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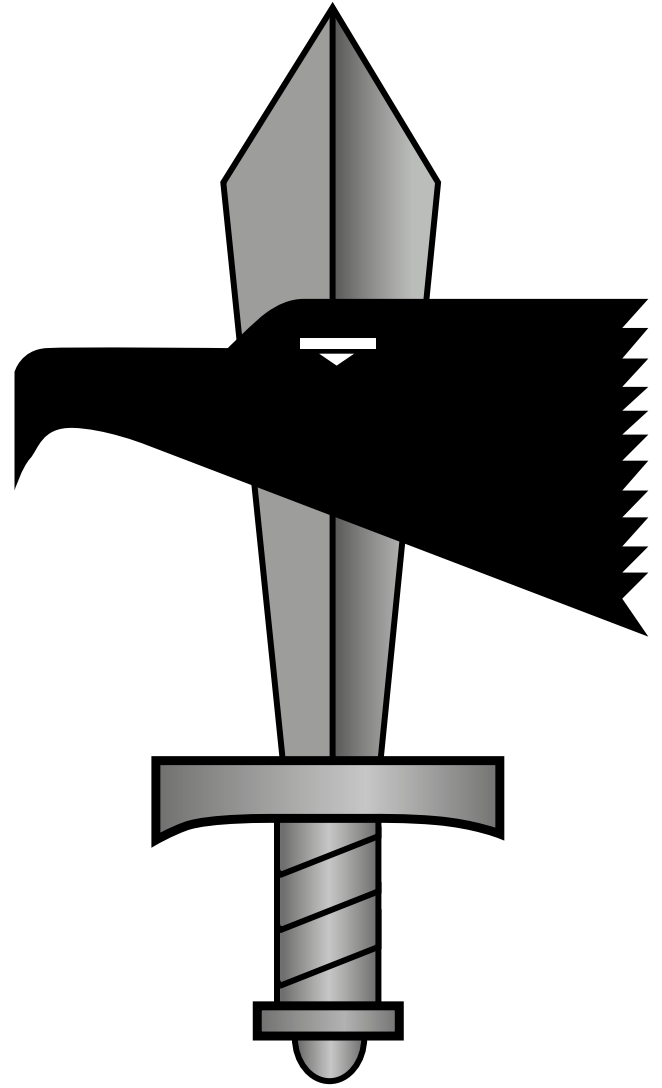
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September 2018

The Magazine of the NATO  
Rapid Deployable Corps - Italy



# THE INSTABILITY OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA:

## SITUATION, PERSPECTIVES, ANALOGIES AND DIFFERENCES



**SPECIAL  
EDITION**



# NATO Rapid Deployable Corps - Italy

*Ubique Celere*

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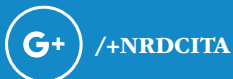
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The Everywhere Rapidly is the authorized official publication of the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps, Italy. All editorial content of the Everywhere Rapidly is approved by the NRDC-ITA Commander, at “Ugo Mara” barracks, via per Busto Arsizio, 20 - 21058 Solbiate Olona , Varese, Italy.

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Printed by: Grafica Olona



# Preface

When I first considered how I could improve my Headquarters' awareness of the geostrategic environment surrounding us, I realized that the widely used "Comprehensive Approach", in an ever changing world, implies per se continuous research, continuous refining of our ways to think, to decide and to act. This challenges us to adapt our own mindset, our own perception of things. In fact, although many events somehow repeat themselves in the endless cycle of history, the dynamics, the key factors, the ways and means change accordingly.

Hence, the crucial need to optimize all resources available in order to get it right. In this respect, the Academic World represents a unique source of intellectual strength, a key enabler for our knowledge and informer of our decision making process.

The NRDC-ITA EAGLE EYE 2018, then, has become of itself the ideal environment in which military personnel and academics together foster a frank, open and objective dialogue.

More than that, this creation of a renewed "way to think", has been designed to allow for an intellectually stimulating environment in which we can indeed "co-work" – and I use the portmanteau verb advisedly. I think co-working goes well beyond coordination, interaction and so forth. In my understanding, co-working epitomizes a real synergy, a conscious and active working together by all elements of a power system.

The second reason was then to obtain something tangible. A product, that can represent a baseline, a guide, a stimulus to further study, and also a reference for spreading awareness in our domain.

In fact, past, current and future operations are and will be characterized by the key preliminary phase: UNDERSTAND, understand the reality surrounding us. In the words of one of our distinguished academics, this will help us all to "avoid the perfect storm".

Understanding allows for knowledge; knowledge allows for empowerment. This is the second milestone of our effort. We need to empower those who lead and those who are to be led.

To this end, even the lowest level is to be empowered to take the right decisions, under considerable pressure and in real time. Understanding the situation, knowing the overall design, empowers those who are to act to do so properly, effectively; thus avoiding catastrophic fallouts for the overall mission.

Additionally, we must identify the key crisis. As the SAHEL discussion proved, the factors for instability can be similar for the whole region, but their relative importance and their combining may vary; and so must be measured against multiple dimensions: cultural, ethnic, social, institutional, economic and so on. A stable and secure environment does not rely only on the military/security line of operation.

The Armed Forces must operationalize, and include all actors, in our planning, in our endeavours. This will not, of course, provide us with a decisive solution for a crisis. However, thereby planners and operators, today and in the future, may avoid being too far off the mark whilst considering each element's contribution to stability.

My wholehearted thanks go to all academics for their commitment and true passion in this common endeavour. They were able to raise thoughts, understand different aspects, whet our interest in examining, more deeply, fields other than the military one.

I am convinced that, today and in the future, our co-working must be enhanced and improved. A veil of uncertainty shrouds the whole world; it is our duty to work together for the current and future leaders, at any level, to understand, empower, and operationalize our endeavour for a better future.

I am confident that this special edition of our Everywhere Rapidly magazine, which collects the key facts and deductions of our studies will provide a significant contribution to the ongoing discussion on stability, as well as a quick reference for further development both in the military and the academic fora.

*Lieutenant General Roberto Perretti*  
**Commander NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy**

# 1 Introduction

by *Andrea Margelletti*

In a changing world, political priorities, security threats and sources of instability constantly evolve. Unfortunately, the world changes faster than the ability to adapt of national institutions and international organizations. The end result is that, on many occasions, policy makers and technical operators have to deal with problems that have already matured and exploded. The ultimate consequence is that, while dealing with these problems and vulnerabilities, we find ourselves acting according to a logic of perennial emergency. In this sense, the geopolitics of the last 10 years have provided us with dramatic concrete examples, from the outbreak of the Arab Spring to the birth and evolution of Daesh and the massive wave of migration from Africa to Europe.

Nonetheless, EAGLE EYE 2018 could likely epitomize an important inversion of tendency, starting from the experience NATO gained during the Cold War years and coming to the present day, when the Atlantic Alliance has proved itself able to quickly adapt to the changing world, modifying the approaches towards an evolving security context. In fact, with the creation of the Southern Hub, the Alliance has recognized the importance of another geographical area other than the renowned "Eastern Front" and, from a methodological point of view, has included a range of threats different from those that, traditionally, belonged to the Soviet Union first and to Russia later.

In doing so, the Alliance has recognised that there are factors different from the Armed Forces of a hostile country. Hybrid and non-conventional factors of instability that, however, can threaten the solidity of the Euro-Atlantic block in a clear and direct way. This interest in the southern front, towards the hybrid and non-conventional threats, well matches the parallel evolution of the concept of stability policing, a fundamental activity of intervention both in the embryonic phases of a possible conflict, by neutralizing its causes, or in the immediately following phases, in order to guide and support the processes of peace building, security and strengthening of good governance.

In this sense, Africa is the continent where non-conventional and hybrid threats to European and Atlantic security develop faster but, at the same time, in a more systemic, unpredictable and inter-connected way. In fact, the proliferation of jihadist terrorism, the multiplication and strengthening of criminal networks, the

increase in outbreaks and volume of migration flows are all linked phenomena that share many of their original factors. These original factors can be divided into two macro-categories, one structural and one contingent. The first is related to long-term phenomena, while the second comprises events limited in time or the result of circumscribed circumstances. Among the structural factors, the most important are the economic-social and political ones, such as population growth, growth in the urbanization rates, climate change and land grabbing, gaps in governance and lack of the rule of law.

Similar trends, which began in the 1980s, produced an enormous pool of labour force and, above all, a new African bourgeoisie which, thanks to the spread of the internet, has become constantly informed and with cosmopolitan aspirations. However, the structure of African economic systems, still tied to a predatory model of selling raw materials, is not able either to absorb labour force nor to satisfy the job ambitions of the bourgeoisie. Similarly, entire generations of Africans, in addition to seeing their economic aspirations not met, had to face the deafness of self-referential, nepotistic and corrupt political systems, incapable of enhancing the human resources available to them and satisfying the identity claims of minorities, who are discriminated against.

In fact, since their independence from colonial patronage, African countries, with rare exceptions, have been unable to produce either a responsible ruling class or transparent and fully democratic government structures. In most of Africa, citizens are unable to express their electoral will clearly and effectively, nor do they see their civil and political rights adequately protected. Often dominated by tribalism or familyism, African societies do not perceive the presence of a wall that should separate private and collective interests, thus transforming state bureaucracies into the tentacles of the power of elitist groups and fuelling marginalization and alienation. An additional structural political factor concerns the very structure of African countries.

Specifically, it is about their ethnic-cultural lack of homogeneity and the underlying defect that accompanies their birth. In fact, most of the continent's State actors, with rare exceptions such as Ethiopia and South Africa, did not arise from national struggles promoted by indigenous ruling classes, but rather were born from the minds of the European colonial powers during the

era of imperialism. The borders traced by the logic of influence outside Africa have defined a political map in which ethnic groups and religious groups traditionally in conflict or totally alien to each other have been forced to live in the same territory and to share the same administrative structures. The final effect of this historical imposition is that the African continent is made up of dozens of States in which hundreds of nations are incessantly enclosed, incessantly struggling for self-determination and liberation since the end of colonialism. A similar and perpetual repetition of unheard demands, as well as producing a tense political debate, has often resulted in conflicts with a variable intensity that are now cankerous and seemingly interminable. In addition, in the last 20 years, many of these ethnic-sectarian conflicts have been polluted by the rhetoric of Islamist extremism, unfortunately skilled in manipulating national narratives and co-opting the agendas of insurgent movements, thus turning them into local fronts of global jihad.

It is quite easy to understand how, in a context characterized by similar structural problems, the contingent factors act as authentic and further accelerators. These contingent factors can be divided into economic and political. Usually, amongst the former one must consider also natural disasters (floods, eruptions, earthquakes) or unforeseen environmental crises that lead to the sudden collapse of the productive apparatus, especially the agro-food sector, and generate humanitarian crises. Specifically, this category includes famines, drought, livestock epidemics and pest invasions.

The set of variables included in the category of contingent political and security factors is much more complex. In this sense, taking into consideration the 2007-2017 decade, one can notice the very high number of crises and conflicts that have gripped the African continent and the competition of factors that, in a different way, have contributed to facilitating phenomena such as migration or jihadist revolts. Since 2007, the year of the first Tuareg uprising in Niger, until the Kasai conflict (2016), Africa has experienced the worst conflicts of the recent past, such as the al-Shabaab terrorist campaigns in Somalia and Boko Haram in Nigeria, the war in Mali and in the Central African Republic, the Anglophone rebellion in the Cameroonian Ambazonia.

The analysis of African social, political and security vul-

nerabilities allows us to understand how, in the current state of things, they are destined to last for the coming decades. In fact, Africa is characterized by constant population growth, equal to 2.1% per year for the next 30 years and a growing level of urbanization. This means that, in 2050, Africans will be about 2.5 billion, accounting for 26% of the world's population, of which over one billion and 300 million will live in cities. Their average age will be 24 years. Urbanization and demographic growth will go hand in hand with the increase in the level of access to new technologies, Internet and global communication networks. Therefore, African society will be increasingly inter-connected, both internally and with the outside world. In contrast, the rates of economic growth for the African continent, as forecasted at the time of writing (1.3% per year) will not be able to absorb the huge flow of labour force that will result from the population explosion, unless deep structural reforms, productive, commercial and tertiary systems will be put in place to sustain the needs of the population or its indigenous development aspirations. As if this were not enough, climate change will reduce, especially in the northern African area and close to the equatorial belt, the percentage of arable land that can be used for grazing. Based on these considerations, it is clear that the African population, in the coming decades, will have strong incentives for emigration, armed struggle and jihadist recruitment even higher than today.



# The instability factors in the Sub-Saharan Africa: a perspective

by Alex Vines

As an incipit, one can observe that it is remarkable that the renewed interests on the African continent allows for a first initial consideration.- At the end of the block confrontation, and despite the paramount importance of the stability of the continent, former masters or controllers lift the grip on African countries, leaving new entities and new actors to fill the gaps together with just a few remaining (France above all) to influence the political and economic processes within the continent.

## *Africa: thinking ahead*

This originated a centrifugal force where the former homogenous blocks were replaced, in time, by diverging political systems, mainly non-democratic in the first phase and strictly related to the local cultures, traditions and social dynamics. Different macroeconomic models, strictly deriving from the former effect and conditioned also by the framework inherited from the former masters, together with fault lines of different civilizations crossed by westphalian-style borders, brought to bear multiple challenges: first and foremost the emergence of transnational security challenges. Mainly materialized by former feuds and border disputes, coupled with the insertion of new actors moved by the richness of the continent to be exploited, caused further weakness and limited resilience of the new institutions emerged after the post colonial period.

Nonetheless, the exploitation of the resources brought also a clear and defined economic growth and an increasing resource and services internal demand. However, the lack of internal actors caused a progressive, mounting debt of countries forced to recur to external multinational actors to gather the necessary investments in the various fields.

Another significant factor lies within the consequent demographic change and the so called "urbanization". In fact the last phenomenon, common in other areas of the world subject to sudden and geometric economic growth, concentrated masses around the capitals and major cities, in essence population hoping for a better future, strictly dependent, nonetheless, by the volatility of the GDP growth, not always sustained in time and whose settling presented significant fluctuations. Indeed a social problem, where the old tribal views collided against the new age, in an ever growing communications and information technology, widely restricted to those in search for a new opportunity.

If that heavily impacted internally, in time, the "contraction" and inward-looking of former masters and partners, it left also the young African institutions in a very limited position to influence the global balance.

From the physical side, the inner size of the continent,

able to contain within the major countries in the world in terms of extension, and the wide diversity in terms of culture and traditions (over 1000 languages spoken, a myriad of ethnic minorities and so forth) represented itself a considerable challenge to define a common understanding and position within a country itself. The challenge represented by the lack of strategic lines of communications, the length of those existing, provided for a difficult transnational, synchronized improvement. We were and we are facing an African "multiple speed" development, where some areas quickly gained an acceptable degree of development, whereas others were left completely alien to this effect; a diverse and diverging situation that will not have a solution in the short or in the mid-term.

## *Economic Trends*

In terms of economic recovery, however, the African countries, in terms of statistic data, are doing satisfactorily despite the various limiting factors discussed hitherto. In fact, on the overall performance of the African countries, according to the Oxford Economic Data FY analysis, shows a progressive and sustainable recovery in the first 15 years of the 21st century, where the majority of the countries overcome the negative growth of the last two fiscal years of the last century. And the forecast out to 2030 confirms the trend, though there will be fluctuations in single countries. Focusing on the sub-Saharan Africa, and according to the International Monetary Fund, there is still economic growth in the area, though the FY 2016 was the slowest in the last 20 years. Nonetheless, the outlook sees a progressive recovery, with a 3,5-3,9 GDP growth by 2020-2022.

Another significant aspect that highlights also the incoming of new actors on the African continent refers to the Foreign Direct Investment projects and funding. Although the former still shows the major commitment of western countries, the related sourcing shifted considerably in the last ten years, with the Asia Pacific Region and the Middle East surging to a combined 65 percent of the overall capitals invested in the last five years. A clear turn around that has China surging to a leading power in the African landscape.

In fact, the China- Africa trade balance statistics of the IMF depict clearly the dramatic surge of the ever increasing role of China, from an almost non existing trade of the early years of the 21st century to a considerable 100 billions USD between 2012 and 2014. A trend that, although the balance in the recent years have slightly diminished its overall volume- likely to be influenced by the Chinese One belt one Road project - certifies the foothold of the Chinese in the continent.

Chinese do not look at Africa in terms of outreaching new markets for the Chinese production alone. The trade off must be seen also in terms of the endless search by PRC of natural resources to sustain Beijing increasing needs. Although the PRC looks also to other parts of the world for mutual, “win-win” solutions, some African countries are still key to its expanding strategy on the market. This, if compared to the decreasing imports of oil by the US from the African continent, proves once again the role of China in the African economic and political dimension. However, and if one sits from the African perspective, a projection elaborated by Bloomberg proves the hypothesis of “diverse-diverging” landscape of African countries still remains and China has not yet achieved a “synchronizing effect” on the macroeconomic system of the region. In the future, at least in the short term and in the field of oil sustainable production, some African countries will lose their privileged position, whilst others, like Nigeria for example, will be on the winning side, conquering a better role in the global market.

Another fluctuating factor in this respect is represented by the oil price itself, which impacts heavily on the GDP of many African countries. If the trend is confirmed, by 2025, the global reduction of oil prices will have more than a significant impact on the GDP of countries which sit either in the sub-Saharan region or on the southern shore of the Mediterranean.

### *Conflict trends*

Another domain which strongly influenced the security situation in the sub-Saharan Africa can be drawn from the history of conflicts in the continent. The first fact to highlight is that something like 30 countries are part or are directly linked to sub-Saharan Africa. Of those, in history, over 65 percent have been involved in conflicts. As for the surge of conflicts in the continent, the majority of them rose in the aftermath of independence of the single countries. As for the duration of the conflicts themselves, which constitutes the fourth aspect of the analysis, 64 percent lasted five years or less, whereas 22 percent overcame the ten years threshold. The impact in terms of losses of life is another aspect that is somehow unknown: it must be noted that the magnitude of losses in human life in Africa due to conflicts between 1960 and 2008 is less than those recorded in Asia in the same period.

The recent trend embodies a decisive shift to the nature of the conflicts and losses mainly due, in line with the rest of the world, to the effect of crossing borders, mobile insurgent groups with different affiliations and ideology, such as AQIM, Al Shabaab, Boko Haram. What renders this analysis relevant to the discussion is that the geographical distribution of conflicts shows that the vast majority occurred in the sub-Saharan Africa or in areas directly linked to such as the Maghreb and the Horn of Africa.

Getting deeper in the human factor, in the root causes of the surge of the militant groups in Africa, a 2010 study referred to Mali and the West Bank indicates that the overarching factor for African males to join the militants lies, mainly, in the ideological factors, where the feel of safety and protection and unemployment counts at odds

between the West Bank and Mali. As for the external influence to security, the US and France still provide the strongest presence of military bases in the continent, although the recent positioning of other countries could indicate a different outlook for the near future. This must not lead to associate, though, the presence of bases with the actual figures concerning military advisors or trainers. The role of other countries, mainly China and with some return of Russian influence, reveals that the future can unfold a more competitive environment.

### *The political landscape and stability trends*

The old perception of longstanding rulers in the area, corroborated by actual figures until the recent years, indicates also that the recent events and the development achieved provided for a shift to the equation. In many countries, the dynamics led to a majority of successful post-term bids by negotiation or elections. Despite some exceptions, or undefined situations, the era of the longstanding leaders appears to be over in the continent. According to the Mo Ibrahim index, the trend of future governance is influenced by the development of the target country: a sustained rather than massive increase in the development index brings along a major focus on human development, rule of law and so forth. A trend that is likely to remain, unless other factors of instability will manifest. And to this end, the water factor is likely to be the next challenge, not only for Africa, but for the rest of the world. According to a study of the UN, by 2025 even developed states in the continent will suffer scarcity of water. Competition for essential resources then erupts as one of the current and major challenges. This can be dealt with, according to some authors only if there will be an integration of the variety of political security architectures acting in the continent. In this respect the current reform of the mechanism of the African Union will indeed provide another stability enabling factor. By reducing the dependence from non-African support both in terms of financing, structures and capabilities, the AU could become the catalyst for integration. In this respect, even the G5 Sahel initiative promoted by France could further provide a stabilizing effect in the Sahel region. There, the challenge lies in the commitment and will of the countries, and most of all, in identifying the right leaders, at any level, to carry out the irrefutable safe and secure environment tasks needed. In this respect, many initiatives of military assistance or, by using the new design, Security Force Assistance should provide in the mid-term the cornerstone for effective security structures in the area.



# Avoiding the perfect storm: building long-term stability for the Sahel Region

by *Pascal Carlucci*

The Western Sahel Region is considered today as one of biggest challenges of European foreign and security policies. The war in Libya in 2011 and the pressure of the migrant crisis in the Mediterranean has compelled political leaders in southern Europe, and the rest of Europe, to consider the geostrategic implications of the endemic problems of Western Sahel. The scarce information about this region is indicative of the how global public opinion has neglected the strategic relevance of the region. This article intends to briefly outline the main sources of geostrategic concern and provide an indication of possible lines of intervention.

What is a perfect storm? In popular knowledge, it is a combination of several factors which affect in a negative way, an existing event. This metaphor is intended to give the reader an immediate idea of the challenges which affect Western Sahel and their practical implications for operators of the international community on the ground. The Western Sahel region has endemic problems of poverty and development which have been statistically presented over the years by UN agencies and another NGO's. This situation is further worsen by geostrategic competition, security threats and institutional weakness. These are the issues which I will address in order to create a framework of the debate about the international community involvement in Western Sahel.

## *Geostrategic Competition*

Great powers have for centuries profoundly shaped the history of international relations through their statecraft and economic influence. So far, their role has evolved, but it has not shrunk in any meaningful way. Since great powers compete over influence in different areas of the world, it is imperative to analyse Western Sahel under this lens. Geostrategic competition can have different definitions, but in this case, it means a political struggle over influence in a specific territory through security means. France has been traditionally present in this region because of its former colonial ties to Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Ciad, and other francophone countries in Africa. The spectrum of bi-lateral cooperation between France and these countries stretches from cultural cooperation to defence cooperation. The intensity of this relationship is not matched by any other country in Europe and the rest of the world. Following the successful Operation Serval in 2012, and given the growing terrorist threat in the region, to launch the regional Operation Barkhane in 2014 to support the local security forces of Niger, Burkina Faso, Ciad, Mali and Mauritania to fight against terrorism. The deployment of such operation has the effect to regionalise the counter-terrorism efforts already carried out in Mali. In 2015, the

five countries already mentioned, created the G5 Sahel organisation and in 2016 this organisation became a security force with counter-terrorism and counter-trafficking duties. France has been the main promoter of this initiative and it has hosted several summit to support the budgeting support for this initiative. While this policy has been presented as a gradual military withdrawal from the region, the fact that France has been the promoter of this new regional effort in the evidence of its willingness to continue to exert its influence in the long term.

In 2017, Germany will soon open a military logistic hub in the airport of Niamey Niger to provide support to the UN peacekeeping operation in Mali MINUSMA. In 2018, Italy has announced its willingness to enhance its bilateral military cooperation with Niger by sending a military contingent to support Nigerian security forces in the country.

The United States has been increasingly present in the region in the last years and it has stepped up its cooperation with G5 countries and its military presence. In Agadez Niger, the United States have built an air force base as a sign of enhanced military cooperation in the Region. Moreover, Niger and Mali are part of the White House Security Governance Initiative (SGI) which aims at strengthening the strategic planning of security forces in the region. Indeed, this is a sign of an unprecedented interest in the region. The fight against terrorist organisations such as Boko Haram, and AQIM and the instability in Libya have led to geostrategic appreciation of the Region and an accrued presence.

China's interest in Africa is already known and widely demonstrated through its economic and, more recently, its military presence. The Sahel presents however an interesting opportunity for China because of its potential to act as a corridor between east and west Africa. There are several infrastructural projects to build trans-Saharan highways like Cameroon-Chad-Sudan, Lagos-Calabar, Lagos-Kano, which would make cross border economic activity easier. This grand infrastructural vision, which will see China its main engine, if successful will determine a major shift in the economic life of the Sahel and they bear the potential of stop the geographic isolation of these countries connecting them to the Ocean. It is interesting to note that none of these project connect Sahel countries to the Mediterranean. This vision encourages these economies to use commercial ports in the Gulf of Guinea and the Atlantic Ocean. This will generate jobs and opportunities southwards, not through the Sahara Desert. This, in the medium term, may generate tension with populations that live thanks to the commercial activities in the Sahara.

The rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Qatar, which spiked in 201, has had its consequences in the Sahel

and most likely it will continue to do so in the future. Saudi Arabia and the United Emirates have provided a large budgetary support for the creation of the G5 Force. However, Qatar has enhanced its relations with both Mali and Burkina Faso creating a friction between countries inside the G5 Force. These dynamics provide further evidence of geostrategic competition in the Region.

### *Security Threats*

The security threats in the Sahel stretch from illicit trafficking, terrorism and civil conflict. Globalisation, environmental problems and societal instability have rendered these security threats interconnected and extremely difficult to eradicate with the sole use of security and military tools. Moreover, European countries have “securitise” the current migrant crisis, especially the central Mediterranean Route, considering the large flow of migrants the result of illicit trafficking carried out by criminal organisations.

The main illicit trafficks in the Region are:

1. Drug Trafficking: The Sahel is an important artery of the cocaine route from Latin America to Europe. (source: Cocaine Route Programme)
2. Human Trafficking: it is difficult to determine the number of people trafficked among the ones who migrate along the central Mediterranean route. However, 1 out of 4 migrants is a woman or a child (source: Relifweb) and it is likely they are victims of trafficking. The trafficking can be best described by listing the countries of origin, crossing and departure. This will give a more detailed picture that will help assess the problem and determine areas of intervention.

Terrorism is of paramount concern, especially after the Malian Crisis of 2012, where jihadist organisations have proved to be able to exploit tribal tensions in the country to seize territory and destabilise the area. Organisations like AQIM and MUJAO have the strategic objective to create safe havens in the Sahel. Recent events have shown that they can stage hit-and-run attacks against security forces which generate tension, especially in the Liptako-Gourma area between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. The G5 Force has been created to tackle terrorism and banditism especially in this area.

Boko Haram is one of the most critical security threats to the Region, especially in Nigeria and the Lake Chad region. Although being severely damaged by the operations carried out by the Multinational Joint Task Force, this terrorist group has proved to be able to re-generate and adapt. The Sahel country more exposed to this threat is Niger, especially in the southeast province of Diffa. Niger has recently brought to justice several mem-

bers of this organisation and intends to heal some of the social wounds of the region in order to deny recruitment and radicalisation.

### *Institutional Weakness*

The security threats faced by the countries in the Sahel, as described in the last paragraph, have the potential of being destabilising if they are not confronted with capable and well-resourced state institutions. The international community has deployed capacity building missions and is investing in development programs and assistance which aim at strengthening the resilience of the 5 countries of Western Sahel. There is no trace of a common approach by the international community, but a state collapse in the Region would affect in a substantial way the security of Europe and other African countries.

Mali and Niger are the largest recipient in security assistance in the Region. Mali hosts a UN peacekeeping mission (MINUSMA) and two EU operations (EUCAP Mali and EUTM). Niger hosts EUCAP Sahel Niger and other bilateral assistance programs. Mali faces the challenge of maintaining providing security the entire country in order to slowly transition from the conflict of 2012 into a more stable situation. Niger is the crossroads of trafficking in the region and it is experiencing security threats especially in the Liptako-Gourma area. If security institutions of these two countries fail to maintain order and disrupt crime, the fragile equilibrium in place will be under threat.

Therefore, regardless of geostrategic competition, the international community should invest in long-term stability. The challenges which I briefly described in this article, have the potential of transforming a fragile situation into a perfect storm.

# Political aspects and framework in the Sahel region

by Maria Cristina Ercolessi

I would like to start as a premise with a critical interrogation of the concept of Sahel. The notion of a Sahel as an area distinct from the larger region of West Africa or from North-West Africa (with the inclusion of the Maghreb countries) emerges in connection with the socio-economic crisis (drought and famine) of the early '70s which calls for international attention and emergency and development assistance (Charbonneau, 2017).

Originally defined as a geographical space between the Sahara desert and the forest area with ecological, economic and social features connected to nomadism, growing erosion of soil, irregularities of rains, food insecurity, it is seen as a "region" mostly for being the target of development and aid programs for combating drought, famine and hunger by international agencies and NGOs, in particular from Europe<sup>1</sup>. The Sahel countries themselves have encouraged such development-oriented definition of the region with the establishment of regional forms of cooperation against desertification (i.e. the Sahel Initiative).

From a political point of view, however, international attention toward the area was for many decades relatively low and fluctuating. Composed almost entirely of former French territories its security and the control of political instability (*coups d'état*, military regimes, conflicts and protests) were largely demanded to France which acted through a combination of military assistance and bases, official development aid, support of local elites and leaders (Powell, 2017; Casola, 2018).

Major crises (like in the war between Chad and Libya on the Aouzou strip in the early '80s) were perceived as potentially more destabilizing from a Cold War perspective for two main reasons: on the one hand, the involvement of the Qaddafi regime in regional affairs; on the other hand, the wider international and African scenario of East-West confrontation (Afghanistan, role of the USSR/ Cuba in the Horn of Africa and Angola).

From an African comparative perspective (see also Dowd&Raleigh, 2013), the dynamics of crisis in the region was not so different from other regional conflicts in Africa in the interplay of local and regional factors of instability and Cold War influences (i.e. Mobutu's Zaire, the two Shaba crises and international intervention at the end of the '70s), but they were managed by a combination of military and political-diplomatic strategies of both France and regional actors which wanted to avoid an escalation of internationalization of local conflicts along East-West lines.

The transformation of the Sahel in a "geopolitical region" or a "geostrategic crossroad", a hotbed of threats to international security identified in Islamic terrorism

associated with transnational criminal and/or illegal economic networks and trafficking, connected in turn to international migration and human mobility, is quite recent, especially if compared to other African regions (e.g. Sudan, Somalia, the Horn and Eastern Africa). Despite the Algerian civil war in the '90s and Qaddafi's policies in the region, international attention to the Sahel as the source of "global threats" emerged only partially and slowly after 9/11 and the launch of "the war on terror" by the US administration. Perhaps more important was the escalation in the 2000s of the armed attacks of Boko Haram in Nigeria and the Lake Chad basin, and its alleged alignment with global terrorist networks like al Qaeda which translated into a specular view of a global terrorist threat vs. a global war on terror which in a certain way have fed each other (Lecocq&Schrijver, 2007; Gutelius, 2007).

As it is well known, it is in that period that the Pan-Sahel Initiative was launched by the US and then expanded in the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and the establishment of AFRICOM. But if compared with other African regions (again above all the Horn of Africa) I would submit that the identification of the Sahel region as a security threat (a "Sahelistan", as it has been called<sup>2</sup>) is even more recent and follows events like the so called Arab springs, the international intervention in Libya in 2011 and the fall of the Qaddafi's regime.

A further factor can be identified in the outbreak of the crisis in Mali in 2012, following the military coup in Bamako and the rebellion of the northern regions (Azawad) by a combination of Tuareg nationalist forces (MNLA) and Islamic jihadist insurgents which triggered off the French military intervention (Casola, 2018). Such events contributed to frame a political notion of the Sahel as a geo-political region oscillating between a "larger" definition (the greater Sahel with the inclusion of Gulf of Guinea countries, mainly Nigeria, and Maghreb countries, or even a Sahel arc of crisis, including North-east Africa), and a "smaller" one, more focused on the countries most directly confronted with the "terrorist threat" and more connected with the Mali crisis. While the establishment of the G5 Sahel (Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Niger, Chad) (ICG, 2017) is an expression of such narrower focus for the management of regional security, it also underlines the centrality of the military role played by Chad in the Mali crisis and in the region (Marchal, 2016). Chad is not a member of ECOWAS and it is the main headquarter of the French operation Barkhane (Hanne, 2017). It may be also worth noting that the G5 Sahel re-constitutes a French-speaking area

1 For a recent assessment by ECHO/EU see [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/africa/sahel\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/africa/sahel_en), last accessed 28/6/2018.

2 See Laurent, 2013.

of military cooperation, which recalls traditional patterns of influence compared with regional organizations (e.g. ECOWAS) with a more diversified colonial background (see also Tisseron, 2015).

More deeply, an operative definition of the Sahel with a focus on the G5 seems to reflect the compounding of distinctive phenomena like radical Islamic insurgencies, criminal economic networks, informal transnational trade routes and “irregular” migration flows in one major global security threat. Such a view is particularly pervasive in Europe/EU/Italy confronted after 2011 with a significant growth of asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants from West Africa.

In the following pages, I will deal with domestic political factors which shape the current situation in the Sahel in a structural way, and that should be taken into account by external actors in order to forge long term sustainable political strategies. My observations are mainly based on the case of the Mali crisis and the G5 countries.

1. From a structural/historical perspective, crises in the Sahel are linked to the patterns of state-building pursued during the colonial period and in the post-colonial framework. Competing notions of the independent state emerged in the Sahara-Sahelian region in the late colonial period. The African elites' nationalist notion of a united centralized state, reproducing borders and political spaces derived from colonialism, was challenged by alternative projects aimed at revising the established order with the creation, for example, of a trans-Saharan Tuareg polity. The issue of the “integration” of Tuareg populations in the new African states has been one of the major political issues in the whole post-independence period, giving birth to successive waves of conflict and cycles of conflict/negotiation/conflict since the 1960s in the countries concerned, especially in Mali and Niger (Lecocq, 2009). The 2012 rebellion and proclamation of the independence of Azawad in Mali can be seen, on one hand, as a phase of the long history of Tuareg rebellion; on the other hand it presents new features: the call for secession and independence of a single region (Azawad) by the MNLA (Gaasholt, 2015) differs from both a pan-Tuareg perspective and a strategy aimed at negotiating domestic accommodation/integration of the Tuareg elites within the Malian state. The Tuareg discourse in Mali seems to echo a more “modern” international language (the right to self-determination) and the emergence of new socio-political actors (youth).
2. In most Sahelian countries the emergence of patterns of conflict along identity or communal lines and/or the adoption of an ideological language and practice connected to radical Islam can be seen as the results of a failure of national integration. Raineri & Strazzari (2015) see the Mali conflict in terms of competing state projects: the African nationalist, the secessionist pursued by Tuareg movements, and a global Islamic project rejecting the same notion of the nation-state in favor of a non-territorial entity of the Muslims (caliphate). While such categories can

contribute to the understanding of the different political trajectories and ideological visions of the main actors of armed conflicts in the region, they may overestimate the consistency and coherence of the strategies pursued by the various politico-military actors in the field and above all the patterns of alliances and competition which are much more fluid and rapidly changing than one could expect in terms of clear-cut state projects.

3. Rather than formalize rigid and abstract definition of the African state as “weak”, “fragile”, “failed”, one can try to research and understand how the system really works beyond formal definitions of governance. In general terms the African state works on the basis of neo-patrimonial forms of governance, i.e. through networks of patron-client relations, aimed at eliciting consensus and build a relative stability of the political order. Such systems can be quite effective in the short and medium term and in some cases elites in power have been able throughout Africa to remain in power for decades and navigate transition processes toward competitive multi-party systems. Mali for example was long considered a success story of democratization and became the darling of international financial institutions for its political and economic reforms, decentralization policies and political participation of the rural population. The military coup and the breakout of the conflict in northern Mali exposed the weaknesses of the “Malian democracy” (Bøås&Torheim, 2013). Neo-patrimonial governance is in fact structurally unstable in the long run: it works through vertical and asymmetric relations, horizontal links are discouraged, produces unequal access to resources and service delivery. In short, it translated into differentiated patterns of inclusion/exclusion of relevant sections of the population (social groups, identity/communal/sectarian/territorial).
4. The development of the Mali crisis in recent years shows that the North-South dichotomy traditionally used to “explain” the conflict is not adequate<sup>3</sup>. Despite the massive deployment of foreign troops under the umbrella of international operations (from MINUSMA, Barkhane, EU Force, G5, etc.), the domestic security situation is deteriorating especially in the central region of the country which witnesses a growth of inter-communal armed conflicts over resources (land in particular). On the other hand, one can doubt the solidity of the “political system of the South” as if it were a separate polity. The strain in civil-military relations brought to light by the military takeover in 2012 is a case in point, while protest connected with socio-economic grievances is taking place in urban centers of the Sahel (about protest in Bamako, see Siméant, 2014).
5. The North-South divide is often associated with another dualistic cleavage between center and peripheral areas, generally defined as territories with no or weak State control, marginalized or excluded by State development programs, lacking in meaningful institutions of local government based on the recog-

3 For a discussion see Baz Lecocq et al., 2013.



nition and participation of local forms of authority and governance; areas with porous borders, transnational networks of mobility of both goods (legal and criminal) and human beings, in short the reign of the so called informal economy and/or criminal networks. In the case of most of Africa, in the Sahara-Sahel region, in Mali as in the Lake Chad basin, we have been witnessing the growth of uncontrolled border areas which have been defined as “ungoverned spaces” in the idiom of international politics (Raleigh & Dowd, 2013). But such picture can be challenged from different angles. First, one can ask if the traditional notion of “periphery” still holds. Periphery compared to what? Indeed border areas do not seem so peripheral for the networks of informal trade and services, for the creation of means of subsistence for local population, and increasingly for the accumulation of wealth and capital by local elites, traditional and new. Second, one can ask whether processes of accumulation of wealth based on criminal trafficking and illegal trade (smuggling or provision of transportation services for migrants for example) are not creating a new geography of centers of powers away from the capital or main “colonial” cities, sometimes with the re-emergence of routes, hubs, towns, of historical trans-Saharan traffics and human mobility (Grégoire&Bourgeot, 2011). Third, the “ungoverned spaces” are not a vacuum of power and authority only because they are not reached by State power. Indeed they are governed by a multiplicity of actors, local forms of governance, emerging or new forms of authority, with complex relations both between themselves and with forms of State authority and agents. Mark Duffield (2001), discussing armed conflicts in Africa, coined the notion of “emerging political complexes” to describe such situations.

6. One of the features of the crises in the Sahel in the last decade is the emergence of new forms of political/armed mobilization which have seen alliances or the merging of local separatist forces, on the one hand, and jihadist movements claiming loyalty to a global struggle on the other hand. In retrospect such uneasy alliances look rather opportunistic, but it must be underlined that at a deeper social level they interact with micro dynamics of armed mobilization. Social groups at the local level may resort to the organizations of militias, self-defence groups in order to capture resources (including external aid flows), defend their own social organization, moral economy, territory and land, from perceived external attacks (Guichaoua, 2011). For doing so they may employ the language and the ideological/political discourses of jihadism or separatism or African nationalism in order to pursue goals which are in fact localized and socially embedded. This contributes to very volatile patterns of alliances in the sense that local actors react to challenges and try to exploit opportunities more than pursuing consistent nation-wide or “global” strategies. The local micro dimension of conflict here as in other African cases (e.g. RDC) deserves more attention in the design of stabilization policies.
7. The region (as other parts of Africa) has witnessed an increasing **militarization** both from “above” (“war

on terror” by the local states and international actors, stricter controls of borders to combat irregular migration and illegal flows) and from “below” (insurgencies and militarization of society). Such pervasive militarization blurs the distinction between regular state armed forces and the rebels. Whole political systems (an interesting case-study is Chad in Debos, 2016) are based on a form of “institutionalized” militarization in which “rebel” forces of various kind may find accommodation into the national army following peace agreements or ceasefires or changing strategies by the President. Political or military leaders of the “State” can act through para-military groups or gangs, or sponsor and profit from illicit/criminal economic networks, self-defence forces or vigilantes both at the national and local level. It must be added that the militarization of society can be fed by the securitization of the Sahelian space through international/regional military forces. Military strategies to tackle socio-economic or political issues - like the challenges related to migration flows across the Sahara and illegal/criminal economies - may backfire. Already the promotion of security through military means has reduced the means of subsistence of local populations engaged in informal activities with no other options in sight except militarization and migration. Finally, local perceptions and interpretations of war and peace, of international intervention as well as state strategies, should be taken more into account. As Bonnacase & Brachet (2013) underline in an interesting introduction to an issue of *Politique africaine*, the notion of “crisis” can be perceived differently at the local level and even denied, while external interferences based on the same notion may deeply transform the local modes of governance increasing insecurity and instability.

# Economic trends and drivers in the Sub-Saharan Africa: performances and outlooks

by Giovanni Carbone

Good morning everybody and thank you for inviting me to give this talk. Today I will talk about *Economic Trends And Drivers In Sub-Saharan Africa. Performances and Outlook*. This is the topic that I have been asked to comment on. I will divide my speech into three parts. First, I will say something about the emergence of a “new” Africa, a topic that was already touched upon by some of the previous speakers. Secondly, I will stress the increasingly “multispeed” economic growth in the region. And, finally, I will try to sketch some possible scenarios for Africa’s future.

At the end of the Nineties, at the turn of the century, the predominant image of sub-Saharan Africa was one of lack of development, a failed continent. However, from the beginning of the new century this image changed quite a lot. A new narrative emerged by the name of “Africa rising” accounting for a region that had started to grow much faster and better than it did before. In particular, between 2000 and 2014, sub-Saharan Africa recorded an average growth of 5.6% per year. This is an average rate of growth, that is, it includes countries that did much better than that and countries that performed less well. As a region, sub-Saharan Africa thus went from lagging behind up until the mid-Nineties – when compared to other regions or to the world average growth rates – to increase its pace of growth from around 1995-96, and then to run even faster starting from 2000. It actually approached the high growth rates of Asian countries. This was an unprecedented period for Africa in terms of economic growth. You have to go back to the 1960s and the early Seventies – just after independence – to find something similar. The recent period of growth was a sustained period that stretches back to 1995, so it has eventually consisted of about 20 years of significant growth (1995-2014). And most countries in the region were affected by this growth, that is, they took part in it. Chad, Rwanda, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, Sierra Leon were among the most impressive performers.

It was also a period of growth that affected a number of sectors. For example, it was not only natural resources sector that expanded, but there was also significant agricultural growth. Africa has a huge agricultural potential, and yet for many years its agricultural production was in decline. But agriculture has started to be more productive in the period we are considering. Infrastructural development was also interesting in this period, with the construction of dams and roads and railways, such as the one from Addis Ababa to the Djibouti harbor. Development in the telecoms sector was also quite impressive, with the unexpectedly fast penetration of cell phones in the region. The banking sector similarly expanded quite effectively, with a number of African banks gaining a foothold across the region. The same

goes for tourism sector: countries like Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania became important tourist destinations. And consumer goods also expanded: think for example of the western carmakers that opened assembly plants in places like Nigeria and Kenya.

So, what explains this turnaround, this period of unprecedented economic growth at the turn of the century? Most observers focus on four main drivers of growth. The first one: the export of commodities from Africa was very important. This was a period of favorable international commodity prices, particularly for oil, gas and mineral exports. As I said, we are used to look at what Africa produces mainly in terms of natural resources. This map shows a summary of the main resources that the continent exports. Oil and gas are among the most prominent, but there is also abundance of copper in the “copper belt” region, as well as of iron, gold, diamonds and many other minerals. This was certainly an important driver of growth, but not the only one.

Another contributing factor was the fact that most African countries, starting from around 1980, undertook key reforms of their economies under the so-called Structural Adjustment Programmes. This was a painful process, especially in terms of social costs, but it nevertheless helped to produce some results in terms of better economic growth. Today, the management of macroeconomic policy in sub-Saharan Africa is generally better than what it used to be in past decades.

A third factor that allowed African countries to improve their growth performance was that multi-party elections were adopted virtually across the whole of sub-Saharan Africa during the 1990s, particularly in the first half of the decade. Of course sub-Saharan Africa is not a hotbed of democracy (even today, most governments remain non-democratic) but multi-party elections began to be adopted more widely, and governments thus became gradually more accountable towards their citizens. They had to pay a little more attention to the outcomes of their actions, of the way they ruled, and this helped improve economic performances. At the same time, there was also a process of relative political stabilization. We will later focus on issues related to conflicts in Africa. But let me point that the peak moment for political instability in Africa was in the early 1990s, but since the mid-1990s and then in the subsequent decade the continent saw a gradual decline of civil wars.

Fourthly, external support was the final key factor contributing to growth. During the 1990s, a decline could be observed in development aid for Africa coming from Western or advanced countries. But aid began increasing again with the new decade, alongside the adoption of debt cancellation initiatives.

Overall, the past fifteen-twenty years were also a period in which international players began to show a new



trust towards the region. Both on the part of advanced countries (Western countries: the US, France, the UK, even Italy with the former prime minister Renzi visiting for three years in a row the sub-Saharan region) as well as of emerging countries (the “China in Africa” story is well-known, but also India, Turkey, Russia, the Gulf States, and Brazil until it bumped into domestic troubles) there was a very strong and mounting external interest. This was for two main reasons. First of all, for the economic opportunities that Africa offered: a number of countries were and are interested in the resources we have mentioned. China’s industrialization process, for example, requires many of the mineral resources that can be found in Africa. But African countries also began to be seen as expanding markets, offering opportunities for exports and investments. Secondly, geopolitical interests were growing. Think, for example, not only of Islamic extremism, but also of the management of migration flows.

So, on the basis of this kind of goals, how did external actors engage with African countries? They used a number of traditional tools, such as diplomatic missions (many countries expanded their embassies network in the Continent); air connections (Turkish airlines, for instance, multiplied its African destinations between 2009-2016, and now has more than 50); development aid went on the rise both for the US and for the UK; trade policies and an increased military presence were other instruments for gaining ground on the continent. But there was also a new strategy that was adopted by a number of countries, most notably by China. This may be called the “country-continent” conference. The FO-CAC (Forum of China-Africa Cooperation) takes place every three years. It is a model that has been imitated by other countries. France, to be true, has actually employed similar conferences since as far back as the 1970s. Much more recently, in 2016, even Italy organized its own conference with Africa.

External interests in Africa went hand in hand with the expansion of trade relations. Here you have a very clear pattern of increase from 2000 on in terms of import and export flows, from and to Africa. Total external trade increased fivefold from 2000 to recent years. And what is interesting is that this is not just about the export of mineral or natural resources from sub-Saharan Africa, but the import side (to sub-Saharan Africa) also went up significantly. A similar pattern can be seen for foreign direct investments in the region, which increased from 10 billion USD a year roughly in 2000, to some 40 billion USD in recent years. The red dot line shows how the share of foreign direct investments going to sub-Saharan Africa gradually went up.

So, why did all this stop after 2014? Because between 2014 and 2016 the global economic scenario changed a lot. China again had a major role in this, but there was an overall deterioration. One way we can look at this is by looking at the prices of commodities. In this graph you have groups of commodities for which, if we consider their price equal to 100 in 2010, you can see that the previous period was a period of price increases, which helped supporting the growth of sub-Saharan economies. But the more recent period has been quite different. Most importantly, the price of oil dropped in late 2014. This was bound to affect Sub-Saharan Africa economies.

At the same time, it is very important to keep in mind that not all Sub-Saharan economies depend on the same exports. So the impact was different from country to country. For example, for a country such as Zambia, the total value of its exports is made up for 51% by copper. This is a good example of a country relying heavily on the export of a single product. Angola was similarly – actually, even more dependent on oil, accounting for as much as 90% of its export in 2016. At the opposite extreme, we have countries whose exports are much more or significantly diversified. One example is Kenya: here you have cut flowers, tea, coffee and other products that are externally traded, with a much more complex overall picture. The same goes for Ethiopia, which also has relatively more diverse exports when compared to countries such as Zambia or Angola. If we shift to the Sahel region, we have countries such as Chad, whose economy essentially relies on oil, and others like Senegal whose export is more diverse, + more similar to Ethiopia or Kenya. In between the two extremes we find other Sahelian countries, such as Mauritania, with iron and copper representing a large share of exports, but Mauritania also has other exports that are relevant as well. Mali, with a high share of exports being gold, Niger is the same with uranium. Thus, when assessing the kind of impact produced by the new global scenario on African economies, we need to keep this in mind. The World Bank and the IMF typically divide African countries in “non-resource-rich countries” and “resource-rich countries”, and among them we can distinguish between oil rich countries and countries exporting other minerals and metals.

Back to our starting point: there was a new economic scenario, globally, since 2014. What was the impact on economic growth in the African region? We can answer to this question by contrasting the growth that was recorded between 1995-2008, before the global financial crisis, with growth in 2015 through 2017. How should we look at this graph? On the horizontal axis, the more a country is on the right, the better they grew in the early period (1995 to 2008). On the vertical axis, on the other hand, countries have a higher position on the graph depending on their performance in the period 2015-2017. We can thus group countries according to these colors: we have red countries down on the left that did pretty bad in the first period and in the second period as well. The yellow countries at the bottom on the right, they include the largest economies in the region (Nigeria, South Africa and Angola) and these are “slipping” countries, that is, countries that did much worse over the second period when compared to the first period. At the top of the graph we have two groups of countries. These are the countries that have been doing better over recent years: we must always remember that, when the price of oil falls, there are countries that benefit from this. On the right hand, at the top of the graph, we have countries that kept doing well, such as Ethiopia, Rwanda and Tanzania. Overall, how can we sum up this situation? New difficulties have emerged, especially for the three largest economies in the region. At the same time, there has been “resilience” in a good number of countries, such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal and Tanzania. And overall we have a picture of increasingly diversified trajectories, something we could also say for the diversifying political situation in the region.

Several key challenges remain for the region. This image gives you a very clear perception of very limited access to electricity south of the Sahara. Electricity is only accessible to little more than one third of Africans, the overall production is inferior to Canada, and half of this is based in South Africa. It is not difficult to list a number of bottlenecks that constraint the opportunities for faster development in Africa. One key obstacle is the poor infrastructures that characterize the area, particularly for landlocked countries. Sub-Saharan Africa counts as many as 16 countries that do not have direct access to the coast. Good infrastructures are key for their economic development, even more so for these countries than for other countries on the continent. Secondly, overall, poverty in percentage terms went down between 1990 to 2012-2013. The share of the African population living in extreme poverty was reduced from 57% in 1990 to 40-42% in 2012-2013. However, in absolute terms, due to the demographic growth of the region, we have today 100 million more African poor compared to 1990. Instability, conflict and state fragility are another set of key challenges for development. A stable institutional framework is essential for development. As for corruption, we still find a number of sub-Saharan African countries at the bottom of any international ranking of corruption. Low levels of education and human capital are also important hurdles. Then we have limited economic diversification: economic growth between 2000-2015 did lead to a degree of economic diversification, with an expansion of the services sector for example, but not so much in the manufacturing sector. This has been relatively disappointing. In addition, economic fragmentation remains an important issue. Regional integration has thus far been limited. Sub-Saharan Africa is 70 times as large as Germany, so it is not unreasonable for it to be home to 49 independent states. The problem is that, in terms of their economic and demographic size, many of these countries remain very small. They thus need to “defragment” and integrate as much as they can, that is, to create larger economic units. And finally, vulnerability to climate change and food crises are also crucial issues.

I will conclude by looking at present and future scenarios. First, where are we now? What is Africa like in 2018? The continent has now completed its rebound. It grew pretty well until 2014, as mentioned, and then suffered a fall of GDP growth rates in 2015-2016. From 2017, the region began to recover and is now expected first to reach a 3.4% growth in 2018, and then to stabilize at around a 4% average growth over the next few years. This is a more moderate growth than in the past (i.e. the growth experienced during the first 15 years of the century) but this is because it is more heterogeneous growth. There are countries that are still running fast, and there are countries that are still struggling to recover.

What kind of Africa, then, if look further down the road – say, in 2020-2040? I want to try and offer you some food for thoughts. First, I think that we should increasingly look at Africa as an archipelago with more and more diverse trajectories, not just among countries (countries that are developing faster than others), but also between urban centers that will grow faster when compared to rural areas, and between coastal regions and inner regions of the continent. So-called leapfrogging is another process that appears to be under way and will continue

to affect the continent in coming decades. Technological development already offered Africa an opportunity to skip some of the expected phases of development (the use of mobiles money or drones are examples for this). Another important point has to do with regional integration. Here, I believe that sub-regions will “come first”. They will somehow continue to drive regional integration dynamics. We’ll probably see a number of sub-regional organizations – if certainly not all of them – possibly accelerating their integration. This is likely to happen in West Africa for example, as well as in Southern and Eastern Africa, where a faster pace in regional integration has already been displayed. In terms of stabilization, we will continue seeing a nucleus of remaining instability at the core of the continent. This will be a T-shape double arc of instability that crosses part of the Sahel towards the east and the Horn, and also down in the middle across Central Africa and Eastern Congo. Finally, the continent will be increasingly “on the move”, both externally, with migration flows towards the Global North, as well as internally with intra-Africa migrations, that is, movements from one African country to another. The latter already represent about two-thirds of all African migration. But with African countries experiencing increasingly diverging development trajectories, intra-African migrations might become even more common.

# Social features and dichotomies in the Sub-Saharan Africa

by Aldo Pigoli

Since 1995, the African continent has been experiencing an extraordinary period of development and growth, mostly unknown in the decades before. Tens of millions of Africans are living in new socio-economic conditions and the future perspectives seem positive, with more development, social inclusion and economic wealth. Nevertheless, there are still strong inequalities amongst the African population and many social factors are boosting old conflictual situations and creating new cleavages.

In general terms, inequalities emerge both at intrastate, within the African societies, and at interstate level. Geographically speaking, there is one Africa, whose borders are well defined and separate Africa from the rest of the world. This element contributes in forging the idea of a single, monolithic and homogeneous reality. While the African institutions and leaders are pushing through the longstanding ideology of “Panafrikanism”, both at political, economic and socio-cultural level, we should address African issues considering more «Africas».

Mediterranean Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, the Gulf of Guinea, Southern Africa and the other geopolitical and geo-economic regions express a multitude of different factors. At socio-cultural level, most of the African Countries and regions still have to confront themselves with conflicting factors belonging to ethnicity, religion and nationalism.

Even though most of the nowadays internal conflicts and of the civil wars are driven by the will and strategy of some political actors to exasperate those elements to support and justify their propaganda, we still have to consider their complexity when we want to provide us with proper analyses and explications about the nowadays African situation and its future developments.

1. Starting from the demographic aspects, it's quite evident that the African continent could not be considered as a whole. In 2017 the African population accounted for 16% of the world population, with 1.256 billion people. 47% of the total population lived in 6 Countries: Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, DRC, Tanzania and South Africa.

Table 1. Most populated countries in Africa

Population 2017	Mln
Nigeria	190,9
Ethiopia	105
Egypt	99,3
DRC	81,3
South Africa	57,7
Tanzania	57,3
<b>Total Africa</b>	<b>1.256</b>

On the other side, more than 20 African Countries had a population smaller than that of London. This element simply suggests the need, both at intellectual and operative level, to avoid a “one-size-fits-all” approach in defining and analyzing African issues.

Africa has the highest rate of population growth in the world, with an annual average increase of 2.5% experienced in the 2010-2015 period, and a high probability that this rates will decrease only at a slow pace in the next decades, with a growth of 1.75-2% in 2050. This means that, by the half of this century, more than half of global population growth is expected to occur in Africa and that Africa's population will inevitably double.

According to United Nations' projections, depending on the number and quality of reforms and programmes adopted by national governments and African institutions in health, family planning and social communication, the African population could become, by the end of this century, from 3 to 6 times larger than today, most likely reaching 4 billion by 2100 (more than 35% of the world population).

The population of Africa is increasing due to a significant gap between births and deaths, in the measure of four to one. Mortality and fertility rates are the highest in the world: African women have 4.5 children on average, compared to just 2.1 children on average in Asia and 2.0 in Latin America. Of the 20 high-fertility countries in the world, 18 are in Africa, the largest being Niger, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and Chad.

At the same time, Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for nearly 40% of the neonatal deaths worldwide, with a mortality rate, in 2016, of 53 infant deaths per 1,000 births (the world average is 30.5), with the highest rates being in western and central Africa,

Both mortality and fertility rates decreased in recent decades, and will keep on decreasing in the next decades, according to the UN.

Nevertheless, in the near future there won't be a decrease in the growth rate of the African population, due to the so called “demographic inertia” that the continent is experiencing.

Half of the African population, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, is and will be in the reproductive age (15-49), providing high birth rates in the next decades.

With 1 billion African under 25 years old expected by 2100, there will be a “youth bulge” that will probably produce hard challenges to the African Countries. African institutions should be able to provide food, houses, education, health, social services and jobs to hundreds of millions of young people. One of the clearest examples is Nigeria, the largest African Country in terms of population and the richest in terms of GDP. In 2017, 80 million Nigerians were younger than 14 years old (42%



of the population), Nigeria nominal GDP per capita was only 1,994 US\$ a year, and nearly half of the population lived in poverty.

There is wide consensus amongst scholars and academics that this youth bulge of the African population will produce more internal conflict in the years to come. Socio-economic grievances and political clashes will be strongly fueled by the youngest part of the African population, especially where there will be a stronger perception about inequality levels between the richest minority and the poorest majority.

Another relevant element regarding the African continent is the strong increase in life expectancy achieved in recent years. At global level, life expectancy at birth rose from 67 to 70 years, with the greatest increases in Africa, where life expectancy rose by 6 years in the first decade of the 21st Century, after having risen by only 2 years in the previous decade.

Nevertheless, Africa is still far away from the data regarding the other regions in the world: life expectancy in Africa in 2010-2015 stood at 60 years, compared to 72 years in Asia, 75 years in Latin America and the Caribbean, 77 years in Europe and in Oceania and 79 years in Northern America. Until now, the demographic pyramid of Africa experienced no relevant evolutions; it is at the same level it was in the Seventies of the 20th Century. From now on, African society will start to become older: By 2100, the number of African people of 65 years and older are expected to grow by 5 times the current level. This will have significant impacts on the socio-economic sphere, creating new grievances from the population for better and larger health and social services. The politico-institutional agenda of the national and local governments will have to consider those aspects, and the African Countries will be facing new challenges to address institutions that, in many cases, are still fragile and inadequately equipped.

2. One of the good news about Africa is related with the significant developments in the health sector throughout the Continent. Public health programmes have been increasing in quantity and quality, allowing millions of people to benefit for healthcare services unknown in the previous decades. Just to provide an example, the mortality rate of children under 5 years old—considered one of the clearest indicators of development in the health sector—is around 80 every 1,000 births, while it was 177 in 1990.

Data linked to Hard and violent epidemic diseases, such as AIDS/HIV, experienced a decrease of the number of people affected and of the victims. In many Countries, especially in Eastern and Southern Africa, when historically lays the largest bulk of victims, millions of people could benefit from new medicines and therapies. In Eastern and Southern Africa, home to half of the total number of people living with HIV in the world (19.4 million people In 2016), data shows that the number of people living with HIV and taking an antiretroviral therapy has more than doubled since 2010, and there is large consensus that, by 2030, HIV/AIDS will no more be considered a public health threat in Africa.

Nevertheless, Africa still lies at the bottom of the world rankings in health and sanitation and many Countries missed to reach the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The March 23rd, 2014 Ebola outbreak in Guinea was a clear example of the fragility of the health

systems in Africa. The Ebola epidemic that widespread throughout West Africa destroyed lives, decimated communities, and orphaned children. More than 11,000 people died of the disease. Even if the number of victims could not be compared with the millions of death caused every year summing up AIDS/HIV, malaria and tuberculosis, Ebola has slowed down economic growth and closed down businesses, blocking for more than a year the economic relations of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia, and their neighbours, affecting the livelihood of millions of people, already being part of the poorest in the world. In the next decades, unfortunately, new similar diseases' outbreaks are likely to occur in many areas of the continent.

Even if the African continent is experiencing a rapid and constant economic growth, unknown until 30 years ago, most of the African people, especially those living in the Countryside, lack proper and constant access to basic services and needs. While in Africa lives more than half of the 1.2 billion world population that doesn't have access to electricity, there is a larger access to mobile phones lines than to sanitation facilities.

Despite being rich, in overall terms, in water and land, most of African people do not have access to fresh water and to arable land, even in those areas where water and land are physically abundant. The economic scarcity of water and land are one of the biggest problems in Africa, and will likely trigger instability and limit development in many areas throughout the continent. The case of DRC is one of the clearest and paradoxical examples: the Congo basin contains 50% of the African fresh waters and its 2.4 billions square meters of territory could be largely used for agricultural activities, both for crops and forestry. Nevertheless, the Congolese population lacks of a proper access to both water and land and is one of the poorest in the world.

3. Education levels are one of the key indicators to understand if a Country has started the paths of development and are fundamental elements when we look at the youngest part of the population.

Nowadays, Sub-Saharan Africa has an average of 69.5% primary enrollment ratio, which is much higher than the 54.3% experienced in 2000, with Mauritius, Kenya and Seychelles being largely above the world average of 89%. On the contrary, some Western and Central African Countries are still far away from having reached sustainable levels.

In general terms, more than 50% of the Africans are not enrolled in the secondary and tertiary school, or do not successfully finish their courses, and the African people with a university degree are still few, especially if compared to other developing Countries in Asia and Latin America. Nevertheless, part of the population is experiencing a solid education path that could pose the grass-roots for future development and growth, both from an economic, social and political point of view.

4. Africa is still the least urbanized area in the world with nearly 60% of its population leaving in the countryside. Currently, nearly 500 million people leave in urban areas across the continent. While Sub-Saharan Africa is often regarded as the world's fastest urbanizing region, this record still belongs to Asia. Nevertheless, African cities are experiencing a fast growth rate and the African urban population will likely double in 2050, almost two thirds of this phenomenon will affect the urban areas.

Most of the actual urban growth is fueled by migration flows from rural areas, and that will be a great growth factor also in the future. In the next years Western, Eastern and Southern Africa will experience the expansion of megalopolis, like Lagos, Nairobi, Luanda, Johannesburg and others. Lagos, in particular, could become the world most populated city in the world by 2100, with nearly 100 million people.

In some cases, the urbanization process will create the bases for transnational integration processes, for example between Kinshasa and Brazzaville, in Central Africa. There is no doubt that urbanization management and policies will play a tremendous role in generating development opportunities or, on the contrary, in triggering instability and conflicts.

The tremendous demographic growth experienced by Africa and its fast urbanization process, brings many questions about the sustainability and the capacity of the national political leadership and of the regional institutions to manage the flows of millions of people moving within Countries, across regions and throughout the continent.

Although the focus is often on African migration to Europe, Middle East and North America, the bulk of African migration takes place within the continent. People move across Africa looking for economic opportunities, fleeing from conflicts or leaving climate-weak areas. Contemporary African international migration flows therefore remain largely intra-regional in nature and not to the global North as media perceptions strongly portray. To show some evidence:

- In Sub-Saharan Africa, intra-regional migration is 2/3 of the total African migration flows.
- The major destination Countries are South Africa, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ethiopia.
- West Africa is the region with the highest rate of intra-regional movements (84% of migration movements of the area are internal flows). The cross-border component of the African migration flows still depends also on its past legacies, reflecting the arbitrary nature of most national boundaries inherited from the colonial period.
- Overall, people living in high or middle-income Countries tend to migrate outside the continent, while people living in poorer Countries show a more regional-based model of migration. This is the case of Somali people moving to Kenya, or Zimbabweans moving to South Africa.
- A different result comes from Countries or regions experiencing some form of armed conflicts, political instability or authoritarian regimes. In those cases, people tend to escape in search of a more peaceful life.

While considering the future of migration flows and urbanization processes, we should have an eye to the role played by remittances, that have become a fundamental factor for many developing Countries in terms of the for local economic growth. According to the World Bank, remittances to Sub-Saharan Africa grew to \$37.8 billion in 2017, and are forecast to hit around \$39.2 billion in 2018 and \$39.6 billion in 2019.

Nigeria is the top recipient, which account for two-thirds of remittance flows into the region, followed by Egypt, Morocco, the “Sudans”, Ghana, Senegal, Algeria, Tunisia, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda. For many Afri-

can Countries, remittances account for a significant part of their GDP, with the impressive examples of Liberia (25.9%), Comoros (20.2 %), The Gambia (20.0 %), Lesotho (17.4 %), Senegal (10.3 %), and Cabo Verde (10.2%).

5. To conclude, the African continent could not be described as “hopeless” or “rising”, as the famous international magazine “The Economist” defined it, precisely, in 2000 and 2013.

There is space for great hope and profound sorrow at the same time, because all the indicators we analyze tend to provide us with this schizophrenic perception. Demographic and economic data tell us that Africa is in the middle of a solid, constant and increasing growth path. No doubts about it. The Africans will be increasing their number and their overall wealth. The bad news and the uncertainty related with them, emerge when we consider the diverging directions that the African population is experiencing, with a smaller part becoming wealthier, more educated and linked with the outer world, and the majority of the Africans being even poorer or not becoming rich, marginalized from the internal and international trends and, paradoxically, more aware of their scanty conditions.

Recent evolutions in the continent are showing us that opportunities and threats go hand in hand, creating potential tensions both at internal and regional level. The African continent future developments at social level are quite easy to understand and intercept but there is no clear indication on whether they will contribute to development, stability and growth or, rather, they will foster slowdown, instability and depletion, therefore creating new sources of conflict.

Each Country, dynamic and factor should be addressed specifically, avoiding generalizations and superficiality, that for long have been the African evolutions’ analysis drivers.

# Security in the States of Sahel region: perspectives and trends

by *Yvan Guichaoua*

My talk proposes a chronological perspective of the crisis which hit Mali in 2012 and that since then has affected the Sahel more broadly since 2012. This relatively descriptive, historical approach aims at providing a factual account of the crisis, but, more importantly tries to capture the main transformations of recent waves of political violence, which emerged in the backdrop of decades of cyclical separatist violence and state repression.

Opting for this approach has one important virtue, namely, to make clear that recent history is not the product of a pre-written script shaped by permanent structures of Sahelian/Saharan politics but stems from choices and decisions made by actors embroiled in a multi-party conflict, and often myopic. Stressing the role of these protagonists is a way to realize that other courses of history were possible.

Also, after the consideration stemming from the collapse of the Malian state, most studies have tended to focus on drivers of radicalization, i.e. adopted an insurgent-centric approach. Differentiating between waves of violence is a way to move away from this exclusive framework and to recognize that states contribute to a system of interactions engendering violence, yet poorly understood. If one wants to envisage long term solutions to the present conflict, inquiring why young men take up arms against the government may not suffice.

Three phases of armed violence can be identified in recent times, involving and affecting different actors and demanding different responses. In a nutshell, the three phases are as follows:

1. Recurring separatist rebellions and imported jihadi violence. One could talk of imported jihadi violence until the early days of the 2012 insurgency as jihadi leaders who took over Mali were mostly coming from Mali's neighbouring countries, and notably Algeria. Domestic political violence was essentially perpetrated by separatist, mostly ethnic Tuareg insurgents.
2. Endogenous jihad. After the occupation of Northern Mali in 2012, the French intervention decapitated the jihadi movements yet did not destroyed them. The foreign jihadi leadership was replaced by local actors recruiting in specific community networks, one could then talk of endogenous jihad. In parallel, separatists signed a peace agreement with the government, hence letting jihadi movements monopolising armed contestation against the government.
3. Militianised violence. The endogenization of jihad and its community-based recruitment provoked violent responses emanating from communities not aligned with the jihadists and targeted by them, sometimes explicitly supported by the government

or the international forces, sometimes just tolerated by the latter. One then sees appear a Hobbesian militianisation of the society in parallel with counter-terrorism efforts. These processes are particularly at work in the Central part of the country and at the border between Mali and Niger.

What follows deepens the historical sequence adopted. Mali pre-2012 was culturally and politically split and witnessed recurring rebellions led by ethnic Tuareg and notably the Ifoghas tribe, considering themselves as the main losers of the post-independence power structure. Rebellions occurred in 1963, the 1990s, 2006 and 2012. The government tested several methods to extinguish the recurring rebellions ranging from blind force (1963) to negotiated compromise (1990s). None of the options stopped armed dissent. In the immediate aftermath of the 2006 rebellion, the government privileged an indirect containment strategy to control its northern periphery, consisting in relying on a web of co-opted loyal armed actors. In short, to mitigate the North/South cleavage, the Malian authorities deepened North/North divisions. They crucially empowered Arab and Tuareg groups occupying low ranks in tribal hierarchies to keep on check Arab and Tuareg groups historically most hostile to the state. In this fragmented political landscape, jihadists driven out of Algeria at the end of the Algerian civil war, took root in Northern Mali and, through profitable hostage-taking operations expanded their capabilities and local influence. Interestingly enough, jihadists entertained close business ties with pro-government proxies in the North.

The collapse of Qadhafi's regime in 2011 precipitated the activation of a rebellion in the making. Tuareg combatants of Malian origin formerly serving Qadhafi in Southern Libya returned to Mali with weapons and boosted the separatists' military capabilities. "Now or never" was their motto. In February 2012, they defeated a weak Malian army, which was further disorganized following a coup in the capital Bamako. With no support from Bamako, the pro-government militias retreated, fled to neighboring countries or joined rebels on an individual basis. On April 6th 2012, the Tuareg separatists established the capital of the newly liberated "Azawad". Yet the Tuareg separatists were not alone. Most of their military victories against Malian forces (notably the Tessalit siege in February 2012) were obtained with the decisive support of jihadi armed groups as part of a circumstantial alliance to repel the state from the North. Jihadi movements were enthused by the opportunity to impose the Sharia Law over newly conquered territories. Relations between separatists and jihadists soon turned sour as the former proved incapable of governing populations under their authority. Jihadists took advantage



of the growing hostility against the separatists to kick out the separatists and establish a 10-month spell of uncontested rule over northern Mali, splitting the commandment of the territory in three: Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb ruled Timbuktu and its region; the Movement for the Oneness of Jihad in West Africa ruled the Gao province while Ançar Eddine (the only jihadi outfit commanded by a Tuareg, Iyad Ag Ghaly) took the control of Kidal.

In January 2013, the French intervention decapitated the jihadi movements: many of their foreign leaders were killed (including the emblematic Algerian commander Abu Zeid) or fled (such as Mokhtar Belmokhtar, who coordinated the Tiguentourine attack against a gas complex in Algeria and the Agadez and Arlit attacks in Niger in Jan 2013 and May 2013). Remaining jihadists in Mali licked their wounds and rekindled their leadership, not without tensions though: the appointment of Nouini in replacement of Ahmed Tilemsi (killed by the French) in the Gao region is said to have provoked the split of Abu Walid Al Sahraoui and his rapprochement with the Islamic State.

As jihadists reconfigured their organizational model, the separatists, the government and the government's armed proxies entered talks to put an end to separatists' grievances. The shaky process, driven by Algeria, eventually led to the signature of an agreement in June 2015, followed by informal mini-agreements aimed at solving murky (business-related) disputes among Northern armed elites. The peace-process, really much based on old "Westphalian" recipes (delegation of power, regional assemblies, DDR etc.), has progressed extremely slowly since. Most notably, the (former) separatists are still the dominant force in Kidal and have multiple bases elsewhere in the North while pro-government militias still roam the desert and have been transformed as counter-terrorism-outfits through the French Operation Barkhane. In the meantime, the UN has deployed troops in charge of monitoring the cessation of hostilities, supporting the peace-process and reinforcing Malian state capacities.

Jihadist eventually did more than just reshuffle their leadership and remaining military capabilities. They expanded their activities geographically and refilled their ranks. The most notable transformation of their activity is their expansion in Central Mali, where they were able to capitalize on anger against the state among specific disenfranchised communities, particularly targeted by state's repression. The opening of this new front massively disrupts local stability (schools closed, civil servants relocated), on a terrain not covered by French counter-terrorism operations.

2017 was a dramatic year for the Malian army, which suffered important losses, as most available databases indicate. While the process started earlier, 2017 illustrates blatantly the endogenization of the jihadi insurgency. The violence has provoked disastrous state responses, consisting in co-opting militias among communities at odds with those joining the jihadi ranks - more than intrinsically loyal to the government. This is what we call the militianisation of the conflict, which is now increasingly resembling a civil war. In the Centre, the army commits abuses against populations while Dogon and Dozo militias settle scores with their Fulani counterparts. At the border between Mali and Niger, the French

military are in an explicit deal with two community-based militias taking advantage of counter-terrorism support to inflame old feuds with local Fulani groups, costing dozens of lives in both camps and spilling over borders.

One may consider these counter-terrorism options as pragmatic, driven by urgency and temporary. Indeed, France and its Sahelian partners have developed long term plans to deal and prevent terror, via the so called G5 Sahel Joint Force. The G5 Sahel may have more legitimacy to intervene militarily than the former colonial power. Yet financial, political and technical hurdles are huge and its operationalisation is terribly slow, risking to transform the temporary, suboptimal and highly dangerous solutions into permanent ones.

# About the Authors



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His publications include: *Political Leadership in Africa* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2018; co-authored with A. Pellegata); *Out of Africa. Why people migrate* (ISPI, 2017), *South Africa: the need for change* (ISPI, 2016), *Africa: still rising?* (ISPI, 2015), "Are lions democrats? The impact of democratisation on economic growth in Africa, 1980-2010" (*Democratization*, 2016, co-authored with V. Memoli and L. Quartapelle); "Leoni d'Africa. Come l'Italia può intercettare la crescita subsahariana" (Università Bocconi Editore, 2015, co-authored with M. Montanini); "L'Africa. Gli stati, la politica, i conflitti" (Il Mulino, 2012, II ed.), *No-party democracy? Ugandan politics in comparative perspective* (Lynne Rienner, 2008). He also published academic articles on peer-reviewed journals such as *Governance*, *Journal of Democracy*, *Democratization*, *Party Politics*, *Political Studies Review*, *European Political Science*, *Journal of Development Studies*, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, *Africa Spectrum*, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, *Politique Africaine*, *World Political Science Review*, *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*, *Afriche e Orienti*, *Africa*, *Politica Internazionale* and *Il Politico*.



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