of the Senegalese population.

Located in the Horn of Africa, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has a population exceeding 125 million and was recently admitted as a member of the BRICS coalition. The principal languages spoken in the country include Amharic, Oromo, Somali, and Tigrinya. Among these, Amharic is particularly prominent as the official and vehicular language, serving as the medium of instruction within the Ethiopian educational system. Additionally, Amharic is a candidate for designation as a working language of the African Union, whose headquarters are situated in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital (Borkena, 2023).

Recently, information has emerged highlighting the teaching of Amharic in the Russian Federation as part of Russia's strategic engagement with the African continent. In this context, it has been noted that "Ethiopia is one of the most cordial countries with Russia. Amharic is the lingua franca spoken by most, if not all, Ethiopians. To establish diplomatic dialogue or economic ties, Amharic can become a key factor."

Finally, the case of the Somali language merits attention. It is the official language of the Federal Republic of Somalia and is spoken by the majority of the country's population in the Horn of Africa. Somali language resilience is notable, having withstood colonial incursions by the British in the north and the Italians in the south. Despite the continued influence of languages such as English and Arabic among Somalis, Somali has reaffirmed itself as a central indigenous language (Kawa, 2023).

V. THE RELEVANCE OF THE SWAHILI LANGUAGE

In the context of the geopolitics of languages on the African continent, the Swahili language stands out. Originally linked to the coastal regions of East Africa, it is currently associated primarily with the territories of Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Interest in the Swahili language has been progressively increasing in numerous study centers around the world, as noted by Mulokozi (2002). It is estimated that it is taught in universities in the United States, Great Britain, Russia, France, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Holland, Poland, Sweden, Finland, Norway, China, Japan, Oman and Mexico. Also in Latin America, Swahili has been an object of interest, highlighting the courses taught at the prestigious academic organisation El Colegio de México (Saavedra, 2019).

In Africa, Swahili is taught at universities in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Ghana, Sudan, Nigeria, among others. The language has also been the subject of extensive scholarly research, as evidenced by the bibliographic compilation conducted by Geider (2003), an effort that has continued in subsequent years.

The area of influence of the Swahili language has been expanding, and countries such as South Sudan, Somalia, and Mozambique are now considered part of this sphere. It is worth recalling, for example, that in 2003 Joaquim Chissano, President of Mozambique from 1986 to 2005, in his capacity as President of the African Union, proposed the incorporation of Swahili (a language he also spoke) as an official language of the organisation (CIDOB, 2005). Filipe Nyusi, who governed Mozambique from 2015 to 2025, also speaks Swahili, among other reasons, because he is originally from the province of Cabo Delgado, which borders Tanzania (The Citizen, 2022).

Regarding the presence of Swahili in South Sudan—a country bordering Kenya, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the south—Habwe (2021) published an article addressing this topic. The author discusses both the achievements and the challenges involved in further promoting the use of Swahili in South Sudan, where the language arrived through migration processes, commercial exchange and armed conflict.

A similar case is that of Somalia, a country bordering Kenya to the south, which has likewise experienced internal armed conflicts, leading to significant displacement and refugee movements. In this context, Khalif (2023) examines the role of Swahili in southern Somali cities such as Baware and Kismaayo, highlighting its growing importance in these areas.

On the other hand, the Swahili language has received significant promotion from political leaders across the broader eastern, central, and southern regions of Africa. In this context, the current president of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, during the graduation ceremony of Swahili students at Kyambogo University (Kampala) in October 2024, urged the people of East Africa — and Africa as a whole — to embrace their commonalities and promote the Swahili language as a powerful instrument for economic integration and continental unification (EAC, 2024), noting that it is a neutral and non-ethnic language.

During the visit of the President of Tanzania, Samia Suluhu Hassan, to Malawi in July 2023, President Lazarus Chakwera announced that he had instructed Malawian education authorities to begin incorporating the Swahili language into the school curriculum. This initiative aims to facilitate communication on commercial matters with *Swahiliphone* countries (VOA, 2023). It is important to note that Malawi borders Tanzania to the northeast, and that the national language, Chichewa, is a Bantu language sharing several features with Swahili.

In August 2024, the National Assembly of Rwanda approved the incorporation of Swahili as an official language, joining Kinyarwanda, English, and French (Africanews, 2024). The diffusion of Swahili in Rwanda has experienced fluctuations due to the country's political instability (Mlaga, 2017). Swahili spread further after the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi ethnic group, which caused hundreds of thousands to flee, seeking refuge primarily in Uganda, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Following the seizure of power by the Rwandan Patriotic Front, many refugees began returning, many of whom had learned Swahili during their displacement. Notably, the current president of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, speaks Swahili.

Something similar has happened in Burundi, Rwanda's twin country, where there were massacres in both 1972 and 1994, causing thousands of Burundians to flee to neighbouring countries, with the consequent spread of the Swahili language. The current president of Burundi, Évariste Ndayishimiye, also speaks Swahili, as well as Kirundi, English and French, like a large part of the Burundian population.

From an institutional and recognition standpoint, the Swahili language has attained significant status. During the 24th Ordinary Summit of Heads of State of the East African Community (EAC), held in Tanzania in December 2024, the designation of Swahili and French as official languages was approved (Gathoga, 2024), joining English, which was already official. The EAC comprises Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia.

Likewise, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has incorporated the Swahili language into its operational framework. The SADC

comprises sixteen countries: Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Seychelles, South Africa, Eswatini, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (Inusah, 2019).

The efforts of both the EAC and the SADC contribute regionally to the broader initiatives undertaken by the African Union at the continental level, where Swahili is regarded as a significant contributor to the development of the African Continental Free Trade Area (The Citizen, 2022a).

The institutional recognition of the Swahili language has not only occurred on the African continent, but organisations such as UNESCO, in November 2021 (UNESCO, 2023), and the United Nations General Assembly (Mwangi, 2024), in July 2024, have designated July 7 as World Swahili Day.

Significant advances have been made in several non-African countries, reflecting the international reach of the Swahili language. For instance, in China, the official political doctrine known as Xi Jinping Thought has been published in Swahili, thereby providing millions of Swahili speakers access to this material (Mutambo, 2023).

In Russia, the teaching of African languages such as Swahili and Amharic has been incorporated into some schools, a development considered crucial for fostering economic, diplomatic, and cultural ties with the African continent (Language Magazine, 2023). Similarly, in Turkey, the dissemination of Swahili through language courses has been reported, stemming from an agreement between the Turkish association Al Selam and the Tanzanian embassy in this strategic Eurasian country (Kavak, 2023).

In Cuba, the International Kiswahili Conference was held in November 2024, focusing on deepening knowledge of this African language (Prensa Latina, 2024). Notably, in July 2024, during the celebration of World Swahili Day, the Tanzanian ambassador to Cuba, Humphrey Polepole, emphasised the importance of the Swahili language (Prensa Latina, 2024a).

Finally, it is essential to highlight the presence of the Swahili language in major media outlets such as China Radio International (CRI), Deutsche Welle (DW), Radio France Internationale (RFI), and Voice of America (VOA), among others. Additionally, Swahili is supported in digital platforms like Google Translate and integrated into emerging artificial intelligence technologies (Oginga, 2023).

VI. CONCLUSION

As demonstrated, the African continent is unequivocally multilingual, with countries where the number of spoken languages ranges from dozens to hundreds. Beyond serving as instruments of communication, languages function as vital markers of



identity and social cohesion among the diverse human groups that use them. In Africa, these distinct linguistic identities give rise to power rivalries over territory, that is, geopolitics.

The most relevant aspect of the geopolitics of languages in Africa is the rivalry between colonial and indigenous languages. Notably, many indigenous languages are undergoing processes of reaffirmation; several have been officially recognised in their respective countries and are assuming prominent roles in political, economic, educational, and communicational spheres. Examples include Amharic, Somali, Hausa, and Swahili, among others.

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Digital Technology and Democratic Sustainability in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

By Dr. Abiodun Fatai-Abatan

Lagos State University

Abstract- The application of digital technology across democracies has been seen as solution to the backlash of electoral process and democratic deficit. The objective was to ascertain whether digital tools like electoral technology, biometric algorithms, electronic transmission and smart card readers have a powerful effect on democratic processes, promoting credible elections, accountability, and citizen engagement which are vital components of democratic sustainability. The primary research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey. The research instrument used for data collection was structured questionnaires under the prism of quantitative method employed for the study. Using Taro Yamani sample determination technique, a total number of 100 samples were selected and administered. The regression analysis found that there was no statistically significant association between digital technology and democratic sustainability ($p = 0.963$), which is contrary to the perspectives held by some studies.

Keywords: digital technology, democratic sustainability, civic engagement, electoral transparency, regression analysis.

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Digital Technology and Democratic Sustainability in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

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Abstract- The application of digital technology across democracies has been seen as solution to the backlash of electoral process and democratic deficit. The objective was to ascertain whether digital tools like electoral technology, biometric algorithms, electronic transmission and smart card readers have a powerful effect on democratic processes, promoting credible elections, accountability, and citizen engagement which are vital components of democratic sustainability. The primary research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey. The research instrument used for data collection was structured questionnaires under the prism of quantitative method employed for the study. Using Taro Yamani sample determination technique, a total number of 100 samples were selected and administered. The regression analysis found that there was no statistically significant association between digital technology and democratic sustainability ($p = 0.963$), which is contrary to the perspectives held by some studies. The results indicated that though digital tools are commonly in use, they have fewer democratizing effects due largely to infrastructural obstacles, institutional inefficiencies, and digital exclusion. The government and electoral authorities were advised to invest in accessible and fair digital services, promote openness in the implementation of election technologies, and raise the digital literacy level. In the absence of such interventions, digital technology could be incapacitated in achieving its potential of promoting democratic resilience in Nigeria. The research investigates relationship between digital technology and democratic sustainability in Nigeria. It discovered that there was no statistically significant relationship between digital technology and democratic sustainability.

Keywords: digital technology, democratic sustainability, civic engagement, electoral transparency, regression analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the re-introduction of civil rule in 1999, Nigerian democracy has been faced with repeated electoral setback through the crises of the electoral process, which has unprecedented consequence for democratic sustainability in the country introduction of technology to employment of technology. The challenge has been the unending debate on whether democracy can be sustained in Nigeria. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has thus introduced several reforms

to address the backdrops of the electoral process. One of such reforms is the introduction of digital technology, which includes social media platforms, biometric registration device, smart cards reader and online result transmitting portal employed in the electoral process to ensure the efficiency and improve legitimacy of the electoral process. The most pertinent of these digital tools to date is the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IREV) to not only check the identity of the voter, but also to offer continuous reporting of results (Chatham House, 2023; GIGA, 2023). Both the international elections observers and domestic election stakeholders envisioned that such innovations is a game-changer that would significantly enhance the legitimacy and credibility of elections in Nigeria (Ifeanyi-Ajufo & Hoffmann, 2023; GIGA, 2023).

Digital technology has come to play a significant role in contemporary democratic governance, transforming how individuals communicate with elections, institutions, and the process of leadership changes in newly emerging democracy (Adeyinka & Ijaiya, 2024). In Nigeria, Africa's most populous electoral democracy, digital technology has demonstrated their potential to improve transparency, accountability and citizen inclusion in the electoral process with strong potentials for deepening the country's democracy. While the gains of digital technology have been applauded among the broad spectrum of the major stakeholders, digital innovations have exposed the structural weakness, digital inequality and technical hitches which often undermine its efficiency during electioneering process. The reality is that digital technology often did not meet expectations. The widespread malfunctioning of BVAS devices during the 2023 presidential elections indicated cases where they failed to verify citizens, caused significantly long queues of voters, and disenfranchised eligible voters (Oladeji, 2023; Chatham House, 2023). The IREV portal also faced inherent technical issues: failed to upload images, login passwords did not work, and offline backups were underused or not used at all a blow to the much-hyped transparency of these technological innovations (Oladeji, 2023; GIGA, 2023). These issues led to increased distrust and transparency issues on the credibility of elections and reliability of INEC to manage the electoral process without encumbrance (Time, 2023).

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The current reality in Nigeria demonstrated that there is a significant digital divide and challenges in Nigeria. The state of internet access, for example, is still discouraging. What might seem remarkable is that although there are over 100 million internet users (Onuoha, 2023), it only approximated 12% Nigerians who have access to functional internet access, and the disparity is particularly high in rural and underserved locations (Onuoha, 2023). This digital divide brings to the fore important questions related to the question of digital participation and inclusion. The uneven rollout and the persistence of digital exclusion are problematic when it comes to the possibility of inclusive democratic processes. The biggest missing piece in the empirical puzzle is how these technologies have interplayed with the systemic, institutional and infrastructural issues deeply rooted in and affecting the electoral process of the country. The inefficiency and failure of digital technology during elections, resulting from the INEC officials inadequate understanding of its use, cast additional doubt on the viability of digital technology for Nigeria's elections (Oche 2015; Nwangwu 2015). Beyond digitalization of elections, democracy is still weak and vulnerable. There are cases of low voters' turnout, result sheet manipulation, double voting, ballot box hijack. More worryingly, elections are still hotly contested despite the application of these technologies (GIGA, 2023).

Given the increasing acknowledgement on digital technology in Africa's elections, the lack of comprehensive and systematic research offers impetus for this study. Consequently, therefore, this study examines digital technology and democratic sustainability in Nigeria, arguing that despite improvement the crisis of the country's electoral process is yet to abate. To develop a conceptual framework that examines the digital technology and democratic sustainability in Nigeria, the paper began with the introduction, followed by the literature review of relevant concept such as digital technology and democratic sustainability. In the next part, it discusses the theoretical framework which provides the grounding for the study. In the next part, it presented the data and discussed the findings. Finally, we conclude and offer recommendations as appropriate.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

a) *Concept of Digital Technology*

Accordingly, digital technology refers to electronic tools, systems, devices, and resources that generate, store, or process data using binary code. It consists of a broad range of revolutionary inventions, including computers, mobile telephones, the internet, social networking sites, cloud services and latest technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and blockchain (Floridi, 2014). It is the technical procedure

of identifying or validating a person by using their physiological or behavioural traits (Wang & Yanushkevich, 2007). Such biological and anthropological traits including fingerprints, eye retinas and irises, voices, faces, and hand (Wang & Yanushkevich 2007). They work by creating computer models of people's physical and behavioural traits to accurately identify them. Electoral technology can identify different people by using patterns of recognition algorithms (Idowu, 2021). They function through biometrics, or any human physiological or behavioural characteristics having general biometric properties (Bolle et al. 2004). Technology has reinvented nearly every corner of society in terms of education, the health sector, trade, government, and civic activities (Adeyinka & Ijaiya, 2024).

Studies on digital technology have increased sporadically, becoming the central theme of contemporary research, especially with the deepening crisis of democracy in fledgling new democratic states in Africa (Diamond 2010, Farid 2008). This discussion has gained traction due to scholars' perspectives on the impact of digital technology on democracy. According to some scholars, technological advancements in the electoral process are seen as an essential instrument for strengthening democracy (Diamond, 2010, Farid, 2008). They argued that integrating technology into the voting process is the ultimate in openness and integrity. This viewpoint has generally emphasised Larry Diamond's concept of "liberation technology.", which is the process of expanding political, social, and economic freedom to the civic public (Diamond, 2010: 70). This freedom emphasises that voters have the unrestricted ability to choose without anyone stopping them or interfering with the process (Fatai and Adisa, 2017).

Digital technology is often enshrined in power relations, economic and cultural values and can be utilised to improve efficiency and transparency of elections, its implementation can also reinforce existing inequalities and establish new mechanisms of control (Fuchs, 2017). For instance, despite the accessibility to internet, digital inequalities of various forms (including those that conflate geography, class, and gender) continue to limit fair access to digital advantage (van Dijk, 2020). The lack of digital infrastructure and widespread access is a big problem in most developing nations and has continued to widen digital divide instead of enhancing democratic, inclusive digital closure in many political societies (Adeyinka & Ijaiya, 2024).

While digital technology has transformed political and social life. The emergence of the social media environment has changed the way citizens access information, the way governments communicate with citizens, and how activism is done (Tufekci, 2017). Democracy in the digital age has drawbacks. The

general public's comprehension of social media is frequently problematic. In the virtual world, many instances of unethical behaviour and use are not accessible to the public. These instances may manifest as hate speech, defamation, hoaxes, and other similar forms (Masduki, 2021). When it comes to communicating and utilising freedom of expression on digital platforms, society's fundamental understanding can occasionally go well beyond bounds. This is among the issues and difficulties facing democracy in the current digital age (Zuboff, 2019). Critically, a view of digital technology must not focus on the aspect of innovation or functionality alone but perceived in terms of the socio-political structures in which it is created and utilised. Artefacts and voting machines are not neutral, they can be manipulated and could in some sense represent some kind of power and authority (Winner 1986). In this respect, an effective study of digital technology would demand questioning who is designing, who is controlling, as well as who is benefiting from it

b) *Concept of Democratic Sustainability*

Democratic sustainability can be defined as the long-term resiliency of democratic institutions, values, and practices to last and evolve with time and especially given the social, political, and technological changes. It is no longer conventional to carry out habitual elections, except to widen institutional, behavioural, and participatory conditions that enhance the prospect of democracy overtime (Diamond, 1999; Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018). Fundamentally, democratic sustainability entails the strength of institutions like the judiciary, legislature and electoral organs, protection of civil liberties and citizen power to demand accountability through transparent and participatory procedures. Lorimer and Lechner (1995) therefore conceived democratic sustainability as the perennial stability of democracy in a way that immune it from erosion. It is the degree at which democracy become acceptable to the broad spectrum of the political actors, reinforcing attitudinal consciousness and institutional value that prevent collapse or retrogress (Idowu, 2021).

Elections continue to be one of the most widely used instruments for measuring democratic advancement. It may therefore be possible to say that a democracy has achieved sustainability if its elections are free, fair, transparent, regular, and mostly inclusive overtime. A sustainable democracy is one that is achieved and maintained in the present without endangering democracy in the future. Diamond (2019) noted that sustainable democracies should be built on both vertical and horizontal accountability. On the one hand, it should be predicated on elections and popular oversight; and on the other hand, it must reinforce checks and balances of democratic institutions in a way that ensure political actors conform to democratic rules.

In the Global South and fragile democracies, the concept of democratic sustainability is deeply rooted in the way a democracy is successful in providing socio-political inclusion, justice, and development (Ake, 2000; Omotola, 2010; Omeje, 2020). In his theory of democratic consolidation, Schedler (1998) used five strategies of democratic consolidation to explain the sustainability of democracy. This includes preventing democratic collapse, preventing democratic erosion, completing democracy, deepening democracy, and organising democracy. The first two indicate undesirable tendencies that should be avoided and, the third and fourth of these theorisations indicate positive attributes that should be reinforced, while. The fifth represents a quality of democracy that is neutral. Therefore, he believes that "eliminating, neutralising, or converting disloyal players" is the best way to ensure democratic life endures (Schedler, 1998:96). It also involves reducing the possibility of "silent regression from democracy to semi-democratic rule" (1998:97), which can lead to democratic loss. To put it another way, democratic safeguards must be put in place to prevent political elites from undermining democratic structures and institutions. Thus, undermining democratic institutions will "amount to inviting a free scenario for all" to institutionalise democracy without following its guidelines (Adeyinka & Ijaiya, 2024).

Consequently, the Civics Academy (2024) therefore has conceived democratic sustainability as the prevalence of the following characteristics which includes regular holding of free and fair elections in accordance with the constitution, respect for the rule of law, a multi-party-political system and respect for basic human rights, especially freedom of association and franchise, citizens involvement in social and political life and democratic governance. Thus, democratic sustainability is best understood as the process of attaining deep and wide legitimacy so that all important political actors, both at the mass and elite levels, think that the democratic regime is the most suitable and right for society and is superior to any other feasible option they can imagine (Fatai, 2022).

c) *Theoretical Framework*

This paper builds upon the notion of Social Construction Theory of Technology and Democratic Theory, which are robust theories to consider the relationship between digital technology and democratic sustainability.

i. *Social Construction Theory of Technology*

This theory was proposed by Pinch and Bijker in 1987. According to this theory technology is not a quick cure to gain electoral legitimacy and credibility but rather is mediated by human action. In their seminar paper titled "The Social Construction of Facts and Artefacts; They are argued on how the Sociology of Science and the Sociology of Technology might benefit

each other to fulfil the purpose of man; they argued that technology is not an end itself but a mean to an end. The theory's fundamental presumptions include that technology does not shape humans or determine their actions but influences it in different ways.

According to Mathe (2020), relying too much on technology to address electoral issues risks taking democracy out of the reach of the majority, which is the fulcrum of democracy. More importantly, it requires a whole lot of consensuses building and political in a contest where political elite have varying interest or less interested about the sustainability of democracy. Elections cannot be free, fair, or credible if those involved in the process are unable to use ET in an open and accountable manner. Instead, ET may be abused or used to obstruct free, fair, transparent, and trustworthy elections. When it comes to ET, Dahl (1989) makes the compelling argument that "evolving technology is bound to be used somehow for positive or negative acts.

As was previously suggested, ET is merely a tool designed to make man's electoral endeavours easier and is thus reliant on his abilities, preferences, and will. Furthermore, "political institutions and democratic processes cannot experience the desired change via reliance on technology alone," (Jacho, 2025). This is because to the fact that ET is a tool or device that man has created to accomplish his objectives, meaning that he may use it to pursue his purposes, whether they be good or bad. Therefore, it should not be assumed that ET would always save democratic consolidation and electoral integrity. This must be the reason why Joerges (1999) noted that human variables cannot be eliminated, regardless of the degree of technology used for elections. It is clear from Cheeseman et al. (2018), Idowu (2021), that technology cannot alleviate the problems caused by badly run elections. Therefore, it is not possible to rely solely on ET to ensure credible elections. Instead, human support must act as a mediator. This clarifies why the theory of social construction of technology is a better fit for serving as the framework for study in this research.

Despite its strengths, the social construction theory has been criticised for its pessimism or lack of faith in ET's capacity to increase election credibility. Notwithstanding the truth, however, it is that though ET has certain difficulties, it has helped to increase the legitimacy of elections.

Given that ET has some limitations that necessitate careful balances with human intervention to achieve desired results, yet it has undoubtedly overcome many election-related challenges in many parts of the world and improved credibility, including strengthening democracy. Despite its flaws, this idea is pertinent to our work since it emphasises the necessity of finding a balance between the use of ET and manual elections. This implies that the two can be used in

tandem to strengthen democracy in the nation by making elections free, fair, and credible.

ii. *Democratic Theory of Technology*

Robert K. Merton is frequently credited for his seminal work on the connection between science, technology, and democratic order. In his 1942 treatise "A Note on Science and Technology in a Democratic Order," Merton examined how scientific and technical organisations are inherently democratic. This work offered the background for the development of democratic theory of technology and at such Merton is frequently referred to as the progenitor of this theory. Notwithstanding, scholars such as Bruno Latour, have also made a substantial contribution to the discipline by highlighting how politics and technology are interpenetrating.

According to the democratic theorists, digital technology is the liberalization of the political space through information technology to realise deliberative and participative civic society. Liberal democrats imagine digital technology through their understanding of democracy and increasingly understand democracy through their encounter with technology. A democratic theory of technology thus investigates the ways in which digital technologies might support or undermine democratic values. While considering possible threats like disinformation and social division, it also looks at how technology might be utilised to enhance citizen engagement and decision-making. The approach acknowledges that citizens and decision-makers in the digital sphere must have reciprocal trust (Habermas, 1996). The reality of the situation in Nigeria, however, constrains this aspiration: digital marginalisation, fake news, and police brutality has curtailed the democratic potential of digital democracy (Fuchs, 2017). Nevertheless, the theory is subject to criticism, as human agency and institutional context are often a major issue in the application of digital technology (Adeyinka & Ijaiya, 2024).

Despite its goal of ensuring that technology supports democratic values, democratic theory of technology has several drawbacks. These include difficulties in guaranteeing responsibility, public involvement, and dealing with problems like deception and manipulation. Also, there is serious worry about how technology can worsen already-existing power disparities and inequities. Notwithstanding, both theories have a methodological strength that help us to strike a balance in the friction between optimist and pessimist of digital democracy. The point then, therefore, is that despite the promises of digital technology, there should be caution optimism. Attention should be paid to the drawbacks of digital technology to ensure credible electoral process and democratic sustainability. It is within this context Nigeria can

optimized the gains of digital democracy and the implication for democratic sustainability.

III. METHOD AND METHODOLOGY

a) Research Methodology

This paper employed quantitative method to ensure unbiased, trustworthy, and broadly applicable findings across a range of domains. By employing numerical and statistical methods to measure and analyse data, they enable researchers to test hypotheses, find trends, and draw conclusions about populations from sample data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This method has capacity to lessen bias, improve study replicability, and make comparisons across other research or time periods.

The paper in terms of research design rely on descriptive survey, a common methodology in social sciences, to compile data about a specific group of people and provide a description of the current situation (Babbie, 2021). The design gives a wide scope of perception and experience of respondents regarding digital technologies like access to the internet, the use of social media, and electronic voting, and their effects on democratic sustainability in Nigeria.

The research instrument employed by the study for data collection is the structured questionnaire. It comprises of a closed-ended questions structured on a five-point Likert-type scale. This is the method that is selected because of its reliability, ease of administration,

and its familiarity with statistical analysis (Saunders et al., 2019). The survey will be conducted on paper and through electronic means to achieve the best accessibility and efficiency when collecting the data.

A total of 100 respondents were sampled. As noted by Wimmer and Dominick (2014) a sample of 100 is sufficient in cases of exploratory studies where funds or access can be a factor in the research. This sample was determined through a simple random sampling method. Through this probability sampling method, the research participant was sampled from the urban population in Nigerian where citizens have high level of access to digital platforms. This makes it suitable for understanding digital technology and democratic sustainability. The process of the research was guided by ethical considerations for the research participants such as informed consent, data confidentiality, etc

b) Research Objective

To examine the effect of digital technology on democratic sustainability in Nigeria.

c) Research Question

How does digital technology affect democratic sustainability in Nigeria?

d) Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between digital technology and democratic sustainability in Nigeria.

IV. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age Group	18–25 years	22	22.0
	26–35 years	16	16.0
	36–45 years	22	22.0
	46–55 years	22	22.0
	56 years and above	18	18.0
Gender	Male	30	30.0
	Female	28	28.0
	Prefer not to say	42	42.0
Marital Status	Single	365	35.2
	Married	480	46.2
	Divorced	90	8.7
	Widow	103	9.9
Employment Status	Student	18	18.0
	Employed (Public sector)	27	27.0
	Employed (Private sector)	21	21.0

	Self-employed	20	20.0
	Unemployed	14	14.0
Place of Work	Government Establishments	114	32.9
	Private Establishments	136	39.3
	NGOs	32	9.3
	Others (Students & Unemployed)	64	18.5
Educational Qualification	Secondary School Certificate (SSCE)	22	22.0
	Diploma/OND/NCE	17	17.0
	Bachelor's Degree	26	26.0
	Postgraduate (Master's/PhD)	13	13.0
	Others	22	22.0
General Education Profile	Tertiary Education	747	72.0
	Secondary School Education	197	19.0
	Primary School	94	9.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The demographic profile reveals a relatively balanced age distribution among respondents, with the 18–25, 36–45, and 46–55 age groups each constituting 22%, suggesting strong participation across working-age categories. Gender representation shows a notable skew, with 42% preferring not to disclose, possibly reflecting sensitivity around identity in survey contexts. The majority are married (46.2%), followed by singles (35.2%), indicating a mature and possibly economically active sample of the population. Employment status is diverse, with public sector employees (27%) and students (18%) featuring prominently. Notably, 39.3%

work in private establishments, while 32.9% are in government institutions, and 18.5% fall under others, including students and unemployed. Education-wise, a significant portion holds tertiary education qualifications (72%), reinforcing literate and civic respondents. The spread across SSCE (22%) and diploma holders (17%) further suggest moderate educational diversity. Overall, the data reflect a population with sufficient socio-political demographic construction, suitable for examining the relationship between digital technology and democratic sustainability in Nigeria.

Table 2: Hypothesis Testing

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	14.983	1.792		8.359	.000
	Digital Technology	-.006	.119	-.005	-.047	.963

a. Dependent Variable: Democratic Sustainability

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between digital technology and democratic sustainability in Nigeria. The results revealed an unstandardized coefficient (B) of -0.006 for digital technology, with a standard error of 0.119 and a standardised value of -0.005. The t-value is -0.047, and the significance (p-value) is 0.963. The high p-value indicates that the relationship between digital technology and democratic sustainability is not statistically significant at the conventional 0.05 level.

According to the decision rule, if the p-value is less than or equal to 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. However, since the calculated p-value (0.963) is far greater than 0.05, we should accept the null hypothesis. Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between digital technology and democratic sustainability in Nigeria.

This result suggests that, within the sample studied, digital technology does not have a measurable

impact on the sustainability of democracy. Although digital tools and platforms are widely promoted for enhancing civic engagement and electoral transparency, the data from this research does not support a statistically significant connection between their usage and the strengthening of democratic values and institutions. This finding may be attributed to various contextual factors, such as technological inefficiencies, digital illiteracy, or institutional weaknesses that undermine the potential benefits of digital interventions in governance. It may also reflect the limitations of the measurement instrument or the scope of the sampled population. In any case, the evidence suggests that the presumed democratic gains from digital technology should not be assumed without careful contextual and empirical consideration.

a) *Discussion of Findings*

The results of this study demonstrated that there is no significant correlation between digital technology and the sustainability of democracy in Nigeria because the p-value stands at 0.963. This finding is shocking and insightful with respect to the optimistic rhetoric of digital technology as the game changer in literature. According to scholars, like Adeyinka and Ijaiya (2024), the digital platforms promote civic engagement and make the government more accountable. This research argues, however, that these theoretical arguments might not bear practical reality of democratic sustainability in the settings of prevailing institutional realities in Nigeria.

One of the potential explanations is the mismatch between technological adoption and the functionality of an institution. The factors that make institutional responsiveness and accountability determinants in the aspect of democratic sustainability are noted in the observations of Schedler (2001) and Omeje (2020), when they both noted that democratic sustainability is a consequence of democratic legitimacy and durability. However, in Nigeria, the implementation of digital technology seems to be occurring in weak, politicised frameworks that stunt its ability to transform. This is often adduced to lack of legitimacy and vulnerability of democracy despite the employment of digital technology. The low impact seen in the regression analysis indicated that a technology that is not anchored in the institutionalised democratic culture and frameworks would not have reinforcing effect on democracy (Diamond, 2019).

In addition, the results contradict the determinism of theory of McLuhan (1964) and Postman (1993). Although their theory implied that the form of media transforms political life, the case in Nigeria is indicative of the shortcomings of technological determinism. On the one hand, electoral integrity and democratic inclusion are hindered despite a large amount of internet penetration and wide coverage of

digital tools. This is stressed by Fuchs (2017), who states that technology can also reinforce power structures and not necessarily disrupt them.

Although digital technologies theoretically can sustain democracy, the results of this study point towards a lack of fit between the hype of digital technology and democratic realities in Nigeria. The concept of digital democracy can only be effective when the economic disparity, government weakness and digital inequality are factored in.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this research, the relationship between digital technology and democratic sustainability in Nigeria was investigated, and it was found out that there was no statistically significant relationship between the two variables. Whilst theoretically it can be stated that digital tools encourage transparency, accountability, and civic engagement (Adeyinka & Ijaiya, 2024; Diamond, 2019), empirical evidence suggests that technology has remained less successful when it comes to democratic sustainability as elections are still contested and the use of technology has continue to elicit controversies especially with the outcome of the 1999 and 2023 general elections in Nigeria. Systemic issues such as technological inefficiencies, digital illiteracy, poor infrastructure, and not-so-institutionally responsiveness are some of the main hindrances that undermined democratic sustainability.

Considering these findings, there are several policy recommendations proposed by this study. To start with, government institutions should strive to spend more on digital infrastructure so that it can be accessible to people equally, especially in the under-represented areas. Second, digital literacy campaigns are a mandatory requirement to help citizens knowledgeable about how they should connect with democratic platforms. Thirdly, there should be a legal requirement on electoral institutions (such as INEC) to enhance transparency and accountability of digital applications. INEC officials must also be trained and knowledgeable about digital technology to prevent knowledge gaps of these technologies during elections. Lastly, the major stakeholder should be convoked on the gains and relevance of digital democracy to political development and democratic sustainability in ways that structured their political behaviour and attitude to seeing democracy as the only game in town. These structural and policy-based initiatives have the propensity to accelerate digital efficiency and the implication for democratic sustainability in Nigeria.

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China and the Islamic World: Religious Dimension in the New Cold War

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Abstract- The issue of the Islamic dimension in the relation between China and the main Islamic countries, especially, the role of the growth of Islam in China has played considerable role in their relationship after the 1980s. Amid an intensified potential war threatening and strategic competition between China and the USA such two powers in the world's politics, economics and military which causes current antagonism since the 2010s, how does China design her foreign policy toward the Islamic world? What is the motivation in her diplomatic approaches to the Islamic countries? And what is the substantial position of the religious and Muslim minority affairs in China mapping out her external strategy and internal tactics to counter the various pressures from the West presumed by CCP? This paper uses historiography and the political analysis to unfold the complicated relationship between China and the Islamic world in the context of Sino-American competition.

Keywords: *China, islam, the west, the new cold war.*

GJHSS-F Classification: *LCC: DS740.5.M8*



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China and the Islamic World: Religious Dimension in the New Cold War¹

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Abstract- The issue of the Islamic dimension in the relation between China and the main Islamic countries, especially, the role of the growth of Islam in China has played considerable role in their relationship after the 1980s. Amid an intensified potential war threatening and strategic competition between China and the USA such two powers in the world's politics, economics and military which causes current antagonism since the 2010s, how does China design her foreign policy toward the Islamic world? What is the motivation in her diplomatic approaches to the Islamic countries? And what is the substantial position of the religious and Muslim minority affairs in China mapping out her external strategy and internal tactics to counter the various pressures from the West presumed by CCP? This paper uses historiography and the political analysis to unfold the complicated relationship between China and the Islamic world in the context of Sino-American competition.

Keywords: China, islam, the west, the new cold war.

I. INTRODUCTION

For last years the world is plunged into an era of a kind of new type Cold War in which the authoritarian states represented by China, Russia, North Korea and Iran stand on one side and the democratic countries led by the USA & Europe Union gather on other side over the series important issues such as Russia-Ukraine War, the confrontation in the Middle East and the fundamental debates in the UN assemblies. However, the Islamic world, another political-cultural block in the global arena, is to choose to stand on which side in this mounted tension and the coming clashes? This paper mainly tackles the issue of the Islamic dimension in the relation between China and the main Islamic countries, especially, the role of the growth of Islam in China has played in their relationship after the 1980s. Amid an intensified potential war threatening and strategic competition between the "East" and the "West" such two political, economic and military power blocks in the world's new antagonism, how does China handle

the Islam in her launching One Road and One Belt Initiative? What is the motivation in her diplomatic approaches to the Islamic world? And what is the substantial position of the religious and Muslim minority affairs in mapping out her external strategy and internal tactics to counter the various hostile western forces China senses? China's attitude toward Islam is entirely oriented from her national security for opposing the West, which the CCP regards as the fundamental enemy in upholding her socialist construction and the Party-State's survival in her Marxism and Leninism ideological social structure based on the authoritarian polity. From this point of view China needs friends even the kind of the alliance from the Islamic world against the Western hegemony. On the other hand, China also takes efforts to strike the Islamic extremism and the radical Muslim groups domestically to solidify her state power and maintain social stability, especially in her western region. Therefore, China's policy toward Islam is very complicated but tries so hard to handle it in balance.

II. A HISTORICAL SURVEY

China has contacted with the Islamic world for nearly 1400 years. Before Christopher Columbus discovered the American continent China Empires had already had relations with the Islam for almost 800 years. The first event made the Tang Empire crashed with the newly founded Abbasid Dynasty is the Battle of Talas² in which Chinese army was defeated by the Muslim troop in 751. Afterwards Chinese imperial power lost the controlling over the kingdoms in Central Asia which usually made tribute to the imperial court of China. However, after just 4 years later the Tang Empire had to ask the Abbasid Dynasty to send its military force to help China empire to crack down the rebellion launched by some Turkic military commanders in its border regions.³ The Abbasid Caliph sent the Muslim troop to assist the Chinese army to retake the imperial capital Chang'an and the eastern capital Luoyang from the rebel forces.⁴ This rapprochement between the two

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² 怛罗斯之战：当时世界上最强大两个帝国的对决 (Battle of Talas, the Decisive Fighting between the Two Most Powerful Empires in the World), see www.163.com/dy/article/H8L7K0BI0553AD9O.html.

³ See 安史之乱 (Rebellion of An Lushan and Shi Siming), www.baike.baidu.com/item/安史之乱/131840?fr=ge_al.

⁴ 大食助唐平定安史之乱 (the Arabs Helped the Tang Empire to Crack Down the Rebellion Launched by An Lushan and Shi Siming), see

great empires conduces to the Islam formally penetrating in China, some Chinese scholars argued.⁵ Before that event the Arab and Persian businessmen had followed the Silk Road and Spice Road coming to China and many of them chose to stay in China forever.⁶ Since then Muslim soldiers and merchants were awarded by Chinese government the right to settle down with the granted land and have the privileges that could intermarry with Chinese women. As a result Muslims in China gradually developed into many enclaves that were distributed in the seaports along the eastern and southern coasts, in the cities and towns along the Grand Canal, along the main transportation centers and the areas surrounding Chang'an, the imperial capital and other cities.⁷

With the Mongols invaded China, they brought many Central Asian and Western Asian Muslim soldiers who were recruited into the Mongol nomadic forces into China in its military campaigns to conquer China. The large number of the Turkic, Persian Muslim soldiers and handcraft men enforced influxes to China and therefore helped the Mongols established the Yuan Dynasty led by Kublai Khan increased the Muslim population and the fast development of Islam in the Middle Kingdom.⁸ The Muslims in China went through the dynastic changes such as the Ming Empire and the Qing Empire, late on the Republic and the People's Republic, all the rulers in China recognize that to handle the issue of Islam and Muslim minorities is not only the domestic problem, but also a problem of the diplomatic relation with the foreign land.⁹ Particularly, in the Manchu's Qing Empire, the Muslims in China had launched two great insurgences in Western China and caused millions and

millions' lives perished in the brutal massacres occurred in the suppress.¹⁰ The Qing Empire also crushed the revolts that the Turkic Muslims got the supports from Khanate Kokand in Khojagan rebellions¹¹ and late, in the event of Yaqub Bek's occupation in Xinjiang¹². So Islam and the Muslims both at abroad and domestically intended to pose the challenges to the Han Chinese power in the border regions regarded by Chinese imperial rulers as the "barbaric land".¹³

III. ISLAM UNDER THE CHINESE COMMUNIST REGIME

In 1949 the People's Republic was founded and Mao Zedong (1893-1976) announced Chinese people stood up that means not be humiliated by the western powers any longer. Since Communism following the atheism and treated all religion negatively¹⁴, therefore, almost all Muslim countries did not recognize Red China in the beginning of the PRC, therefore, kept the diplomatic ties with Taiwan, the Republic.

The Korean War (1950-1953) greatly deteriorated the relation between Communist China and the United States of America. Faced politic and economic sanction imposed mainly by America, the People Republic China had to search her own living space in the international arena.

The turn point is year of 1955 when Bandung Conference was held in Indonesia while Premier Zhou Enlai (1898-1976) used the Islam card to stretch out the courteous of Red China to the Islamic countries. The Hui Muslim scholars graduated from Al-Azhar University in Egypt in the 1930s helped Communist China to establish the diplomatic relation with the Islamic world.¹⁵ Following that conference the friendly relationship with the Muslim Countries, such as Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Sudan was established¹⁶ respectively and the ties

www.baik.e.baidu.com/item/大食助唐平定安史之乱/54608914?fr=ge_ala.

⁵ In General the Chinese Academic circle regards the date of Islam entering China is 651 AD when the Ummayyeh Dynasty sent its firstenvoy to China's Tang Dynasty. However, some scholars think that only the Arab soldiers settled down after helping the Tang Empire to suppress the rebellion and built mosque that event could sign Islam entering China. See book *ZhongguoYisilan Jiao Shi* (中国伊斯兰教史History of Islam in China), edited by Li Xinghua, Qin Huibin, Feng Jinyuan and Sha Qiuzhen, Chinese Social Science Publisher, Beijing, 1998.

⁶ For the information on the spread of Islam along the Silk Road, please see the article of 论丝绸之路上的宗教传播 (On the Religious Spread along the Silk Road), www.zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/194207171.

⁷ For the distribution of the Muslim enclaves in the period of the Tang and the Song Dynasty, please see the article of 唐宋时期的伊斯兰教 (Islam in the Tang Dynasty and the Song Dynasty), www.baiven.com/b/207/391226.html.

⁸ "元时回回遍天下"之说 (the Theory of the Huihui Living in All over China in the Yuan Dynasty), see article online: www.shdwh.cn/ReadNews.asp?NewsID=1622. For the detailed information on the Muslim's migration into Yunnan in the Yuan Dynasty, please see author's doctoral dissertation Chapter Two, *Concord and Conflict: the Hui Communities of Yunnan Society in a Historical Perspective*, Stockholm, Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1996.

⁹ See *the Cambridge History of Islam*, part of China, wrote by Josef Fletcher.

¹⁰ See 回民起义 (the Uprisings of the Hui People), edited by Bai Shouyi 白寿彝, 4 vols, Shanghai: Shenzhou GuoguangPress 神州国 光社, 1952.

¹¹ 西域和卓家族研究 (Study on the Clan of the Khojas in Xinjiang) by Liu Zhengyin and Wei Liangtao, Beijing: Chinese Social Sciences Press, 1998, see www.baidu.baik.e.com/item/西域和卓家族研究.

¹² See Hodong Kim: *Holy War in China, the Muslim Rebellion and State in Chinese Central Asia, 1864-1877*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.

¹³ The term of "barbaric" can be referred in the book of Dru Gladney *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic*, Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1991.

¹⁴ After the founding of the PRC soon the new regime expelled all Western Christian missionaries from China and in the middle of the 1950s, the Communist regime launched "Religious Reform" to restrict religious activities.

¹⁵ Liu Linrui (刘麟瑞 1917-1995) see www.baidu.baik.e.com/item/刘麟瑞/4209001?fr=aladdin.

¹⁶ For the diplomatic turnout of the PRC in the Bandung Conference, see 中国的中东外交政策日益成熟 (China's Foreign Policy toward the Middle East Has Showed Increasingly Mature), www.baidu.baik.e.com/s?id=1765075235897424780&wfr=spider&for=pc.

to the Islamic countries turned to normalization and friendly warm.

The Impact of the foreign relation with the Islamic countries surely would effect upon the domestic policy: namely the PRC government's policy toward her own Muslim minorities and Islam. In order to improve the relation with the Islamic countries the CCP formulated the special policy toward the Muslim Ethnic Minorities based on the Soviet Union's model, and designed preferential programs: training and cultivating the Muslim minority cadres, absorbing them into the administrative structure, provide the young Muslims with good education program.¹⁷ For implementing these special programs the CCP founded and organized the important official organs such as the United Front Working Department, the State Committee of the National Affairs, the State Bureau of the Religious Affairs, China People's Political Consultation Committee, the Islamic Association of China, all of them aimed to integrate the Muslim elites into the ruling class to solidarity the state power in order to control the Muslim minorities and use the autonomous regions to incorporate the Muslim territories into China tightly. Favorite treatment toward the Muslim minorities, such as the over-presentation of the Muslim representatives in People's Congress, Ethnic Autonomous Regions such as Xinjiang Uighur and Ningxia Hui; Special subsidies allocated to the Muslim cadres and easily admitted Muslim youths into school, particularly, the university and college education, and established more than ten ethnic minority universities and colleges sponsored by the Ministry of Education Affairs or the State Committee of the National Affairs to train the ethnic minority cadres; Special Halal food or Halal dining halls or canteens were set in schools, administrative units, factories and state enterprises while there are any Muslim employees or students work and study in order to accommodate their special dietary customs; Allow the Muslim minority couple has more than one child while the country eventually has carried out the very restrictive population controlling program for several decades until recently encouraging people to give birth more babies.¹⁸ In this regards, CCP's policy is to improve its images in the Islamic world. Meanwhile, the Communist regime keeps alert toward the radical Islam and was ready to crack down any challenges to the Party-State power from the separate movement.

On the other hand in dealing with the international relation, the PRC has developed a foreign policy: seek the support from the backyard while facing the great pressures from the western powers led by USA

that threatens the Communist rule in China, so China has tried hard to gain the geopolitical strategic living space and opportunity in the Cold War and the Post-Cold War era. In the late 1960s and the first half of the 1970s, China was the one of the countries from the Communist block to support and train the guerrilla fighters in the Islamic world especially the Palestine's Fatah organization. China also had an alliance tie with Albanian the only country in Europe with the Muslim population as the majority. In supporting Albanian encountering with the threat from the Soviet Union, China provided the large quantity weapons to Albania. Before the disintegration of the Soviet Union and therefore, the end of the Cold War after the Second World War, China from the orthodoxy Marxism and Leninism point of view, particularly during the Great Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), was a country always strongly supporting the radical revolutionary ideology including the theory of violent revolution. Impacted by this theoretical orientation, CCP once regards the terrorism being one of the efficient means to weaken or topple the structure of the two superpowers namely the USA and Soviet Union. Although the death of Mao Zedong leads to the down of the Gang of Four, China under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping and his late successors in CCP have continually adopted a pragmatic approach, the political theory regarding the Western democratic power as the hostile force threatening the Socialist China, remains basic foundation in CCP's political and ideological strategy. The clashes between the America and the Islamic extremist forces, the 911 tragedy event, and the USA encounters with the global Jihad forces led by Al-Qaida, Osama Ben Laden, exactly have given China an excellent opportunity for her strategic surviving and expanding her influence in the world in the period of the first decade of the new century.¹⁹

Late Prof. Samuel Huntington of Harvard University raised his theory: the future clashes of civilization: Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East allied with Confucianism in the Eastern Asia collaborated together to confront with Judaism and Christianity represented by Western countries in future.²⁰ Although this theory is very problematic (internal clashes, for instance, Iran-Iraqi war, tension between monarchy rulers in the Islamic world and its Muslim subjects, sectary fighting between Shia and Sunni within Islam), however, this view was shared by the elites in China's educational, academic, ruling group of the Communist

¹⁷ Jianping Wang: "Islam and the State Policy in Contemporary China", *Studies in Religion*, Sept. 2016, pp. 1-15.

¹⁸ 少数民族优惠政策有哪些? (What is the Content of the State's Preference Program toward the Ethnic Minorities?), see www.zhidaobaidu.com/question/463429725677451925.html.

¹⁹ 911是中美国运分水岭? 中国抓住机会崛起, 美国却在走下坡路 (Is the September 11 Event the Watershed for the State Fates between China and America? China Seized Opportunity for her Rising Up but America is in Decline), see www.baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1757767376788739935&wfr=spider&for=pc.

²⁰ Samuel Huntington: "the Clash of Civilizations", *Foreign Affairs*, the Summer Issue, 1993.

party circles, even the state's thinking tanks in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attack against the World Trade Towers in NYC.²¹ The Chinese official newspaper "*The Global Times*" used the striking headline on the first page with the big sized title "the United States is Collapsed" to express its kind of the pleasure for the 9/11 tragedy.²² The leading Chinese officials were so pleased and applauded this big event with the gloat posture in public after the colliding accident that a Chinese jet damaged an American reconnaissance aircraft over the South China Sea and the latter landed urgently on the Hainan Island.²³ Following that air colliding incident China had detained all American crews for 11 days before they were released. This event drove China Communist Party's propaganda machine inciting the anti-American rhetoric and the hatred against the USA's hegemony policy in the national media.

The 9/11 tragedy and therefore, the Iraqi war and the Afghan war have caused more than trillion US Dollars expenses and more than 6000 American soldiers' lives. The fall into mire of the USA like the Vietnam War in the 1970s now in Iraq, Afghanistan made many Chinese politicians believed that the deeper the USA involved into the fighting against the Islamic extremists who lead a global Jihad war, the safer China would feel in the national security. A weakened America who faces the confrontation with the Al-Qaida led by Osama Ben Laden and ISIS would greatly benefit to China's national interests, and China gains the unprecedented strategic opportunity in her advancement in economy, military and politic force in the global affairs.²⁴ Many Chinese strategists assume that the confrontation between the Islamic fundamentalism and the USA has given China a great chip which made her having developed into the big economic power in the world during last decade. So China is ready and has always ready to play the card of the Islamic world to encounter with the hegemony policy and encounter with the geopolitical stand posed by the USA. Consequently, the great developing of China's economy couples with the expansion of powers by China in the Middle East, South Asian, Southeast Asian and African countries while the USA had to tackle the al-Qaida and the

Taliban, ISIS such Islamic extremist organizations. After joined in the WTO China has quickly developed into the second largest economic power in the world just next to the USA. Coincidentally, in the period of China's fast development the USA's resources "had been exhausted in the Iraqi and Afghan wars".²⁵

With the USA policy of containing and encircling China in geopolitics such as in the Asian and Pacific Region for last decade, the PRC reacted with her own strategic deployment to secure her backyard: it ushers "One Belt and One Road Initiative", the sphere of the Belt and Road locates many Islamic or Muslim countries that the PRC wants to use or play the force of the Islamic world as a card to encounter or at least to deplete the USA's power, and to reduce its pressure taken against China in the game play on the international chessboard.²⁶ For last three years China apparently has aided the Hamas movement, Lebanon Hezbollah, Syrian Assad regime, Yemeni Houthi armed forces, Iraqi Shi'a military forces and Iran's Khamenei Shi'a regime in the confrontation in the Middle East exactly showing that China takes advantage of such international events to erode the western powers and shift American focus away from the Asia and the Pacific, and therefore, make China feel more security and safe in her international relation and the world political order.²⁷

However, China has never expected that Islamic extremism and terrorism could cause a backlash in China homeland also. The tilt China relies on the power of the Islamic world, and the loose attitude of its own domestic politics toward its own Muslim minorities has led to the dramatic revival of Islam in China.²⁸

The Muslim population growth in China is very fast because of the loose in controlling the Muslim minority population, there were 26 million Muslims in 2015; besides, the number of mosques reached to 40000 more, and many of them have been enlarged and rebuilt into the Arabic architectural style; every year for last two decades there were more 10000 hajjis have fulfilled their pilgrimage to Mecca before the broke of the Covid-19;²⁹ More and more young Muslim students went

²¹ My personal impression at wake of 911 tragedy as I was the staff of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences when I talked with the scholars from the high institutions in Beijing and Shanghai; Even the cadres and scholars who worked for the thinktanks such as Ministry of the Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Public Security, the Department of the United Front Working shared with this view.

²² Read the issues of *Huanqiu Shibao* (The Global Times) after event of the September 11, 2001.

²³ Watching the Evening News Program of CCTV afterward of the event of the 911 Tragedy.

²⁴ It is termed as "the Second Greatest Strategic Opportunity" by some scholars. See 石齐平称中国迎来第三个战略机遇期 (Shi Qiping Declared that China Welcome the Arrival of the Third Strategic Opportunity Period), www.baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1781985733663466268&wfr=spider&for=pc.

²⁵ Qwert: *Junshi Wenti de Sikao* (军事问题的思考 Reflection of the Military Issues), see *zhihu* network, www.zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/646714187.

²⁶ 不断发展我国与“一带一路”沿线伊斯兰国家的合作 (Continually Develop the cooperation between China and the Islamic Countries along the Areas of the One Belt and One Road) by Ma Baodong, see www.happyhomeinlove.com/lunwendaquan/2023/0919/233207.html.

²⁷ For this point of view, the papers from the date banks such as Baidu and Zihu, and Thesis of the High Education Institutes could show it clearly.

²⁸ Jianping Wang: "Struggle for the Rights: Islamic Revival in China", my presentation at the seminar of the Near East Studies, Cornell University, April. 13, 2009. This manuscript has not been published.

²⁹ Jianping Wang: "Islam in Contemporary China: An Overview", *IIAS the Newsletter*, No. 75, Autumn 2016, p. 21.

to Madrasas (Islamic colleges) for their Islamic education not only in China but also in the Islamic countries; Many mosques established their own Madrasas to meet the demand coming from various Muslim communities all over China for the Islamic education; Many Islamic publications have emerged, lot of them are unofficial publication;³⁰ Many Muslim charity organizations have been founded as NGO to work and formulated into a network of the Islamic economy and finance;³¹ Many Muslim scholars have been promoted into the professorship in a number of universities and they established not a few of Islamic research institutes and academic centers to promote Islamic studies and recruit the Muslim students studying for their academic degrees;³² The Islamic conferences, workshops, forums and lectures are booming in various levels in the academic and cultural, educational fields.³³ With this Islamic revival movement, lot of Muslim elites are absorbed into the governmental organs and agencies, they make speeches, involved policy making, actively engage in administration, media, publication, diplomatic and economic, trade and cultural activities.³⁴ For trade and economic links the new city Yiwu in Zhejiang Province has witnessed the growth of the foreign Muslim immigrants: more than 100000 business men from all over the Islamic countries take their residence.³⁵ As a result the Chinese state even allocated a piece of land, allocated fund to build a large modern mosque with the Arabic style in architecture to accommodate them for religious services in Yiwu.³⁶

³⁰ Jianping Wang: "The Search for Identity - Ethnic and Religious - by Muslims, in China, an Atheist Nation", see the website of the Harvard-Yenching Institute and of the Harvard-Yenching Library. It also includes an uncompleted list of the unofficial Islamic periodicals in the contemporary China.

³¹ Jianping Wang: "Islamic Charity in China: its Organizations and Activities in a New Era", *Religion, Culture and Public Sphere in China and Japan*, edited by Albert Welter, Springer, 2017.

³² It should have an investigation for this phenomenon. The statistics could be no less than 100.

³³ This author as a specialist on Islamic studies in China has a number of opportunity to participate in the conferences and workshops on the subjects of Islam, Muslims, One Belt and One Road etc. Of course, as a non-Muslim scholar he certainly has missed many conferences and workshops which organized by Hui Muslim scholars who prefer to invite the Hui Muslim scholars for such kind of academic events and activities.

³⁴ This also needs a thorough investigation by the independent scholars.

³⁵ 漂泊义乌的中东人：在这里活着、哭泣和变富！(The Middle Easterners Wander in Yiwu: They Live, Cry and Being Rich here!), see www.baijiahao.com/s?id=1719297595309440231&wfr=spider&for=p.c. The number of the foreign Muslims living in Yiwu is various, from 500000 to 300000. According to the statistics in 2019, before the Covid-19th broke out, there were at least 15000 foreign Muslims living in Yiwu. Even there were 170 restaurants which were owned by the Middle Eastern Muslims.

³⁶ I personally visited the mosque two times in 2011 and 2022. There were more than 10000 Muslims praying in this mosque in the Friday congregation in late October in 2011.

The strengthen of the Islamic ties with many Muslim countries has conducted to the influxes of the different Islamic factions and politic Islam trends into the Muslim society in China, and caused the factional tension and radical Islam in some way which partly was reflected in the competition between the Shi'a Iran and the Sunni Saudi Arabia for the influence over the Muslims in China.³⁷ For the last ten years Ikhwan Islam in China has witnessed an internal power struggle between the Hard Faction and the Soft Faction, and the local governments support the latter and suppress the former in the intermediate of this creed dispute.³⁸

So the rapid revival Islam also leads to some thorny problem as the totalitarian politics is not parallel with the great changes in a market economy and a diverse cultural society: Terrorism attacks in Xinjiang and a strong Islamic nationalism, their challenge to the PRC government. The growth of Islam in China also causes the phenomena of the Islam Suadization in China, Halalization in China, Arabization of Islam in China and even Islamization of China itself, particularly in case of Ningxia, Gansu, Qinghai, Yunnan and Xinjiang regions thought by CCP leaders.³⁹ To encounter the problems above mentioned, the authorities decide to introduce the campaign of Sinocization of Islam in China, and reshape mosque's Arabic architectural style into the Chinese traditional cultural style; and reduce the configuration in Arabic language, Halal sign and woman's veil etc. in public.⁴⁰

The Islamic extremists coupled with the nationalist splitting elements, and furthermore, no less the mishandling in the statecraft over the ethnic minority affairs, and administrative corruption and bureaucratic problem, have brought a series terrorist attacks and violence which shocked China for the period of 2007 to 2017.⁴¹ The Uighur separatists have launched the assaults against civil targets and infrastructure: car bombing and explosion in the Tiananmen Square, Knife attack in Kunming Railway Station, explosion in the railway station in Urumqi, the car bombing explosion in the free market in Urumqi, again the knife attack in Guangzhou and many violent attacks happened in

³⁷ 浅析泛伊斯兰主义对我国穆斯林的影响 (A Slight Analysis on the Impact of the Pan-Islamism upon the Muslims in China), www.varjob.com/lizhigushi/2021/0120/288402.html.

³⁸ See recent paper published by Dr. Mohamed Al-Sudairi on the Islamic Factions within the Ikhwan Group in China: "Traditions of Anti-Wahhabism in China: An Account of the Yihewani Hardliners and the Theological Origins of the Yihewani-Salafiyya Schism".

³⁹ 解读民族宗教工作政策 (第二期) (Interprete the Work and Policy on Ethnic Minorities and Religion, No. 2, see <http://fxwmw.fanxianw.com/Print.aspx?id=63898>).

⁴⁰ Li Weijian (李维建): *Guanyu YisilanjiaoZhongguo Hua de Jidian Sikao* (关于伊斯兰教中国化的几点思考 A Few Ideas on Sinosization of Islam), see: <https://www.aisixiang.com/data/130650.html>.

⁴¹ for this, there is lot of coverage in the western media.

different parts of Xinjiang and other parts of China.⁴² All these events make Chinese Communist Party leaders realize that the Islamic extremism being the big dangerous enemy which they used to think the problem only for the western countries, particularly, the America. Now they feel the suffering from this Islamic extremism also takes deep-root in China. And Chinese leaders usually deem China a good friend in the Islamic countries since Chinese government carefully make balance over the Palestine issue, for instance, the Israeli-Palestine confrontation, over the Indian-Pakistan wars, China has always tried hard to be a cardinal friend and firm support to the Islamic world.⁴³

The complicated situation make China decide to use hard-striving gesture to crack down the religious extremism particularly, the Islamic extremism, the national separatism and the international terrorism, the so called three evil forces in Xinjiang.⁴⁴ Since then, it imposes the very tough policy controlling and surveillance or monitor the religious activities in Xinjiang, such as restrict Uighur Muslims in pray, fast in Ramadan, the Quranic studies, the Islamic education, the Islamic cloths and the Islamic living way. Such a restriction makes the Uighur Muslims more resentful to Chinese Han Chauvinism, regard such a policy is the Han occupation and Han colonist policy, and a plan to deliberated move to eliminate Uighur culture and Islamic culture, as the western medias usually accuse. So now it could potentially develop into a vicious circle in Xinjiang's political environment. During the last decade the harsh policy in Xinjiang toward Islam and Muslim minorities has eventually impacted inland China too. Many Muslims in inland feel the pressure in some content based on the fact that the authorities also impose the restriction on pray, fast, private Islamic education including the Quranic studies and the Arabic studies. The unofficial Islamic periodicals and printings have been decreased dramatically under the more tightly censorship imposed by the authorities. After the middle of the 2010s, the size of the Chinese hajjis to Mecca also suffers the reducing. Most of the Arabic architectural style of mosque building have been enforced to replace into traditional Chinese temple style. The Islamic studies and its academic activities face down-sized shrinking. The religious revival tidal current turns to the depression in whole country.

IV. REACTION OF THE ISLAMIC COUNTRIES AND THE MUSLIM WORLDS TO CHINA

While the large ethnic massacres took place in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang on July 5, 2009 many Islamic countries actually kept silence except Turkish government lodged an official protest.⁴⁵ The dilemma of many Islamic countries silently tolerant to Chinese government keeping the strong hand against the Uighur Muslims in her Xinjiang policy reflects the their ambiguous stand: they need the investment, technology and economy helps from China, they need China's construction workers' labor service in the infrastructure projects such as building highway, bridge, power station, buildings, and other aid projects. They also need the cheap production imported from China, particularly, the light industry, and daily needs, electrical applicants, vehicles. A number of the Islamic countries such as Iran, Syria, Pakistan, Yemen, Sudan, Algeria and Egypt face the embargo from the western countries in military industry, they have to purchase weapons from China, even Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Iraq have turned to China to order martial equipment and weaponry. So many Islamic countries rely on China in economic aids and financial helps, meanwhile they use China as a lever to encounter with the western hegemony policy in the international affairs. The Islamic countries also want the support from China for the course of Palestine in the struggle against Israeli's occupation of the Arab land. Historically, many Islamic countries resemble China suffered very much from the Western imperialism and colonialism, therefore, they naturally feel sympathy to the anti-western approach taken by China. On other hand, since they rely on the aids and supports from China in some degree, they cannot offend China, and they wish using China as a card to play against the West countries in the global politics. They maximally take the advantage from Sino-USA competition in the world politics. Another reason for the Islamic countries' stand toward China policy in Xinjiang is Islamic extremism and Muslim radicalism which cause the headache for many ruling regimes in the Islamic world. Last not the least, many Islamic countries resembling the most undeveloped countries in the world regard China as the good model in developing its economy so fast in such a short period that China has changed from a very poor country into a developed country, the second largest economy power in the world. Nevertheless, the official medias in the Islamic countries likely echo the voice of Chinese government labeling the violence in Xinjiang as the terrorist attacks, or the internal affairs, therefore, show some kind of understanding and restraining in

⁴² For the terrorist attacks in China, please read the Xinjiang White Paper issued by the State Information Office yearly.

⁴³ There is a sharp difference and shift in the public opinion in China between the dates of the outbreak of the 911 tragedy and the series terrorist attacks which occurred in the various parts of China after July 5, 2009.

⁴⁴ The CCP has held several working meetings about Xinjiang, and has designed the special policies about Xinjiang. For the Hard Strike Campaign and the Struggle against Religious Extremism, National Separatism and International Terrorism, could see lot of the news and reports in the Western medias for last decades.

⁴⁵ For this silence from the Islamic world the readers could be referred to the newspapers such as *the New York Times*, *Washingtonpost*, and *South China Morning Post* in that period.

their official stand over the issues as the human right for Muslim minorities in China.

Chinese Muslims in general take stand at the side of their Muslim brothers in supporting the Palestine armed struggle against Israeli's occupation of Palestine land.⁴⁶ Chinese Muslims strongly condemned America invaded Iraq and Afghanistan, and some mosques in China held the activities such as burning scarecrow of George Bush Jr. the formal president of USA to show angry against the USA's invasion of Iraq, and their supporting Saddam Hussein.⁴⁷ As the news of the terrorist attack in the 9/11 reported on Chinese media many Chinese Muslims applauded this attack and expressed their support to Osama Ben Laden secretly.⁴⁸ As Ben Laden was killed by the American special forces, a few Muslim periodicals expressed their great sympathy to this martyr for the Islamic course.⁴⁹ When the Western powers condemned Bashar Assad used chemical weapon killing the Syrian resistant forces, Chinese Muslims organized their charity network to donate money and materials and sent them to Syrian government.⁵⁰ Chinese Muslim elites sponsored the conferences, workshops and forums to support Chinese state's "One Belt and One Road Initiative" projects in order to strengthen the links between China and the Islamic world.⁵¹ While America imposes economic sanction against Iran, many Chinese Muslims including Muslim clerics and scholars showing their support of the Iranian government against the American hegemony in the Middle East. Such sentiment of anti-West and anti-America from Chinese Muslims but encouraged by Chinese state in manipulating the public opinion also in turn be skillfully taken advantage by the Muslim intellectuals in China for the chance of improving Sino-Islamic ties and meanwhile secure their good social

status and interests for Islam growing in China.⁵² Sponsored by Chinese government, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region has held Sino-Arab Forum several times to promote the economic, politic and cultural links between China and Arabic countries.

V. ISLAM IN A NEW COLD WAR TODAY

China becomes the second largest economy in the world, just next to USA, and potentially will surpass the power of America in near future, assumed by the Communist Party of China.⁵³ However, the unbalance of a partly liberal economy and the advancement of science and technology but with a more tightly controlled authoritarian politic system in China make such a used to be friendly and close relation with America now turns to more and more difficult in maintenance and could be impossible continual. The abuse of China from the open and democratic and liberal society such as the USA and Europe, especially use the western technology and investments, educational facilities to strengthen the communist totalitarian structure and export its corrupted authoritarian power into the world make the USA and Europe feel so threatened that the politicians in Washington DC believing the superpower status of the USA today will be soon replaced by China in the coming few decades. So do the Trump and Biden administrations take the hardline toward China, and the trade war between the two largest economic powers deteriorated Sino-American relation further, particularly in the second term of Trump Administration. The tension over the source of the pandemic Covid-19, over the China South Sea, over the Taiwan Strait, over the Syrian civil war, over the Iranian nuclear program, over the provoke incidents in the Korean Peninsula, over the issue such as poor human right record, specifically over the Uighur human rights in Xinjiang and recently over the Russian-Ukraine War, and Israel-Hamas and late on Israel-Iran confrontation, all make such a Sino-America relation direct toward a semi new cold war in the Asia and Pacific Region even in the worldwide level.

The strategy for keeping Marxism regime but using Western technology and investments to strengthen the power of China's Party-State was and is continually employed by the CCP. Beijing's final goal is to make Communist China the number one in the world, to defeat the Western powers led by the USA, the only superpower in the world, the triumphal of Communism over Capitalism. Such an ideological strategy actually is inherited from the imperial China: maintaining the

⁴⁶ After the Bandung Conference in 1955 the Chinese government has always supported Palestine people's struggle against Israel's invasion. Manipulated by the state, Chinese Muslims certainly stand at the side of the Muslims in the world. The recent conflict between Israel and Hamas since October 7, 2023 has stimulated Chinese nationalism and increased the anti-Zionism in the network's debate.

⁴⁷ I was informed by some Muslim scholars in the conference after the American troops invaded Iraq in 2003.

⁴⁸ Sha Zongping (沙宗平): *ShengzhanyuJihadeBianxi* ("圣战"与"吉哈德"辨析, Distinguishing and Analyzing the Holy War and Jihad), see: <http://www.norislam.com/home/space.php?uid=73456&do=blog&id=10792>, accessed on the date of Dec. 27, 2009.

⁴⁹ I spent quite a time to surf the internet sources as the death of Ben Laden was announced on May 2nd 2011. I found many articles written by Chinese Muslims showing their angry feeling against American hegemonic policy and the great sympathy toward Ben Laden and his Jihad course, see www.2Muslim.com and www.norislam.com. Some Chinese Muslim intellectuals composed poem to praise Osama Ben Laden, and thought him as a great hero.

⁵⁰ Basically the donation was through the mosque channel and collected from the Muslim believers as they prayed and listen to the sermon delivered by the Imams in the mosques.

⁵¹ The universities in Lanzhou, Xining, Yinchuan, Kunming and Beijing organized such kind of conferences and workshops.

⁵² This argument could be confirmed by the foreign policy taken by the Chinese government during her official position during last seven decades and the facts of the revival of Islam in China after the 1980s.

⁵³ Refer to the working reports of the CCP Congress for last decade and the PRC governmental reports of the National People's Congress annually.

hierarchical Confucianism value in keeping the power of the empire and taking advantage of the western weaponry to strengthen the imperial ruling over the subjects. Even the CCP uses the name of the People's Republic, according to Prof. Mark Elliott, a specialist of the Manchu Empire in Harvard University, the Communist China remains as an empire,⁵⁴ and ruled by an "emperor" without the title of emperor.

The American politicians wanted to shift the force of the Islamic fundamentalism and radical Islam into China, weaken the relation between China and the Islamic world, for instance, lobbying Afghan Taliban force to support the separatist movement in Xinjiang, so in order to blurring the ties between China and the Islamic world.⁵⁵ Among the high rank CCP officials the USA is regarded as an evil-minded force aiming to topple the Communist government of China. The American government uses the issue of the human rights of the Muslim ethnic minorities in China to tarnish the image of China in the international community and balance the competition between China and the USA. Also the USA strongly opposes China's policy in Xinjiang over the issues such as the Uighur rights, the educational camps, the religious policy and the discrimination against the Muslims in China. The USA also strongly oppose China using forces in the unification with Taiwan and China's position in the South China Sea. And the USA also very suspects the motivation of China's "One Belt and One Road Initiative" strategy, China's mediated role in the improving relation between Saudi Arabia and Iran and the expansion of Brics organization and Shanghai Cooperation Organization recently. The USA is very alert over China's attitude concerning the Russian-Ukraine war, which China apparently support Russia in the war and has joined military drills with Russia several times for the last years. Far the more, Beijing has invited Assad Basir, the former president of Syria and Russian president Putin visiting China after Russia invaded Ukraine. The USA also very doubts China's motivation as she invited the high-level representatives from 14 Palestinian factions to hold a reconciliation dialogue in Beijing from July 21 to 23, 2024 and all Palestinian factions jointly signed the "Beijing Declaration on Ending Secession and Strengthening Palestinian National Unity" (hereinafter referred to as the "Beijing Declaration").⁵⁶ Hence, the

strategic differentiation between China and America makes two countries' relation impossibly turn to be friendly, instead the direction could lead toward the hostile enemies even potentially war in future, which looks very possible. Although recently the leaders of China and USA held a summit meeting in Los Angels on November 15, 2023 with the sweet words from Chinese side and showed some charming feature in the meeting in an attempt for improving the bilateral relation, who know whether it is a tactical or makeshift? Right now China invites Russian president Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to participate in the military parade for the celebration of the victory in the war resisting the Japanese invasion on September 3, 2025. It seems that China has consolidated her position as the leader of the authoritarian block against the Western democratic countries headed by the USA in the world politics. With the intensification of China's relation with the Western world, many Islamic countries in the Sunni Islamic world actually find them in dilemma to choose a standing on which side in the future clashes between the two big political powers in the new cold war atmosphere. will such a hostility in Sino-America relation conduce to the large scale world war or the nuclear war in near future? We hope that will not take place anyway.

VI. SUMMARY

China likes to continue the cooperation with America on the fields of trade, economics, financial and science & technology, however, China keeps its alert to prevent American political and cultural influence which potentially weaken the ruling power of the Communist Party of China. From the fundamental Communism ideology point of view, the PRC regards America the arch-enemy in its strategical maneuver, that would hardly be changeable because of the differences in political and economical structure, more difference is in the ideological approach and spiritual values.

Sino-American relation is a crucial key in choosing and tilting the position of the PRC toward to the Islamic world and the Middle Eastern policy. Far the more, the Sino-American relation is an important barometer in China own domestic policy toward the issue of her Muslim minorities.

Chinese Muslims motivated by their Islamic notion and ideas prefer to a closer relation with the Islamic world for their better treatment as the Muslim minorities and relying on the preferential program (favorite treatment) granted by the Party-State for the growth of Islam in China, at the same time the Muslim elites involving the governmental function support the PRC's policy holding by the hardliner to take a strong position against the USA's hegemony policy and in the gesture of Sino-American encountering or competition.

The Islamic world looks up China to weight against the USA's policy in the Middle East and

⁵⁴ See Mark C. Elliott: *Emperor Qianlong, Son of Heaven, Man of the World*. Longman/Pearson, 2009.

⁵⁵ Such kind of political stand could be reflected in the speeches given by the Chinese leaders in their inner circle meetings for last two decades.

⁵⁶ See the website news: <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E5%85%B3%E4%BA%8E%E7%BB%93%E6%9D%9F%E5%88%86%E8%A3%82%E5%8A%A0%E5%BC%BA%E5%B7%B4%E5%8B%92%E6%96%AF%E5%9D%A6%E6%B0%91%E6%97%8F%E5%9B%A2%E7%BB%93%E7%9A%84%E5%8C%97%E4%BA%AC%E5%AE%A3%E8%A8%80/64688172>

meanwhile try to balance the Western domination in the world with China's politic and economic power. So many Islamic countries take a very realistic position toward China: welcome its economic aid and infrastructural project investment, but privately is not so happy with China's policy concerning the human right of its Uighur people and the domestic Islamic religious policy. The discontents with China's policy mostly come from the grass-root level of the Muslim society not from the officialdom in the Islamic world.

The stand of American administration is very ambiguous: it wants China's vast market and the great benefits from the economic exchanges between the two countries, however, the USA definitely is afraid of the Communist China to challenge its superpower status and its global domination, particularly its geopolitics strategy in Asian and Pacific Region and her domination of the world politic structure and financial order, especially, USA dollars role in such economic system. Thus, the USA regards Communist China as potentially the biggest enemy after the Soviet Union was disintegrated. The USA closely watches the role the PRC plays in the Russia-Ukraine War, the confrontation in the Middle East and the situation in the South China Sea, over the Taiwan Strait.

Late Professor Samuel Huntingdon's prediction could never occur that the coming clashes would be the civilization clashes: between the alliance of Confucianism China and the Islamic world on one side and the alliance of the Judeo-Christian Western on the other side. In my opinion, since China and the Islamic world has no fundamental commonality in their strategy interests and cultural values, although their social structure and politic apparatus are similar in some way. The Islamic world most likely be a watcher in the fierce competition between China and America, probably try to gain the maximal benefits from such a heated tension in the international arena. Since the Islamic world is very diverse concerning their economic ties and politic stand in the competition of China with the West, the Shi'a world led by Iran probably more close to China, and the Sunni world headed by Saudi Arabia is more caution toward the Sino-American relation, probably a little closer to the West. From China's stand since her priority goal is to keep the Party-State and the authoritarian hierarchy in power therefore, China could not whole-heart support Hamas and the Shi'an Axis led by Iran in the confrontations in the Middle East since China definitely could not risk her military strength being weakened just for the course of the Islamic countries. China only support the Arab and Palestine in morality and political justice, except to supply some military weapons, she could not do more. On the side of the West, democratic system based on the ruling of law is not so perfect, there are some flaws which make the West is tolerant with the authoritarian regimes, so the

appeasement policy allow the existence and the development of the dictatorship in the world. Another main reason for the Islamic countries feel humility and angary is the USA policy strongly supporting Israel over the conflicts between Israel and Palestine. Nevertheless, the triangle relation of China, the Islamic world and the Western power led by America is a picture of three-legged one: complicated, pragmatic and based on self-interest in their mutual ties, and such a triangular relation in the international politics will keep going on for some time in future.



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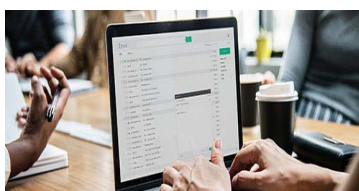
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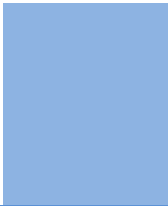
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Verbs have to be in agreement with their subjects. In a research paper, do not start sentences with conjunctions or finish them with prepositions. When writing formally, it is advisable to never split an infinitive because someone will (wrongly) complain. Avoid clichés like a disease. Always shun irritating alliteration. Use language which is simple and straightforward. Put together a neat summary.

14. Arrangement of information: Each section of the main body should start with an opening sentence, and there should be a changeover at the end of the section. Give only valid and powerful arguments for your topic. You may also maintain your arguments with records.

15. Never start at the last minute: Always allow enough time for research work. Leaving everything to the last minute will degrade your paper and spoil your work.

16. Multitasking in research is not good: Doing several things at the same time is a bad habit in the case of research activity. Research is an area where everything has a particular time slot. Divide your research work into parts, and do a particular part in a particular time slot.

17. Never copy others' work: Never copy others' work and give it your name because if the evaluator has seen it anywhere, you will be in trouble. Take proper rest and food: No matter how many hours you spend on your research activity, if you are not taking care of your health, then all your efforts will have been in vain. For quality research, take proper rest and food.

18. Go to seminars: Attend seminars if the topic is relevant to your research area. Utilize all your resources.

Refresh your mind after intervals: Try to give your mind a rest by listening to soft music or sleeping in intervals. This will also improve your memory. Acquire colleagues: Always try to acquire colleagues. No matter how sharp you are, if you acquire colleagues, they can give you ideas which will be helpful to your research.

19. Think technically: Always think technically. If anything happens, search for its reasons, benefits, and demerits. Think and then print: When you go to print your paper, check that tables are not split, headings are not detached from their descriptions, and page sequence is maintained.



20. Adding unnecessary information: Do not add unnecessary information like "I have used MS Excel to draw graphs." Irrelevant and inappropriate material is superfluous. Foreign terminology and phrases are not apropos. One should never take a broad view. Analogy is like feathers on a snake. Use words properly, regardless of how others use them. Remove quotations. Puns are for kids, not grunt readers. Never oversimplify: When adding material to your research paper, never go for oversimplification; this will definitely irritate the evaluator. Be specific. Never use rhythmic redundancies. Contractions shouldn't be used in a research paper. Comparisons are as terrible as clichés. Give up ampersands, abbreviations, and so on. Remove commas that are not necessary. Parenthetical words should be between brackets or commas. Understatement is always the best way to put forward earth-shaking thoughts. Give a detailed literary review.

21. Report concluded results: Use concluded results. From raw data, filter the results, and then conclude your studies based on measurements and observations taken. An appropriate number of decimal places should be used. Parenthetical remarks are prohibited here. Proofread carefully at the final stage. At the end, give an outline to your arguments. Spot perspectives of further study of the subject. Justify your conclusion at the bottom sufficiently, which will probably include examples.

22. Upon conclusion: Once you have concluded your research, the next most important step is to present your findings. Presentation is extremely important as it is the definite medium through which your research is going to be in print for the rest of the crowd. Care should be taken to categorize your thoughts well and present them in a logical and neat manner. A good quality research paper format is essential because it serves to highlight your research paper and bring to light all necessary aspects of your research.

INFORMAL GUIDELINES OF RESEARCH PAPER WRITING

Key points to remember:

- Submit all work in its final form.
- Write your paper in the form which is presented in the guidelines using the template.
- Please note the criteria peer reviewers will use for grading the final paper.

Final points:

One purpose of organizing a research paper is to let people interpret your efforts selectively. The journal requires the following sections, submitted in the order listed, with each section starting on a new page:

The introduction: This will be compiled from reference matter and reflect the design processes or outline of basis that directed you to make a study. As you carry out the process of study, the method and process section will be constructed like that. The results segment will show related statistics in nearly sequential order and direct reviewers to similar intellectual paths throughout the data that you gathered to carry out your study.

The discussion section:

This will provide understanding of the data and projections as to the implications of the results. The use of good quality references throughout the paper will give the effort trustworthiness by representing an alertness to prior workings.

Writing a research paper is not an easy job, no matter how trouble-free the actual research or concept. Practice, excellent preparation, and controlled record-keeping are the only means to make straightforward progression.

General style:

Specific editorial column necessities for compliance of a manuscript will always take over from directions in these general guidelines.

To make a paper clear: Adhere to recommended page limits.



Mistakes to avoid:

- Insertion of a title at the foot of a page with subsequent text on the next page.
- Separating a table, chart, or figure—confine each to a single page.
- Submitting a manuscript with pages out of sequence.
- In every section of your document, use standard writing style, including articles ("a" and "the").
- Keep paying attention to the topic of the paper.
- Use paragraphs to split each significant point (excluding the abstract).
- Align the primary line of each section.
- Present your points in sound order.
- Use present tense to report well-accepted matters.
- Use past tense to describe specific results.
- Do not use familiar wording; don't address the reviewer directly. Don't use slang or superlatives.
- Avoid use of extra pictures—include only those figures essential to presenting results.

Title page:

Choose a revealing title. It should be short and include the name(s) and address(es) of all authors. It should not have acronyms or abbreviations or exceed two printed lines.

Abstract: This summary should be two hundred words or less. It should clearly and briefly explain the key findings reported in the manuscript and must have precise statistics. It should not have acronyms or abbreviations. It should be logical in itself. Do not cite references at this point.

An abstract is a brief, distinct paragraph summary of finished work or work in development. In a minute or less, a reviewer can be taught the foundation behind the study, common approaches to the problem, relevant results, and significant conclusions or new questions.

Write your summary when your paper is completed because how can you write the summary of anything which is not yet written? Wealth of terminology is very essential in abstract. Use comprehensive sentences, and do not sacrifice readability for brevity; you can maintain it succinctly by phrasing sentences so that they provide more than a lone rationale. The author can at this moment go straight to shortening the outcome. Sum up the study with the subsequent elements in any summary. Try to limit the initial two items to no more than one line each.

Reason for writing the article—theory, overall issue, purpose.

- Fundamental goal.
- To-the-point depiction of the research.
- Consequences, including definite statistics—if the consequences are quantitative in nature, account for this; results of any numerical analysis should be reported. Significant conclusions or questions that emerge from the research.

Approach:

- Single section and succinct.
- An outline of the job done is always written in past tense.
- Concentrate on shortening results—limit background information to a verdict or two.
- Exact spelling, clarity of sentences and phrases, and appropriate reporting of quantities (proper units, important statistics) are just as significant in an abstract as they are anywhere else.

Introduction:

The introduction should "introduce" the manuscript. The reviewer should be presented with sufficient background information to be capable of comprehending and calculating the purpose of your study without having to refer to other works. The basis for the study should be offered. Give the most important references, but avoid making a comprehensive appraisal of the topic. Describe the problem visibly. If the problem is not acknowledged in a logical, reasonable way, the reviewer will give no attention to your results. Speak in common terms about techniques used to explain the problem, if needed, but do not present any particulars about the protocols here.



The following approach can create a valuable beginning:

- Explain the value (significance) of the study.
- Defend the model—why did you employ this particular system or method? What is its compensation? Remark upon its appropriateness from an abstract point of view as well as pointing out sensible reasons for using it.
- Present a justification. State your particular theory(-ies) or aim(s), and describe the logic that led you to choose them.
- Briefly explain the study's tentative purpose and how it meets the declared objectives.

Approach:

Use past tense except for when referring to recognized facts. After all, the manuscript will be submitted after the entire job is done. Sort out your thoughts; manufacture one key point for every section. If you make the four points listed above, you will need at least four paragraphs. Present surrounding information only when it is necessary to support a situation. The reviewer does not desire to read everything you know about a topic. Shape the theory specifically—do not take a broad view.

As always, give awareness to spelling, simplicity, and correctness of sentences and phrases.

Procedures (methods and materials):

This part is supposed to be the easiest to carve if you have good skills. A soundly written procedures segment allows a capable scientist to replicate your results. Present precise information about your supplies. The suppliers and clarity of reagents can be helpful bits of information. Present methods in sequential order, but linked methodologies can be grouped as a segment. Be concise when relating the protocols. Attempt to give the least amount of information that would permit another capable scientist to replicate your outcome, but be cautious that vital information is integrated. The use of subheadings is suggested and ought to be synchronized with the results section.

When a technique is used that has been well-described in another section, mention the specific item describing the way, but draw the basic principle while stating the situation. The purpose is to show all particular resources and broad procedures so that another person may use some or all of the methods in one more study or referee the scientific value of your work. It is not to be a step-by-step report of the whole thing you did, nor is a methods section a set of orders.

Materials:

Materials may be reported in part of a section or else they may be recognized along with your measures.

Methods:

- Report the method and not the particulars of each process that engaged the same methodology.
- Describe the method entirely.
- To be succinct, present methods under headings dedicated to specific dealings or groups of measures.
- Simplify—detail how procedures were completed, not how they were performed on a particular day.
- If well-known procedures were used, account for the procedure by name, possibly with a reference, and that's all.

Approach:

It is embarrassing to use vigorous voice when documenting methods without using first person, which would focus the reviewer's interest on the researcher rather than the job. As a result, when writing up the methods, most authors use third person passive voice.

Use standard style in this and every other part of the paper—avoid familiar lists, and use full sentences.

What to keep away from:

- Resources and methods are not a set of information.
- Skip all descriptive information and surroundings—save it for the argument.
- Leave out information that is immaterial to a third party.



Results:

The principle of a results segment is to present and demonstrate your conclusion. Create this part as entirely objective details of the outcome, and save all understanding for the discussion.

The page length of this segment is set by the sum and types of data to be reported. Use statistics and tables, if suitable, to present consequences most efficiently.

You must clearly differentiate material which would usually be incorporated in a study editorial from any unprocessed data or additional appendix matter that would not be available. In fact, such matters should not be submitted at all except if requested by the instructor.

Content:

- Sum up your conclusions in text and demonstrate them, if suitable, with figures and tables.
- In the manuscript, explain each of your consequences, and point the reader to remarks that are most appropriate.
- Present a background, such as by describing the question that was addressed by creation of an exacting study.
- Explain results of control experiments and give remarks that are not accessible in a prescribed figure or table, if appropriate.
- Examine your data, then prepare the analyzed (transformed) data in the form of a figure (graph), table, or manuscript.

What to stay away from:

- Do not discuss or infer your outcome, report surrounding information, or try to explain anything.
- Do not include raw data or intermediate calculations in a research manuscript.
- Do not present similar data more than once.
- A manuscript should complement any figures or tables, not duplicate information.
- Never confuse figures with tables—there is a difference.

Approach:

As always, use past tense when you submit your results, and put the whole thing in a reasonable order.

Put figures and tables, appropriately numbered, in order at the end of the report.

If you desire, you may place your figures and tables properly within the text of your results section.

Figures and tables:

If you put figures and tables at the end of some details, make certain that they are visibly distinguished from any attached appendix materials, such as raw facts. Whatever the position, each table must be titled, numbered one after the other, and include a heading. All figures and tables must be divided from the text.

Discussion:

The discussion is expected to be the trickiest segment to write. A lot of papers submitted to the journal are discarded based on problems with the discussion. There is no rule for how long an argument should be.

Position your understanding of the outcome visibly to lead the reviewer through your conclusions, and then finish the paper with a summing up of the implications of the study. The purpose here is to offer an understanding of your results and support all of your conclusions, using facts from your research and generally accepted information, if suitable. The implication of results should be fully described.

Infer your data in the conversation in suitable depth. This means that when you clarify an observable fact, you must explain mechanisms that may account for the observation. If your results vary from your prospect, make clear why that may have happened. If your results agree, then explain the theory that the proof supported. It is never suitable to just state that the data approved the prospect, and let it drop at that. Make a decision as to whether each premise is supported or discarded or if you cannot make a conclusion with assurance. Do not just dismiss a study or part of a study as "uncertain."



Research papers are not acknowledged if the work is imperfect. Draw what conclusions you can based upon the results that you have, and take care of the study as a finished work.

- You may propose future guidelines, such as how an experiment might be personalized to accomplish a new idea.
- Give details of all of your remarks as much as possible, focusing on mechanisms.
- Make a decision as to whether the tentative design sufficiently addressed the theory and whether or not it was correctly restricted. Try to present substitute explanations if they are sensible alternatives.
- One piece of research will not counter an overall question, so maintain the large picture in mind. Where do you go next? The best studies unlock new avenues of study. What questions remain?
- Recommendations for detailed papers will offer supplementary suggestions.

Approach:

When you refer to information, differentiate data generated by your own studies from other available information. Present work done by specific persons (including you) in past tense.

Describe generally acknowledged facts and main beliefs in present tense.

THE ADMINISTRATION RULES

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BY GLOBAL JOURNALS

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Topics	Grades		
	A-B	C-D	E-F
<i>Abstract</i>	Clear and concise with appropriate content, Correct format. 200 words or below	Unclear summary and no specific data, Incorrect form Above 200 words	No specific data with ambiguous information Above 250 words
<i>Introduction</i>	Containing all background details with clear goal and appropriate details, flow specification, no grammar and spelling mistake, well organized sentence and paragraph, reference cited	Unclear and confusing data, appropriate format, grammar and spelling errors with unorganized matter	Out of place depth and content, hazy format
<i>Methods and Procedures</i>	Clear and to the point with well arranged paragraph, precision and accuracy of facts and figures, well organized subheads	Difficult to comprehend with embarrassed text, too much explanation but completed	Incorrect and unorganized structure with hazy meaning
<i>Result</i>	Well organized, Clear and specific, Correct units with precision, correct data, well structuring of paragraph, no grammar and spelling mistake	Complete and embarrassed text, difficult to comprehend	Irregular format with wrong facts and figures
<i>Discussion</i>	Well organized, meaningful specification, sound conclusion, logical and concise explanation, highly structured paragraph reference cited	Wordy, unclear conclusion, spurious	Conclusion is not cited, unorganized, difficult to comprehend
<i>References</i>	Complete and correct format, well organized	Beside the point, Incomplete	Wrong format and structuring



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