

RELAÇÕES
INTERNACIONAIS

R:I

SPECIAL ISSUE : 2022

**(In)security and (in)equality
in the Atlantic**

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DESIGN

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TRANSLATION AND PROOF READING

Samuel Jerónimo

DIGITAL EDITION

ERC APPLICATION I24442

ISSN 1645-9199

DOI <https://doi.org/10.23906/ri2021.si>

LEGAL DEPOSIT 207 795/04

R:I Abstracts are indexed
by CSA PAIS, IBSS, IPSA, LATINDEX,
SciELO Citation Index of Thomson
Reuters and EBSCOThe editorial status is available online
at [http://www.ipri.pt/images/
publicacoes/revista_ri/assinaturas_ri/
EstatutoEditorial_RI2016.pdf](http://www.ipri.pt/images/publicacoes/revista_ri/assinaturas_ri/EstatutoEditorial_RI2016.pdf)

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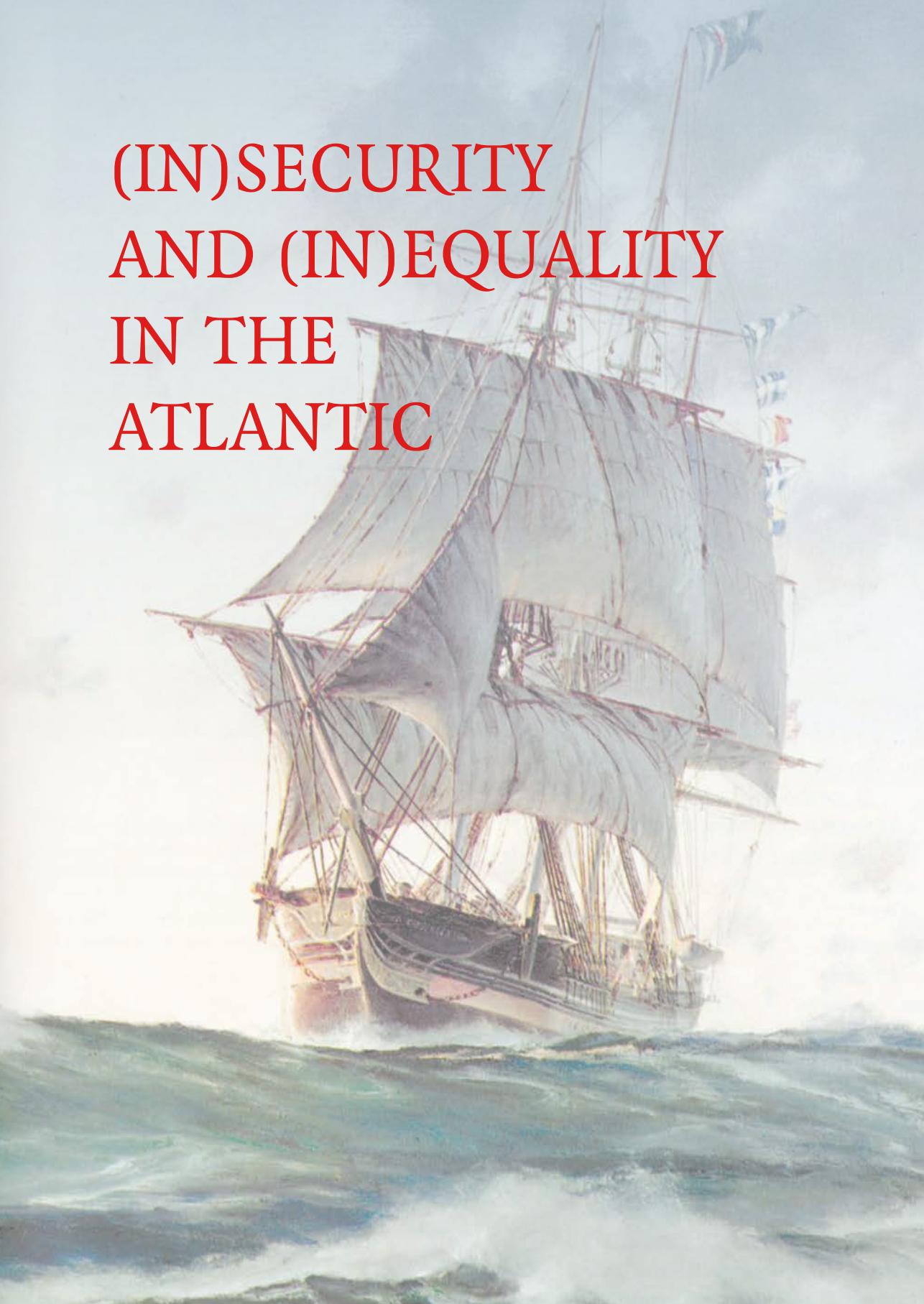
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Design by José Brandão
based on a 19th century painting.

(IN)SECURITY
AND (IN)EQUALITY
IN THE
ATLANTIC



INTRODUCTORY NOTE

(IN)SECURITY AND (IN)EQUALITY IN THE ATLANTIC

Nuno Severiano Teixeira | Carmen Fonseca

The Atlantic is a central area for the setting of global trends and a critical one for international dynamics at various levels. Over the past decade, researchers on both sides of the Atlantic have discussed the setbacks and steps forward in the relations between states, civil societies, and international state and non-state actors in the Atlantic. The three continents that surround the Atlantic – the Americas, Europe and Africa – play different roles and functions in the international system, as well as having different characteristics concerning economic and social development, democratic consolidation, political and social structures and their cultural and identity standards.

These are the key themes and the subject of analysis of the Jean Monnet Atlantic Network 2.0. The Jean Monnet Atlantic Network 2.0 brings together research centres¹ located on the three continents around the Atlantic and has been developing its work for more than five years. Its chief goal has been to promote the theoretical debate fuelled by the viewpoints of the researchers belonging to the centres that compose the network, in three core areas: economic and commercial flows; energy and sustainability; and security and inequalities.

The launch of the network took place within a fast-changing international context due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic between 2020 and 2022 and the war in Ukraine, which broke on 24 February 2022. These events, and those unleashed by them, which made the world a different place, stressed beyond any lingering doubt the relevance of the Atlantic and the various dynamics at play in the area.

The articles published in this issue of *R:I* are the offspring of the research, reflection and discussion carried out within the framework of the seminars held under the auspices of the Jean Monnet Atlantic Network 2.0, and their purpose is to delve into some of the current and most pertinent themes in the study of international relations within the Atlantic framework.

This issue aims, in particular, at contributing to a broad discussion of the concept of security taking into account the interactions between the North and South Atlantic and within each space. The COVID-19 pandemic, on the one hand, and the war in Ukraine,

on the other, have highlighted the interdependence and connection that bind states and people around the world, posing complex challenges to states.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown clearly that security is not only about the State, the action of the military – namely the use of force –, but also about the people, the use of knowledge, namely knowledge about the virus and the vaccines. This dynamic has also been reflected in the high flow of refugees and displaced persons caused by the war in Ukraine, which has demanded from the international community structured and rapid responses. However, this war brings Europe back to an understanding of security in its classic sense – military and economic capabilities as a sign of power and strength capable of undermining the foundations of the international order and altering the balance of power of the international system. After the war in Ukraine, the architecture of transatlantic security will surely be different.

In this conjuncture, the dossier opens with reflections on the two main events that mark the early years of the 20s of the 21st century, the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine – events that permeate the analyses carried out in the remaining articles.

The war in Ukraine is analysed by Patricia Daehnhardt, who suggests that this event, having transformed the post-Cold War order, ‘may become the prelude to the first war of the ongoing power transition between the United States and China’. The author examines the role of NATO, the EU-US relationship and the EU in its response to the war to explain how one can at once speak of the collapse of the European security order and the revitalisation of the transatlantic security community. The China element is also added to the analysis, given the competition with the US and how this might also have implications for the transatlantic community.

The COVID-19 pandemic, and in particular the so-called ‘vaccine diplomacy’ is the focus of the chapter penned by Eduard Soller and Marixe Ruiz. The authors analyse the strategies of the vaccine-producing and receiving Atlantic countries based on an evaluation of the process that transformed health into a topic out of the ‘diplomatic toolbox’ and the evolution of the concept of geopolitics which came to incorporate the dimension of the pandemic, health and vaccines, in particular. The research highlighted strategies of cooperation and regional competition that already characterise that area, as well as normative and symbolic factors, and also material ones, as defining drivers of the strategies adopted by the countries.


Migration has been also a dimension impacted by the pandemic, both in terms of the constraints imposed on the mobility of populations and in relation to migrants, in particular those with an irregular status, refugees or asylum-seekers. Focusing on the case of European countries, Teresa Rodrigues’s article examines the vulnerabilities imposed on migrants, highlighting the different wills and capacities at play to deal with the health problem and to implement comprehensive measures that are able to fit the different profiles of minority communities.

Continuing on the topic of human security, the article penned by Bruno P. Carvalho, Mariana Esteves and Susana Peralta analyses the Portuguese case. The authors discuss the relationship between inequalities and human security using data produced by representative surveys. While admitting that Portugal is one of the safest countries in the world, the authors were able to verify that low-income female populations, both the eldest and youngest age groups, often feel insecure. A notion of insecurity deriving from a multidimensional approach to the concept of security incorporating in it the indicators related to income, food, housing and health.

With the same context and drawing on original empirical material, Eva Garcia Chueca's article addresses the social protests that have erupted in some of the Atlantic countries during the pandemic. Seeking to understand the relationship between such protests and inequalities, especially in cities, the article concludes that the correlation between the two is unclear, since there is also no homogeneity among the countries in which the largest number of demonstrations occurred in 2020. The author therefore suggests other explanatory factors for the protests in countries such as the United States, Mexico, and France.

Mark Aspinwall's article scrutinises the environmental rule of law in Latin America, deemed a rather fragile political area. Aspinwall endeavours, on the one hand, to identify the factors that account for the weaknesses of the environmental rule of law and how Latin American countries have allayed the problem, and, on the other hand, to assess their consequences, first of all in migratory flows. In his article, the author explores the role of expert non-governmental organisations in the development of initiatives among the most affected populations and suggests that the empowerment of civil society, and not only the State, is crucial for the successful management of this problem.

The following article delves into the case of Brazil. As is well known, in the last four years, respect for the environment and the preservation of the Amazon are practices that have been absent in the policies of the Brazilian government, one of the reasons why there has been a growing international discrediting of Brazil. Based on this reality, Joana Castro Pereira analyses the Amazon policies implemented during the government of Jair Bolsonaro, acknowledging their 'anti-environmental and anti-indigenous' nature, policies which contributed to the undoing of Brazil's environmental governance. The author discusses those policies to highlight the need to adopt a 'transformative change' in the management of the Amazon that enables the Amazon to perform its international role without calling into question its sovereignty.

With the context of the war in Ukraine and in particular the COVID-19 pandemic, it is expected that the plurality of articles published in this issue of R:I may contribute to an knowledgeable discussion on the security dynamics that mark the Atlantic area in the 21st century while sparking further development of some of the themes here addressed, from transatlantic security to migration, climate security, interdependence and inequalities. 

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■ ■ ■ ENDNOTES

¹ The network is composed of six research centres: Belgium (Université Libre de Bruxelles), Brazil (Fundação Getúlio Vargas – International Intelligence Unit), Mexico (Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas), Morocco (Policy Center for the New South), Portugal (Instituto Português de Relações Internacionais da Universidade NOVA de Lisboa) and Spain (CIDOB – Barcelona Centre for International Affairs).

The articles published in this Special Issue edition were produced under the Jean Monnet Atlantic Network 2.0, with the support of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The European Commission's support for the production of this

publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

THE EURO-ATLANTIC SECURITY ORDER AND THE WAR IN UKRAINE¹

Patricia Daehnhardt

INTRODUCTION

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has sealed the collapse of the European security order created after 1991, the end of peace and the return of war in Europe. With its full-scale military invasion of Ukraine, Russia aims to annex a sovereign neighboring state, overruling Ukraine's 31-year-old political sovereign statehood, and deny it the right to existence. This unprecedented violation of international law was sparked by President Putin's revisionist imperialist ambition to recover its sphere of influence and reconstitute great imperial Russia. But this war is not only a war against Ukraine. It is also an attack against Europe's democracies, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the wider euro-Atlantic security community, based on Putin's resentment against the democratic and liberal West and the Atlantic Alliance. As a response to Russia's invasion the Biden administration and its European allies have shown impressive unity in their determination to provide military, financial and humanitarian means to help Ukraine defend itself.

It is of course difficult to make predictions as to the ongoing war and its outcome for the Euro-Atlantic security order. The article makes five observations which stand out in the responses to the war and how they may affect the European security order. The first section deals with the collapse of the European security order and the return of large-scale inter-state war. The second section discusses how NATO has responded and how the transatlantic

ABSTRACT

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has sealed the collapse of the European security order created after 1991, the end of peace and the return of war in Europe. In its place a confrontational international disorder is emerging characterized by the weakening of the rules based international order, and by the ideological crystallization between democracies and autocracies. The article assesses how both the US and the EU have responded to the war in Ukraine, all while forging a new transatlantic security architecture. While this war has already shattered the European post-cold war order, it may become the prelude to the first war of the ongoing power transition between the United States and China.

Keywords: Ukraine war, NATO, transatlantic security community, power transition.

RESUMO

A ORDEM DE SEGURANÇA EURO-ATLÂNTICA E A GUERRA NA UCRÂNIA

A invasão russa da Ucrânia selou o colapso da ordem de segurança europeia criada após 1991, o fim da paz e o regresso da guerra na Europa.



No seu lugar, está a surgir uma desordem internacional de confronto caracterizada pelo enfraquecimento das regras que sustentam a ordem internacional e pela cristalização ideológica entre democracias e autocracias. O artigo avalia como os Estados Unidos e a União Europeia responderam à guerra na Ucrânia, ao mesmo tempo que forjam uma nova arquitetura de segurança transatlântica. Embora esta guerra já tenha abalado a ordem europeia do pós-Guerra Fria, pode tornar-se o prelúdio da primeira guerra da transição de poder em curso entre os Estados Unidos e a China.

Palavras-chave: guerra na Ucrânia, NATO, comunidade de segurança transatlântica, transição de poder.

security community has been revitalized. The third section assesses the United States (US)-Europe relationship and the US's renewed commitment to Europe, despite China remaining the US's strategic priority. The fourth point addresses the European Union's response to the war in Ukraine. Finally, the article returns to the question of the European security order by looking at how China has thus far positioned itself vis-à-vis the war between Russia and Ukraine, and how the US-China competition for global hegemony is likely to have implications for the European security order and transatlantic security community. While this war has already shattered the European post-cold war order, it may become the prelude to the first war of the ongoing power transition between the US and China.

THE COLLAPSE OF THE EUROPEAN SECURITY ORDER AND THE RETURN OF WAR

Russia's military invasion of Ukraine marked the collapse of the European security order and the end of 77 years of long peace in Europe.² The demise of the post-Cold War international order was a long time in coming and the Euro-Atlantic stability had fallen prey to different crises with Moscow. The frozen conflict in Moldova's region of Transnistria, since the 1990s, the five-day war in Georgia, in 2008, Russia's induced Ukraine's energy crises in 2004 and 2009, Russian cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns and election interference in European Union (EU) countries, were successive stumbling blocks of a cooperative European security structure in which three decades of post-Cold war peace and security became ever more fragile. It resulted from President Vladimir Putin's revisionist policy of destabilizing Russia's near abroad, especially in those post-Soviet countries that had entered an institutionalized relationship with the EU through the Eastern Partnership in 2009. Outside the Euro-Atlantic area, Russia supported Syria's leader Bashar al-Assad in the ongoing civil war since 2011. But Russia's annexation of the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea, in 2014, put the stability in the Euro-Atlantic area under even more strain. Russia's unlawful annexation was a watershed moment. Already then, 'the annexation of Crimea and the war in eastern Ukraine represented a radical change in the European status quo, and Putin's strategic offensive decisively altered the European security framework as it had existed since the end of the Cold War'.³ A change of frontiers through force violated international agreements such as the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, the 1990 Charter of Paris, both of which recognized the territorial status quo in Europe, and the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, which guaranteed Ukraine's sovereignty, was unprecedented in the Euro-Atlantic area. The Russian President was following the script that he had announced to a disbelieved

audience at the Munich Security Conference, in 2007, when he expanded on his revisionist vision and stated his aim to unravel the post-1991 order, including the rejection of post-Soviet states' sovereignty.⁴ In the summer of 2021, the President published an article in which he denied Ukraine's right to existence due to the supposed historical unity between Russians and Ukrainians.⁵

Raising the stakes on the deteriorating NATO-US-Russia relationship, on 17 December 2021 Putin presented NATO and the US with two draft treaties demanding legally binding security guarantees for Russia: NATO should commit to no further enlargements, a legally binding written guarantee that Ukraine would never join NATO and withdraw all military infrastructure and Allied forces from NATO countries that had joined the Alliance after 1997.⁶

Russia's security demands were unacceptable both to the US and to the Europeans as they would have amounted to legitimizing the end of the post-Cold War security order that had been negotiated in 1997 between the West and Russia in the NATO-Russia Founding Act and represented a reversal of NATO's eastward enlargement. In other words, both ultimatums demanded that NATO return to its Cold War order disposition, annul the Alliance's 'open

RUSSIA'S SECURITY DEMANDS WERE UNACCEPTABLE BOTH TO THE US AND TO THE EUROPEANS AS THEY WOULD HAVE AMOUNTED TO LEGITIMIZING THE END OF THE POST-COLD WAR SECURITY ORDER THAT HAD BEEN NEGOTIATED IN 1997 BETWEEN THE WEST AND RUSSIA IN THE NATO-RUSSIA FOUNDING ACT AND REPRESENTED A REVERSAL OF NATO'S EASTWARD ENLARGEMENT.

door policy' which had paved the way for the integration of fourteen Central and Eastern European countries which had voluntarily joined the Alliance after 1991, and return to a division of the European security order into great power zones of influence.

As Putin's stated argument for his actions – Ukraine's NATO membership – was not on the negotiating table between Kyiv and NATO, it was clear that this was merely a manipulative move with the aim to attack Ukraine, regardless of the West's answer. The Russian President had always opposed NATO enlargements. As Robert Kagan observed, in 2018, 'more than Russia's security, NATO enlargement threatened Russia's ability to reassert its regional sphere of influence, to reclaim its position as a dominant power in Eastern and Central Europe and its standing on the world stage as an equal of the United States'.⁷ Rather, the ultimatums were the culmination of the revisionist claims that Putin had advanced forward for almost two decades to establish a Russian zone of influence over Ukraine and the post-Soviet space and to open a wedge between the US and its European allies and help Russia advance its goal of expanding its hegemony over Europe.⁸ Furthermore, during 2021 the President ordered the positioning of around 100,000 Russian troops at the Belarus-Ukraine border in preparation for the full-scale invasion of the country on 24 February 2022.⁹ To ensure China's acquiescence, on 4 February Putin signed a Russian-Chinese treaty with President Xi Jinping, in Beijing, which declared their 'unlimited friendship'. Putin and Xi converge in their opposition

to the Western democracies and more importantly, to America's global predominance.¹⁰ By invading Ukraine and starting a full-scale war the Kremlin, however, made a series of strategic miscalculations, which prevented it from achieving its goal of a rapid subjugation of Ukrainian forces and installation of a puppet government in Kyiv through what it called a 'special military operation'.¹¹ The Russian president underestimated the Ukrainian leadership and people. First, the government in Kyiv was not overturned and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky did not abandon his country but asserted himself as a wartime leader of Churchillian magnitude. Second, the resilience of the Ukrainian people and its ability to resist the enemy and defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their country is impressive. In the process, Ukrainians are consolidating the unity of their country and strengthening their national identity which had been under strain in the preceding years, particularly in the war-torn areas in the Donbas in Eastern Ukraine. Finally, Russia's war has clarified Ukraine's geopolitical position in the Euro-Atlantic security order: if before the war Ukraine was seen as a buffer state between the EU and NATO, on the one hand, and Russia, on the other, the outbreak of war has shifted the West's Eastern border to the east and Ukraine is now, albeit without immediate EU and NATO membership, a front state in the West's border with Russia. This, in turn, is enlarging the transatlantic security community. Furthermore, President Putin misjudged and underestimated the West's response. NATO, the EU, the US, and like-minded states responded in an unprecedented and unified manner. NATO has strengthened collective defense and deterrence on its Eastern flank, Finland and Sweden will likely become NATO members in 2023, the EU has adopted a series of sanctions packages against Russia, individual states have committed to greater defense spending, and NATO, the EU, and a coalition of over 40 countries is committed to help Ukraine defend its country.

President Putin's energy cut-offs and threats of using nuclear weapons have not intimidated Europeans but rather strengthened them in their resolve to assist Ukraine and reduce their own energy dependence from Russia. Despite soaring energy prices and rising inflation, public opinion in Europe and the US have supported the provision of humanitarian, financial and military assistance to Ukraine. Throughout 2022, European public opinions were supportive of their governments' decisions regarding humanitarian aid, taking in Ukrainian refugees, adopting economic sanctions, and supplying heavy military equipment to Ukraine.¹² Regarding transatlantic relations, European and Americans favor the maintenance of US involvement in European security and defense.¹³ In the first months of the war the West was hopeful that negotiations could be achieved once Russian offensive power had been weakened on the battle ground, as happened in the summer of 2022. But losing on the battlefield only made Putin more determined to continue the brutality of war to prevent Russia's strategic defeat and Putin's own demise. In September 2022, Putin turned military weakness into a political offensive by unilaterally declaring the annexation of four Ukrainian oblasts partially occupied by

Russian troops, namely Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia, and declaring a partial mobilization in Russia.¹⁴

The war meant to serve the Kremlin's triple purpose of denying Ukraine's sovereign right to existence, weakening the EU and NATO and driving a wedge between Europeans and Americans. Dividing the transatlantic allies is a goal that both Russia and China, the other revisionist autocratic regime, share, together with ending the US global predominance: Russia's strategic goal is to drive a wedge between the US and Europe to weaken the European security order and allow for Russia to substitute it for its own vision; China's strategic goal is to drive a wedge between the US and Europe to prevent a joint Euro-Atlantic front against China in Asia.

But Putin misjudged the reconstitution of the transatlantic security community and President Biden's commitment to defend the liberal order, together with its European allies and other democratic like-minded countries as part of his administration's strategy. The Euro-Atlantic security community is set to enlarge, with NATO expanding to include Finland and Sweden and the European Union eventually enlarging to include Ukraine and Moldova.

Finally, Russia's own security was not enhanced and the losses it has so far incurred in number of Russian soldiers' lives, equipment and political support is a cost that seems to outweigh the gains Putin expects to make out of the war.¹⁵ To the contrary, Russia has self-excluded itself from the European security order. While with Putin, Russia seems set to remain on its confrontational towards the West, in a post-Putin scenario, however, a democratic Russia may be much less likely than the deterioration of the Russian regime into a rogue state or a failed state and the disintegration of Russia itself.

At the time of writing, it is difficult to envisage the possibility of a peace that would guarantee the end of the war through an armistice agreement or the capitulation of one of the parties, or at least the end of hostilities.¹⁶ First, without victory in sight President Putin does not want to end the fighting, as this would amount to having to accept a strategic defeat and possibly the end of the Russian regime. Second, President Zelensky will not accept to sit at the negotiating table to risk losing Ukrainian territory. Nor can Ukraine stop fighting, as it would cease to exist as a sovereign state and as a nation. Third, there is no credible international mediator: while Turkey has facilitated a grain exporting deal, in July 2022, to mitigate the global food crisis, as a NATO member it is seen with suspicion by Russia.¹⁷ China, on the other hand, despite abstaining in the United Nations (UN) resolutions on Russia's invasion has little credibility as a mediator due to its ambiguous stance vis-à-vis Moscow and its 'no limits' friendship treaty with Russia.

THE US-EUROPEAN TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY COMMUNITY

The stability of the Euro-Atlantic area has been founded upon the unity and cohesion of the transatlantic security community. After the Second World War, this transatlantic unity developed between the US, Canada, and Western European countries when they created the Atlantic Alliance, in 1949, to guarantee the protection of Western Europe against

the expansionism of the Soviet Union. During the Cold War, the commonality of values and shared interests facilitated the development of a transatlantic security community. In its original conception, the transatlantic security community emerged from what Karl Deutsch, in 1957, defined the ‘pluralist security community’ – ‘a set of states that has integrated and in which there is an effective guarantee that the members of the community do not physically fight each other and resolve their disputes by other means’. Security among members developed from a ‘feeling of community’ that sustains ‘institutions and practices strong enough to sustainably secure expectations of peaceful change’.¹⁸ A security community thus reduced the security dilemma between its members and mitigates strategic competition between them.

Given that a security community is characterized by its normative nature, a common ideational vision of the international order, and the resolution of disputes between member states without resorting to military force, a security community is distinct from a classic alliance and, moreover, can exist in the absence of a formal alliance.¹⁹ Decisively, its members converge regarding the contours of the international order, the hierarchy of threats and the identity of adversaries, the interests and a common vision that sustains the security community. This strategic convergence is crucial in moments of power transition and redefinition of regional orders. This was the case at the end of the Cold War, in 1991, when the bipolar world order was substituted and the existing European security architecture was extended, through NATO’s enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe into a wider transatlantic security community.

In the last decade or so, however, this transatlantic security community came under considerable strain. President Barack Obama, who assumed office in 2009, after the serious transatlantic crisis over the Iraq war a few years earlier, pursued a policy of ‘leading from behind’ in the Euro-Atlantic security area and expected the European

RUSSIA’S ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA, IN 2014, WAS IN PART A GAMECHANGER FOR NATO’S DETERRENCE AND DEFENSE POSTURE THROUGH NATO’S ENHANCED FORWARD PRESENCE, POLAND, ESTONIA, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, AND NATO’S TAILORED FORWARD PRESENCE, IN THE SOUTHEAST OF NATO TERRITORY, IN 2016.

allies to take the lead in dealing with crises of Libya, Syria, and Crimea. In the case of the latter, after Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea, in 2014, the US delegated to Germany and France the mediation of the conflict between Ukraine and Russia and expected Germany’s Chancellor Angela Merkel to assume a leading role.²⁰ This partial US retrenchment from Europe was done

in an amicable way and explained through America’s ‘Asia pivot’ in the early 2010s as a response to China’s rise. At the same time, though, this retreat facilitated Russia’s revisionist strategy of supporting Syrian President Bashar al-Assad militarily in the ongoing civil war and in its annexation on Crimea.

But Russia’s annexation of Crimea, in 2014, was in part a gamechanger for NATO’s deterrence and defense posture. In response to the annexation, the US increased its

military presence in Europe and together with Great Britain, Canada and Germany deployed four multinational battalion-sized battlegroups through NATO's enhanced forward presence, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and NATO's tailored forward presence, in the southeast of NATO territory, in 2016. President Donald Trump, Obama's successor, pursued a different transatlantic policy.²¹ Despite upholding America's military deployments in Eastern Europe, he accused the US's European allies of security freeriding regarding the agreed upon 2% GDP for defense spending and considered withdrawing the US from NATO.²² In different ways, both the Obama and the Trump presidencies weakened the transatlantic link, to the extent that some questioned the end of the transatlantic alliance and the erosion of the transatlantic security community.²³ Obama charmed the European with personal empathy, but his geopolitical heart seemed to be in the Asia-Pacific focused on the emergence of China. Trump criticized NATO as an obsolete institution, raised suspicion in European capitals about the administration's commitment to the US security guarantee contained in NATO's Charter article 5 and multiplied the conditionalities on US collective defense guarantees, including ordering the withdrawal of US troops from Germany. This weakened the transatlantic security community and unsettled the European allies. In turn, former US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis recognized the importance of the transatlantic security community and the Alliance's role in defending the Euro-Atlantic security order when he stated, in his resignation letter, that

'our strength as a nation is inseparable from the strength of our unique global system of alliances and partnerships. The United States remains the indispensable nation of the free world, but we cannot protect our interests or play that role effectively without strong alliances and without respect for our allies'.²⁴

When Joe Biden became US President, in January 2021, it was thus far from clear that the transatlantic security community would recover. To be sure, President Biden's tone differed considerably from his predecessor, but the new administration still identified the Indo-Pacific as the United States' strategic priority, with consequences for the transatlantic relationship. But upon assuming office, President Biden committed to strengthening transatlantic unity, declared that America was 'back' to rebuild America's alliances, and recognized that to guarantee the international status quo and US's global role, it needed its allies to counterbalance Russia and China, whose mutual strategic partnership had strengthened in recent years.

Thus, the transatlantic allies were recovering the Alliance's strategic convergence, and albeit the double shock of the chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan, in August 2021, and the surprise signing of the US-UK-Australia AUKUS Treaty, one month later, and the temporary unease it caused between allies, the Alliance recovered its momentum. This was all the more crucial in the run-up to the war and the increasing global power transition that was crystallizing.

In this context, the West's reaction to the outbreak of the war confirmed the strategic convergence of the transatlantic security community and in the months that have followed Washington and its European allies have managed to keep a decisive unity in their joint responses to Moscow's actions. As a consequence of the West's unified response, uncertainty about Ukraine's status as a member of the transatlantic security community has been clarified: Ukraine shares the West's interests in preserving the liberal international order and converges strategically, at the highest price in the loss of human life, in opposing the offensive revisionism that Russia's military invasion has unleashed over its territory. Rather than persisting as a neutral state in a condition of strategic blurring, Ukraine has become the front state between the West and Russia. And rather than giving in to demands to demilitarize, like in 1994 when Ukraine gave up the nuclear arms stationed on its territory, in the Budapest Memorandum, post-war Ukraine will rearm and likely become a strong military power. To ensure lasting stability in the Euro-Atlantic area, Ukraine should become a NATO member and an EU member at the earliest possible stage.²⁵

THE US-EUROPE RELATIONSHIP AND NATO REVITALIZED

The revitalization of the transatlantic alliance preceded the war in Ukraine and began when the Biden administration took office. But one of Russia's unintended consequences of its invasion of Ukraine was reinforcing NATO's revitalization. When the Biden administration took office in January 2021 it was then already clear that US support for Ukraine was necessary for different reasons: 'Russia's war is against the West, not just Ukraine; the future of a rules-based international order depends on Russian withdrawal from Ukraine; and the United States has a moral commitment to both Ukraine's fight for independence and democracy in general'.²⁶

Thus, when Russia's invasion started, on 24 February 2022, the US and its allies coordinated their response and started sending arms and equipment individually to support Ukraine militarily. But NATO's direct involvement in the war was considered a red line for the Alliance even though President Zelensky requested a no-fly zone enforced by the Alliance.²⁷ The allies were united in stating that they would support Ukraine's defensive war strategy, deliver weaponry and train Ukrainian soldiers, but withhold from considering a no-fly zone over Ukraine or deploying NATO troops on the ground as this would have turned NATO into an active part in the war.²⁸ NATO's goal is assisting Ukraine in its legitimate right to self-defense while keeping transatlantic unity and strengthening Europe's deterrence, but avoid escalation towards a direct confrontation with Russia, or between NATO and Russia.

To coordinate military assistance to Ukraine, US secretary of defense Lloyd Austin set up the Ukraine Defense Contact Group, which first met on 26 April 2022 on the Ramstein Air base in Germany and gathered over 40 allies to consult over providing military assistance to Ukraine, and which has met regularly ever since.²⁹ As the war drags on,

the allies and Ukraine have continuously discussed and coordinated the delivery of more sophisticated weapons systems, from air and missile defence, anti-tank and artillery systems and drones to heavy arms delivery, including combat tanks to Ukraine.³⁰

NATO's unity during 2022 has been impressive. From having considered NATO as 'braindead', in 2019, the French President Emmanuel Macron now considered NATO to have revitalized through electroshocks.³¹ Finland and Sweden, traditionally neutral countries, which had intensified cooperation with NATO after Russia's annexation of Crimea, became candidate countries for membership at the Alliance's summit in Madrid, in June 2022.³² At this summit, NATO approved its New Strategic Concept, defining Russia as 'the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area'.³³

To counter Russia's aim 'to establish spheres of influence and direct control through coercion, subversion, aggression and annexation', the allies committed to strengthen NATO's deterrence and defense posture in Eastern Europe and accelerate the development of forces, capabilities, and infrastructure. The number of troops in the four existing battlegroups in Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania deployed in 2017 were increased and four new multinational battlegroups were deployed to Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia. The US for its part significantly increased its military presence in Europe, with additional troop and capabilities deployments to different NATO allies and with the establishment of a permanent headquarter in Poland.³⁴ The Alliance adopted a new NATO Force Model, increasing the scale and readiness of its troops.³⁵ Member States pledged to reach 2% of GDP defense spending targets faster and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stated that the Defence Investment Pledge of 2% of GDP in defense by 2024 was 'increasingly considered a floor, not a ceiling'.³⁶

The question for Europeans will be how to guarantee that the US remains committed to the formula that America's security is intrinsically linked to Europe's security. This means first, that the US reinforces its troop and capabilities presence in Europe to an unprecedented degree since the end of the Cold War; second, given that Washington will not re-pivot away from the security engagement underway in the Indo-Pacific in the global competition with China, Euro-Atlantic democracies need to cooperate more intensively with Asian democracies, for example, through the Transatlantic Quad and the Indo-Pacific Quad formats, to prepare for two simultaneous conflicts, in Europe with Russia and in the Indo-Pacific with China.³⁷ Third, the US needs to support Europe's efforts for a European defense.³⁸ Ten months of war have laid bare Europe's grave insufficiency in guaranteeing for its own security and decide about questions of peace and security without the full commitment of the US. To overcome this situation,

NATO'S UNITY DURING 2022 HAS BEEN IMPRESSIVE. THE QUESTION FOR EUROPEANS WILL BE HOW TO GUARANTEE THAT THE US REMAINS COMMITTED TO THE FORMULA THAT AMERICA'S SECURITY IS INTRINSICALLY LINKED TO EUROPE'S SECURITY.

Europeans need to get serious about contributing more significantly to their own defense, through a combination of national and joint development of capabilities and procurement, and the US needs to lay its own ambiguity to rest on where it stands on European defense. While Europe's own insufficiencies has rendered the long-standing debate on European (defense) autonomy somehow secondary, the US should play a supportive role towards a European pillar in NATO as the most effective way to increase Europe's security.³⁹ As this is a long-term process, Europe may well become more dependent before it gets less dependent on the US for its security and defense. Europeans will need to increase defense cooperation among EU members to a serious level to reduce fragmenting defense efforts and production costs and foment joint defense procurement.

But emerging divisions between Poland and the Baltic states, on the one hand, and Germany and France, on the other, over how to provide political and military support for Ukraine make it difficult to envisage concrete development in European defense cooperation. While the Eastern European countries advocate providing Ukraine quickly with the military equipment it requests, promoting quick accession talks for Ukraine's EU membership and applying tougher sanctions against Moscow to accelerate Russia's defeat in the war, Berlin and Paris have taken a more cautious and hesitant attitude regarding the delivery of weapons and being less outspoken about Ukraine's victory and the terms of the outcome of the war.⁴⁰ Chancellor Scholz and President Macron merely stated that 'Ukraine must not lose this war' and 'Russia must not win the war' rather than openly saying, like the leaders of the Baltic states, Poland or Finland have done, that Ukraine must win the war and recover lost territory.⁴¹

Regarding Ukraine's bid for EU membership while Eastern European countries and the Baltic states, for obvious reasons argue for Ukraine's quick EU accession, President Macron has suggested the creation of a European Political Community, a sort of ante-chamber without guarantee of full accession.⁴² The EU Versailles summit declaration, on 10-11 March 2022, adopted this idea, stated that 'Ukraine belongs to our European family', a formula which due to its vagueness did neither satisfy the Ukrainians nor the Baltic or Eastern European states.⁴³

The Eastern European and the Baltic states, in particular, have voiced their criticism of Germany's support of Ukraine which they often considered to be 'too little, too late' in terms of arms delivery to Ukraine and they have been more vocal in arguing for a speedy delivery of heavy armament to Ukraine.⁴⁴ To be fair, in terms of bilateral deliveries of military equipment, Germany has been the third biggest supporter of Ukraine with €2.3 billion, preceded by the United Kingdom with €4.1 billion and the US which with €23 billion remains by far Ukraine's most significant supporter, according to data as of 20 November 2022 from the Ukraine Support Tracker from the University of Kiel. In terms of total commitments for Ukraine in terms of military, financial and humanitarian aid, with its decision to provide another €18 billion as of January 2023, the EU Member States and institutions will have surpassed the US.⁴⁵

These countries have in fact acted as the Nordic-Eastern bulwark against Russia's actions in Ukraine displaying keenness to assume a leadership role unlike France or Germany. Poland has not shied away from exerting leadership during the war, although for some European governments that approach might be seen as too hawkish.⁴⁶ The dislocation of Europe's center of gravity towards the East is bound to slow down European defense cooperation given that apart from Europe's inherent difficulty to reduce its dependence on US capabilities the Baltic and Eastern European states obviously see the US military presence in Europe as the best guarantee for their own security. Without the US as Europe's pacifier and protective nuclear umbrella, Europe would be much worse off, and Russia would try to wield its power not only over the states of the former Soviet Union but also over Eastern Europe and the Baltic states.

THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE WAR IN UKRAINE

In reacting to the war in Ukraine, the EU's response has been impressive and, in the process, has attempted to become a geopolitical actor.⁴⁷ The EU and its Member States responded in a swift and coordinated manner through humanitarian and financial assistance, and military support (weapons and ammunition) to Ukraine. In October 2022, the UNHCR had registered 7.6 million Ukrainian refugees in Europe, with some 4.2 million refugees having been granted a temporary protection scheme in the EU to be able to access health care and a temporary work permit.⁴⁸ In a series of unprecedented decisions, as of late November 2022, the Council adopted eight sanctions packages targeted at the Russian state and economy, members of the government, Russian banks, and companies. European unity remains, Europeans drastically reduced their dependency from Russian fossil fuels at a galloping pace and EU policymaking has become more cohesive. Four days after the outbreak of the war, President Zelensky submitted Ukraine's bid for EU membership. And at the European Council on 23-24 June 2022, Ukraine and Moldova were accepted as candidate countries for EU membership.⁴⁹

The EU put in practice for the first time the European Peace Facility, an off-budget instrument that reimburses member states for defense equipment they have supplied to Ukraine. As of 9 November 2022, Ukraine had received six tranches of EPF-funded military equipment and non-lethal support worth €3 billion.⁵⁰ To support those member states replenishing depleted stockpiles, and to boost defense cooperation the Commission put forward a proposal on joint procurement of equipment, on 19 July 2022, through the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act.⁵¹ If approved, the EU would allocate €500 million of the EU budget for 2022-24. Where this equipment is to be procured, on the European market or from non-EU countries is of course subject of debate as it concerns not only competition between European defense industries but also with the US defence industry.⁵² What is clear is that the European 'peace dividend' of the last three decades has meant that Europe's armed forces and defense industries have become underfunded and underinvested.⁵³

The need to step up defense capabilities, to help support Ukraine and to strengthen Europe's own national defenses has rendered discussions on strategic autonomy and European sovereignty a somewhat secondary concern. NATO's role as the continent's main organization for collective defense has reignited the debate to strengthen the European pillar in NATO: the EU as a military power is not realistic and NATO is the most effective Euro-Atlantic institution to ensure deterrence and defense; NATO is the best way to keep Global Britain attached and interested in European security; if a debate on European nuclear deterrence sets off this would be best handled within the framework of the Atlantic alliance; and finally, Europe's reliance on the US nuclear and overall military deterrence has again brought home that despite timid European efforts to develop into a military power, European countries are still overly dependent on the US for its security and defence. In recognizing the renewed relevance of the transatlantic alliance, the development of a European pillar within NATO is likely to gather the allies' agreement and it is a way for Europeans to overcome a decades-long problem of disagreement over the idea of European strategic autonomy and focus on developing European defense in close interconnectedness with NATO. Reinforcing EU-NATO cooperation is one important element. While the EU's Strategic Compass, adopted in March 2022, and NATO's New Strategic Concept, adopted in June 2022, already envisaged closer institutional coordination, the war in Ukraine has strengthened the need for the strategic partnership to boost EU-NATO cooperation on capabilities, interoperability, and military mobility.⁵⁴

The return of war to Europe has also forced the EU Member States to adapt their own national security and defense policies in helping to provide assistance to Ukraine and



THE RETURN OF WAR TO EUROPE HAS ALSO FORCED THE EU MEMBER STATES TO ADAPT THEIR OWN NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICIES IN HELPING TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO UKRAINE AND MORE DECISIVELY, TO ENSURE THEIR SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICIES ADAPT TO THE NEW GEOPOLITICS..



more decisively, to ensure their security and defense policies adapt to the new geopolitics. Germany is a case in point. In an unprecedented move, and after weeks of criticisms by its allies for Berlin being too hesitant regarding Russia, Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced a radical change in Germany's security and defense policy which, if fully implemented, will transform Germany into

a military power and a strategically thinking actor. In response to the outbreak of Russia's aggression, and in a major policy reversal, Scholz enabled weapons delivery to Ukraine by ending Germany's restrictive policy which prohibited sending defensive weaponry to conflict regions. On 27 February, the Chancellor delivered a remarkable speech to the Bundestag which quickly became known as the *Zeitenwende* speech, meaning a turning point or watershed moment. He condemned 'Putin's war' as 'an unjustifiable attack on an independent country, on the peace order in Europe and in the

world' and a 'watershed era' which would change the world.⁵⁵ Scholz announced major changes in Germany's defence and energy policies and in Germany's relations with Russia. First, Germany's underfinanced armed forces, the Bundeswehr, would receive a €100 billion one-off special modernization fund, the government would now invest over 2% GDP in defence annually, procure new military equipment and step-up Germany's defence efforts on NATO's Eastern flank. If implemented, this will signify a budget increase from €45 billion to €75 billion, making Germany the biggest European military power in NATO.

Second, following up on the decision two days prior to the invasion to suspend the Nordstream II pipeline process as a response to Russia's unilateral recognition of the separatist republics of Luhansk and Donetsk in Eastern Ukraine, Scholz stated that Germany would reduce its energy dependence from Russia and diversify its energy imports and sources, building new liquefied natural gas terminals and importing fossil fuels from new countries. Third, Scholz's speech was about change in Germany's bilateral relations with Russia. Germany's *Ostpolitik* – that security and peace in Europe was not possible without Russia – and the principle of 'Wandel durch Handel' (transformation through trade) – that trade interdependence would produce democratization and modernisation partnerships would bring Russia closer to the Euro-Atlantic security order – had both failed and would no longer define Berlin's Russia policy.⁵⁶

The *Zeitenwende* speech represented a foreign policy revolution for Germany.⁵⁷ Three post-Cold War decades in which Germany had thrived as one of the main beneficiaries of the European status quo had come to an end with the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the notion of the indivisibility of European security lost its meaning: there was no possibility of returning to the status quo ante and the now emerging confrontational order with Russia suggested that European security was only possible *without* Putin's Russia.⁵⁸

EURO-ATLANTIC SECURITY ORDER AND THE INTERNATIONAL POWER TRANSITION

The war in Ukraine may well be the first major war of the global transition of power. The decade preceding the outbreak of the war in Ukraine was marked by successive crises in Europe and the Euro-Atlantic area: the sovereign debt crisis in the eurozone, the refugee crisis, in 2015, the Brexit crisis, in 2016, the Trumpian transatlantic crisis, and the Crimea crisis, in 2014, were crises confined to the Euro-Atlantic area. These crises all significantly destabilized national economies and affected relations among EU and NATO partners, but they did not structurally change the power distribution: the US remained the prevalent power in the Euro-Atlantic area and the existing institutions were reformed or new ones were created as a response to the crises.

The war in Ukraine, in contrast, is producing a global impact. In the context of the Euro-Atlantic area the war is a conflict between a revisionist autocratic regime and democratic regimes in Europe and the US, yet at the same time the competition among the great powers for spheres of influence continues. The war affects the stability and

future order in the Euro-Atlantic order, but also the West's relationship with China, and both are interconnected. Ultimately, it raises the question of the decline of the US and the extent to which the war in Ukraine is an expression of that American decline and the US's failure in deterring Russia for assaulting its neighbour.⁵⁹

NATO's new strategic concept recognizes this by including reference to China for the first time in a strategic concept and identifying China as a systemic challenger of the Alliance. NATO's partnership with the EU should be strengthened because of 'the deepening strategic partnership between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation and their mutually reinforcing attempts to undercut the rules-based international order'.⁶⁰

China has revealed ambiguity in its response to the war in Ukraine in trying to balance different interests and President Xi Jinping has followed an ambiguous position typical of a hegemonic leader: Xi refers to the Ukraine 'crisis', instead of a war and he has not pressured Putin to end the war.⁶¹ This tacit support for Russia annuls China's neutral position, and entails questions for Europe's future security order and, more decisively, galvanizes geopolitical competition with the US in the Indo-Pacific region. China opposes NATO enlargement and shortly after the war began warned the US 'not to try to establish an Indo-Pacific version of NATO to "suppress" Beijing's rise'.⁶² Thus, the war in Ukraine is a test case for China regarding a possible reaction from Western countries to a Chinese invasion of Taiwan.⁶³

China and Russia have been united by common interests in a bilateral relationship that falls somewhere between an axis of convenience and a strategic partnership.⁶⁴ As Michael Cox observed, in 2016, on the annexation of Crimea and the crisis in Ukraine: [the crisis has revealed] that

'China has been prepared to ignore certain basic principles in order to maintain its relationship with Russia, while Russia has been more than willing to appease China in order to make sure it can keep the Chinese on their side. [...] a Russia under increasing siege from what it now perceives as being a permanently hostile West, and a China confronted by an America that stands as the principal obstacle to its ambitions in Asia-Pacific, have come to the not illogical conclusion that there is nothing to lose, and probably much to be gained, from moving even closer together'.⁶⁵

China and Russia share at least three foreign policy interests. First, both oppose US global hegemony and want to end it; second, both aim to change the rules-based, multilateral liberal international order and replace it with a post-western and post-democratic order defined by spheres of influence; finally, in doing so they want to demonstrate that authoritarian regimes are more effective in dealing with crises than democracies.⁶⁶ This convergence, however, hides what Jeremy Cliffe terms 'a dangerous new reality': that of 'authoritarian states strong enough to accrue more relative power within the global system but not strong enough to found new poles of stability'.⁶⁷

But the war in Ukraine has confirmed the growing asymmetry in the Russia-China relation with the balance shifting in China's favor.⁶⁸ Russia's military aggression against Ukraine has benefited China: due to the EU's and US sanctions, Russia has become increasingly dependent on Beijing, to sell the gas it stopped exporting to European countries and to whom it wants to keep associated to claim the support of non-western great power.⁶⁹ But the prolonged war has also been costly for China and exposed economic vulnerabilities given that it is the largest importer on oil and one of the largest importers of food on the global market where prices have risen.⁷⁰

After Washington's long-held policy of 'strategic ambiguity' that had kept both China and Taiwan guessing, in May and September 2022 President Biden has pledged publicly that the US would defend Taiwan militarily if China invaded Taiwan.⁷¹ However, with the ongoing war in Ukraine and the US war effort in supporting it, a simultaneous war on two fronts would be the worst case scenario for the US.⁷² If one considers that the US failed to deter Putin from invading Ukraine, it is not impossible to consider that it could fail in deterring Xi from making a move on Taiwan. If such a scenario materialized the competition for power transition through which China attempts to substitute the US would really be put to the test and with an uncertain outcome, especially if a hegemonic war would be seen as its preferred mechanism of change.⁷³

The collapse of the European security order shows that we have already entered a confrontational international disorder which is characterized by a weakening of the rules based global order, increasing ideological crystallization and an offensive contest between democracies, on the one hand, and autocracies, on the other. This new dynamic has already produced a bipolarization between the transatlantic and Asian democratic communities, 'the United States and its allies – the main conservative powers, on the one hand, and, China and Russia – the main revisionist powers, on the other'.⁷⁴ In this more confrontational world order, we observe the growing bipolar competition between the US and China for the future international order, a return to power politics and spheres of influence which Europe is not able to escape from.

As China's claim to global hegemony will challenge the transatlantic relationship it will be increasingly difficult for Europe to evade this bipolar power competition. Europe continues to be highly dependent on the US for its security and defense, but it also is economically strongly intertwined with the Chinese economy. The US for its turn will need its European allies on its side in the growing US-China competition, while China will vow to drive a wedge between European capitals and the US. While the recent US

THE COLLAPSE OF THE EUROPEAN SECURITY ORDER SHOWS THAT WE HAVE ALREADY ENTERED A CONFRONTATIONAL INTERNATIONAL DISORDER WHICH IS CHARACTERIZED BY A WEAKENING OF THE RULES BASED GLOBAL ORDER, INCREASING IDEOLOGICAL CRYSTALLIZATION AND AN OFFENSIVE CONTEST BETWEEN DEMOCRACIES, ON THE ONE HAND, AND AUTOCRACIES, ON THE OTHER.

mid-term elections in November 2022 showed an unexpectedly better result for the Democratic Party and were in part seen as support for the Biden administration's transatlanticist foreign policy, the US presidential elections in 2024 may bring to the White House a less transatlantic incumbent.

For Europeans this uncertainty confirms the need to support the Biden administration in its policy of increasing cooperation between its European allies and the Indo-Pacific like-minded democratic countries in the Indo-Pacific, such as Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand to counter China's claim to global dominance. The Ukraine war, bitter as it is, has shown that democracies are peace-loving but once attacked in their integrity will fight back ferociously and can muster great willpower together.

There are many countries in the Global South that Europe and the US should win over as equal partners. Globally, Russia's aggression against Ukraine is an assault on the UN principle of self-determination and its rules and norms-based order, and it has global consequences, affecting food and energy security well beyond the European continent. Europe and the US should not miss the opportunity to try to win over the hearts and minds of countries in Latin America and Africa on a basis of respect and persuade them that a world of conflict is of no benefit neither for them and their regional security orders nor for the Euro-Atlantic security order.

To avoid that the war in Ukraine becomes the first major war of the global transition of power it is now crucial to contain China in taking advantage of this transitional moment: with the US involved in supporting a major war effort of the first large-scale war since World War Two, China may feel tempted to challenge the dominant power and take its place as the new dominant power in the international system. The last transitional moment back in 1989 was one of 'peace and change'. Let us work towards containing that this one becomes, in the words of Robert Gilpin's seminal book, a transition of 'war and change in world politics'.⁷⁵

CONCLUSION

The war in Ukraine is Europe's war, as the future of the Euro-Atlantic security order is at stake. In the post-war order that will one day emerge, Ukraine will be firmly located in the Euro-Atlantic security structures, even if short of full EU or NATO membership. After three decades of existing as a buffer state between the EU and NATO, on the one hand, and Russia, on the other, the war has acted as a catalyst to locate Ukraine firmly within the Euro-Atlantic security community. The war has consolidated the Euro-Atlantic security community and strengthened its two strongest institutions, NATO and the EU, which have converged towards united and coordinated responses to Russia's war against Ukraine.

The war in Ukraine is also the first major war in the global power transition phase international politics is undergoing. The outcome of the war and the future of the Euro-Atlantic order will have repercussions on how the US positions itself vis-à-vis China, its hegemonic contender.

The stakes for global security and the democratic security community are high: Ukraine risks losing its sovereign right to exist, Europe risks losing security and stability on its continent, like-minded democracies globally risk losing security and stability in their own regions, and the US risks losing the great power contest with China. One way of reducing the threats to the future of democracy is to strengthen it by extending the transatlantic security community towards a global democratic security community, to help contain great power revisionisms and restore international order and stability. **RI**

Reception date: 2 November 2022 | Approval date: 30 December 2022

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ENDNOTES

¹ This paper was prepared within the framework of the Jean Monnet Atlantic Network 2.0. The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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PROXIMITY AND COMPETITION VACCINE DIPLOMACY IN THE ATLANTIC SPACE¹

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INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has altered the cooperation and competition dynamics globally. The Atlantic space is no exception. The capacity of a relatively small number of countries to produce vaccines and their willingness to share them with neighbours and partners has become a major leverage in inter-state and inter-regional relations. Recipients of those vaccines are also actively looking for partnerships with those ‘vaccine powers’ and even signing deals to produce them locally.

Despite the growing production capacities, vaccines are a limited good. Therefore, producers are forced to make decisions about the destination of those vaccines as well as whether they will be transferred bilaterally or through multilateral channels. The latter possibly makes more sense if the goal is to increase the effectiveness of the global fight against the pandemic and might also pay off in terms of reputation and influence in multilateral frameworks at a global or regional level. Yet, the former serves to consolidate relations among governments and increase a country’s reputation within the community of recipient countries.

This article examines the strategies of producers and recipients in the Atlantic Space, defined broadly to comprise North, Central and Southern America, Europe and Africa. Have producers – in this case the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK) and the European Union (EU) – prioritised the countries within this space and particularly

ABSTRACT

Vaccines have suddenly been incorporated into the foreign policy toolbox of global and regional powers. This article analyses the strategies of producers and recipients of vaccines in the Atlantic space. It concludes that COVID-19 has reinforced previous trends regarding regional cooperation and global geopolitical competition. In that vein, the Atlantic space has been a laboratory for both cooperation and competition initiatives among vaccine producers and recipient countries. Although material interests have been a major driver in shaping preferences and strategies, this article suggests that symbolic and normative factors also contributed to the configuration of vaccine diplomacies of producers and recipients.

Keywords: geopolitics, vaccines, Atlantic space, COVID-19.

RESUMO

As vacinas foram rapidamente incorporadas na caixa de ferramentas de política externa de potências globais e regionais. Este artigo analisa as estratégias dos produtores e recetores de vacinas no espaço atlântico. Conclui que a covid-19 reforçou tendências anteriores, relativamente à



cooperação regional e à competição geopolítica global. Nesse sentido, o espaço atlântico tem funcionado como um laboratório de iniciativas de cooperação assim como de competição entre os países produtores e recetores de vacinas. Embora os interesses materiais tenham contribuído para moldar preferências e estratégias, este artigo sugere que os fatores simbólicos e normativos também ajudaram a configurar a diplomacia das vacinas.

Palavras-chave: geopolítica, vacinas, espaço atlântico, covid-19.

those geographically closer to them? In which circumstances has multilateralism been preferred over conventional bilateral agreements? Why have non-Atlantic vaccine powers such as Russia, China and India prioritised certain Atlantic countries in their respective vaccine diplomacies? Has the Atlantic space become a space of competition among Atlantic and non-Atlantic vaccine producers or even among those emerging non-Atlantic global powers? Have recipient countries taken advantage of the global competition to lead the vaccine race?

Prior to analysing the strategies of producers and recipients, this article sets out to assess the process through which health has become part of the diplomatic toolbox of consolidated and emerging powers, and the extent to which a new form of health geopolitics has taken place in the Atlantic space. The article zooms in into the most relevant cases of both producers and recipients, complementing the analysis of general trends and a more granular analysis of the interests and instruments of relevant actors.

HEALTH GEOPOLITICS AND VACCINE DIPLOMACY

The irruption of the pandemic and, especially, the vaccination campaigns, have been feeding the geopolitical debate and dozens of articles were published on the geopolitics of health, vaccine geopolitics and the geopolitics of COVID-19. What is geopolitics? In what way would a geopolitical analysis of this phenomenon differ from other analyses produced by International Relations or Development scholars? Geopolitics considers that geography is a key factor explaining the dynamics of power in the international relations and the behaviour of states and other relevant international actors. Therefore, those analyses attempt to grasp the extent to which geographic factors have shaped health-related decisions in areas such as restricting or permitting mobility, production, purchase, and distribution of vaccines and other medical equipment. The pandemic has been, in any case, a powerful reminder that, contrary to the notion of its death as conceptualised by Richard O'Brian,³ geography is very much alive.

There is no single approach to geopolitics. Classical geopolitics is seen as the realm of those studying states and their capacities to impose themselves over their competitors through their control of the territory, critical routes or highly valuable natural resources. Consequently, a geopolitically driven foreign policy or diplomatic action would be one focusing on competition and trying to take advantage or eventually improve its geostrategic position. However, this is only a certain way of thinking and acting geopolitically. Critical geopolitics has widened the scope of the actors analysed to include non-state actors as well as supranational bodies, and it has also sought to identify the

conditions under which geographical elements might favour cooperation over competition and conflict. Critical and innovative approaches to geopolitics go beyond the study of material assets and take into consideration ideational, symbolic and emotional considerations.⁴

Until recently, health was not among the top priority topics for students of international relations. Paradoxically, health was a fertile terrain for international cooperation and one in which functional relations flourished earlier. It is worth recalling the first international sanitary conference, held in Paris, aimed at setting a number of common standards to struggle against the

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cholera in 1851 or the creation of an international bureau for fighting against epidemics in 1919, a predecessor of what later on would become the World Health Organisation (WHO), to cope with the needs and learning the lessons from the so-called Spanish flu (1917–19) which caused the death of around 50 million people (2.5% of the world's population at the time). COVID-19 has propelled health as an emerging area of study when it comes to the study of cooperation and competition, both among great powers and among a wide range of state and non-state actors.⁵

As COVID-19 erupted, the initial focus of attention was the impact this pandemic might have on China's role as a world power and as a role model, China being the country where the virus was first recorded and one imposing very drastic measures to contain it after the first weeks of contradictory information and secrecy. Gradually, two other topics escalated in the agenda of priorities: the shortcomings of the WHO when dealing with the health crisis – fuelled by the contestation of the global multilateral framework by Donald Trump – and the shortages in facemasks, tests, ventilators and personal protective equipment, which would trigger episodes of cooperation in the form of bilateral donations and the invocation of solidarity mechanisms, but which mainly translated into harsh competition to purchase the scarce units that were on the market as well as forms of protectionism. In those circumstances, a precedent of what is now referred to as the 'vaccine diplomacy' emerged. Emerging countries such as China, but also Turkey and Morocco, put forward what was temporarily referred to as a 'mask diplomacy' or 'medical diplomacy', in an attempt to strengthen existing relations, promote new ones and overall build a reputation as 'problem-solvers'.

The appearance of the first vaccines against COVID-19 was a game-changer and yielded contradictory effects. The vaccine undoubtedly accelerated competition among the limited number of countries that had the means to discover and produce those vaccines. These countries were competing not only for the vaccination of their own population, but also in terms of whose vaccine came first, which one was more effective and how many agencies validated their use. Evoking the notion of an 'arms race', it was common to refer to a 'vaccine race', in which possessing the vaccine was tantamount, all diffe-

rences aside, to possessing nuclear weapons. In that vein, in this article we refer to vaccine powers in the same way that the scholarship has referred to nuclear powers. In a second stance, those vaccine powers also competed through the use of contracts and donations to consolidate or enlarge their areas of political and economic influence, or even as a bargaining chip when negating other issues.

At the same time, the vaccine favoured very different forms of international cooperation. For instance, several countries, philanthropies, private sector and international organisations joined efforts in the framework of the Global Alliance for the Vaccination and the Immunisation (GAVI), and created a new international platform, COVAX (global equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines), to facilitate the arrival of vaccines in the countries with fewer resources. Some regions also witnessed a significant boost in cooperative efforts, not only in dealing with the health crisis but also with the economic consequences of it.

Therefore, the analysis of vaccine diplomacy should contemplate both competitive and cooperative strategies. The latter may take place in the scope of bilateral or multilateral frameworks and, very often, in both of them.

THE PECULIARITIES OF THE ATLANTIC SPACE

The Atlantic space is a huge area comprising North, Central and Southern America, Europe and Africa. These territories have been linked through a shared and often tragic history, by intense people-to-people cultural connections and dynamic trade and investments flows.

The Atlantic space is an area in which multilateralism through interregional frameworks has been vindicated. For instance, the EU and Latin America have invested in the EU-CELAC summits, but also in other subregional cooperation schemes and, while doing so, they referred to a ‘community of values’. More recently, the EU and the African Union (AU) have also vowed to upgrade and substantiate their bi-regional partnership. In the EU-African summit, in February, the leaders reaffirmed their commitment to working together to promote effective multilateralism within the rules-based international order, with the UN at its core. This adds to decades-old partnerships around the Mediterranean, now under the Union for the Mediterranean umbrella.

One of the most interesting developments in the Atlantic space was the emergence of institutionalised south-south bi-regional frameworks. However, the last South America – Arab States summits (ASPA) took place in 2015, and the Africa-South America summit in 2014. Therefore, whereas different EU-Africa, EU-Mediterranean and EU-Latin American fora have been a space to discuss how to best cope jointly with global challenges – including the most recent health crisis – the south-south connections have lost relevance, at least at a bi-regional level. Coordination and contacts did take place among states in multilateral settings such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), but not structured regionally.

Therefore, when it comes to finding a solution to the health crisis, the Atlantic Space is better predisposed than others regarding multilateral, interregional and regional solutions. Did this predisposition translated into effective measures and how did it impact the vaccine diplomacies in the Atlantic space? The following section will shed light on this.

Another peculiarity of the Atlantic space is that, despite not having been the origin of the virus, it encompasses some of the territories that have been more severely affected in terms of contagions and casualties, but also regarding the economic and social effects of the pandemic. According to the estimates in May 2022 collected by Our World in Data, the US and Latin America hold a ratio of 3,000 deaths per million people, and the EU 2,440. Some countries present exceptionally high numbers, such as Peru, with the highest death rate all over the world (6,388.18). The exception to this trend in the Atlantic space are the countries of the African continent, with less than 200 deaths per million inhabitants.

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The uneven rates in mortalities and infections is partly related to the age structure, with older societies experiencing higher levels of mortality. This is not the only factor, however. High densities and social inequalities in some countries, particularly in Latin America, also contributed to the spread and mortality of the pandemic.

COVID-19 is not only a health crisis but also a socio-economic one. Here the effects were particularly severe in those countries relying on tourism and international mobility, but also those with large segments of the labour force irregularly or infra-employed. There are some extreme cases in the Caribbean, but countries around the Mediterranean and some emerging touristic destinations in West Africa – such as Senegal – also experienced a major economic shock. In fact, the dependence on tourism explains the growth shock in 2020; even more than the development level and the lockdowns' intensity.⁶ For other countries the vulnerability stemmed from high levels of indebtedment and subsequent risks of currency and debt crises. This affects not only low-income countries but, first and foremost, middle-income ones.

On the other side of the coin, the Atlantic space has become one of the epicentres in vaccine-related research (mainly in Europe and North America, but South Africa's scientific community has also played a very important role in the study of the virus and its new variants). Interestingly, a small Atlantic state, Cuba, remains the only small country in the global south that has been able to come up with its own vaccine. The countries around the Atlantic have significantly increased their capacities to produce vaccines, building on already existing industrial complexes both in the northern countries but also in some larger Latin American and African countries. Although India remains the 'pharmacy of the world', the countries of this region and the Atlantic space

as a whole have upgraded their production and export capacities, playing a significant role in the process of immunising the world's population. However, parts of the Atlantic space such as most Sub-Saharan African countries still present very low immunisation rates.

The other peculiarity of the Atlantic space is its role in vaccine production. The EU, the UK and the US are among the top vaccine manufacturers (AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Moderna,

THE EU, THE UK AND THE US ARE AMONG THE TOP VACCINE MANUFACTURERS. CUBA HAS ALSO MANAGED TO DEVELOP TWO VACCINES.

Janssen, Novavax). Cuba has also managed to develop two vaccines (Abdala and Sobe-rana) and, in 2022, South Africa also announced the first RNA vaccine designed, developed and produced at lab scale in the African continent (Afrigen). In May 2022,

the EU represented 39.7% of the world's exports, while the US occupies third position with a 15% share.⁷ On top of it, some Latin American and African countries also reached deals with global producers to manufacture vaccines in their territories. Such is the case of Mexico (AstraZeneca and CanSino), Venezuela (Abdala), Brazil (Afrigen, Can-Sino, Pfizer and Sinovac), and Argentina (Gamaleya and Afrigen), Morocco (Sinopharm), Algeria (Gamaleya and Sinovac), Tunisia (Afrigen), Egypt (Sinovac and Afrigen), Chad (Pfizer and Afrigen), Nigeria (Afrigen), Kenya (Moderna), Rwanda (Pfizer), Botswana (Biological E), and South Africa (Janssen, Afrigen).⁸

As the next sections will outline, the Atlantic space has become a domain for geopolitical competition with and among non-Atlantic vaccine producers. The EU's Strategic Compass, a document unanimously adopted by the EU members in March 2022, which sets a shared diagnose on threats and regarding the policies and tools to face them, referred to the role of vaccines in this increasingly competitive world. The document refers to the weaponization of interdependence and soft power, listing vaccines among other assets as instruments of political competition.⁹

To a large extent, COVID-19 has accelerated previously existing trends. China's presence in Africa is evident to any observer, being particularly visible in the extraction and commercialisation of raw materials but also in large investment in infrastructures as well as public debt. European countries and the EU have openly presented this as a challenge and have vowed to strengthen their relations with Africa, including in infrastructures with the Global Gateway project. This quote by the High Representative Josep Borrell shows clearly that Europe perceives it as competition and that health-related factors may have heightened this competitive dimension:

'The pandemic has also moved geopolitical competition in Africa beyond investment and business opportunities to include values and governance models. We find ourselves confronted with other global actors whose methods and agendas are very different from our own. Many of them will not hesitate to use disinformation campaigns and other

forms of hybrid warfare to undercut European influence. Despite these difficulties, we still have compelling reasons for wanting to make Europe Africa's partner of choice'.¹⁰

The opening of a Chinese military base in Djibouti, in 2017, marked a new phase when it comes to China's presence in the continent, and the possibility of China opening a second African base in Equatorial Guinea would add a new layer of complexity in the geopolitical competition in the Atlantic space.¹¹

China has also increased its presence in Latin America, a strategy that has been built on the same pillars: raw materials, investments, and public debt. The main difference is that the security component is still negligible. Yet, Chinese political choices (support to Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua) have been interpreted in light of the global competition with the US.

Russia's capabilities to expand its influence in Africa and Latin America are significantly smaller than those of China, but they are particularly relevant on the security front. Russia supplied 30% of the total weapons purchased by Sub-Saharan African countries in the period 2016–20, and also stood as the primary supplier to North African states such as Algeria and Egypt.¹² The Russian presence in Africa has also grown through the involvement of Russian private military contractors such as the Wagner Group, operating in Mali, Libya and the Central African Republic, among others. On the military front, the countries of East Africa as well as the Sahel seem to feature more prominently in the Russian agenda than the African countries in the Atlantic shoreline. In Latin America, Russia has also opted to openly back those governments that are at odds with the US. The case of Brazil is more complex, as the relationship between Brasilia and Moscow has been mainly built on both countries' BRIC membership, a relationship that has been recently nurtured by the conservative affinity between Vladimir Putin and Jair Bolsonaro.

India, the other non-Atlantic vaccine producer analysed in this paper, has also increased its attention to the African continent. The first India-Africa summit took place in 2008 and, once more, the spotlight has been thrown on the East African countries. In Latin America, the BRICS also provided a platform for the strengthening of relations with Brazil. Yet, Latin America and the Caribbean is still a relatively unexplored priority in Indian foreign policy. Things may change, if for no other reason than because India aims at projecting itself as a global rather than a regional power.

All in all, the next section will illustrate how vaccine diplomacy deployed since 2021 reinforced rather than modified already existing cooperation and competition logics in the Atlantic space. For some Atlantic producers, this added to already existing policies to prioritise relations with the closest neighbours, through both bilateral and regional frameworks. Interregional frameworks have also been used to go beyond the inner circle of neighbours, and this is particularly relevant when referring to an area as wide as the Atlantic space. Among the Atlantic producers we can also observe a mix of coo-

perative and competitive tactics, a traditional feature in transatlantic relations. For the non-Atlantic producers, this was an unexpected opportunity to consolidate and expand emerging relations with countries from the global south, thus reinforcing the Atlantic space as an area for geopolitical competition.

NEIGHBOURS FIRST: PROXIMITY STRATEGIES

For any country it is advantageous that their closest neighbours manage to keep the pandemic in check. This is due to several factors, among which, the fact that they are more exposed to health-related problems in its vicinity due to mobility and tourism; the fact that they tend to have particularly strong commercial relations with their neighbours and COVID-19 has represented not only a health crisis but also a socio-economic shock; the willingness to be perceived by their neighbours as problem-solvers and as preferential partners. And yet, not all the actors have prioritised the neighbourhood approach when making choices on how and where to deploy the vaccine diplomacy. The two which have done so are the EU and the US.

The very existence of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the fact that article 7 of the Treaty of Lisbon states that ‘the Union shall develop a special relationship with neighbouring countries, aiming to establish an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness’ are the best evidence that the EU has a differentiated approach regarding the countries in its vicinity. More recently, the New Agenda for the Mediterranean adopted on February 2021 aimed at reinforcing ties with the southern neighbours, with the intent to ‘contribute directly to a long-term vision of prosperity and stability of the region, especially in the social and economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis’.¹³ Accordingly, by July 2017, the EU had already delivered a support package of over €2.3 billion.¹⁴ Besides, the EU, in collaboration with the European Investment Bank, mobilised over €2.5 billion to support the eastern neighbours in addressing the pandemic and socio-economic recovery.¹⁵

Beyond the ENP, the Western Balkans have occupied a privileged place in EU’s response to the pandemic, as the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council ‘A united front to beat COVID-19’ shows.¹⁶ A €70 million package under the Instrument of Pre-Accession was created to help them access EU Member States’ vaccines.¹⁷ However, the presence of Russian and Chinese vaccines all over the Western Balkans demonstrates that the EU has not reached the coveted problem-solving role in the region.¹⁸

The US does not have a ‘neighbourhood policy’, but the extensive borders with Canada and Mexico, as well as the differentiated treatment of ‘hemispheric affairs’ in the decision-making process, suggest that proximity is also a relevant factor when analysing US foreign policy and international aid choices. However, US’ narrative and practice regarding vaccine and aid sharing evolved during the pandemic. Joe Biden’s global and multilateral approach is, up to a point, a response to Donald Trump’s unilateralist and

free-riding discourse. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the Trump administration hosted a high-level meeting with Lopez-Obrador at the White House to secure cooperation on July 2020, whereas it refused to work together with other partners and withdrew from the WHO and therefore from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).¹⁹ Biden gave fresh impetus to US' multilateral commitment to project a different kind of leadership. The US reengaged with the multilateral institutions that Trump had abandoned and expressed a cooperative attitude 'sharing [...] not to secure favo[u]rs or extract concessions', but to 'save lives and to lead the world in bringing an end to the pandemic'.²⁰ Moreover, being part of the WHO again enabled the US to regain its role in the PAHO, favouring Canada and the southern neighbourhood. The North American Leader Summit was also used as a framework within which to enforce cooperation.²¹

REGIONALISM

The EU followed a successful regional approach when delivering vaccines. As data show, by the end of 2021, close to 80% of EU's adult population was fully vaccinated, with little differences between Member States.²² As it was committed to the principle of leaving no one behind, it ensured enough vaccines for its members while at the same time contributing extensively to COVAX facilitation. They gave priority to MS but without incurring in 'vaccine nationalism'.²³

In order to reach the goal of vaccinating EU Member States' citizens, an agreement was approved on procuring COVID-19 vaccines on behalf of them. This way, EU-level Advance Purchase Agreements with vaccine manufacturers were made possible.²⁴ Thus, the European Commission (EC) negotiated with several producers 'to build a diversified portfolio of vaccines for EU citizens at fair prices'.²⁵ In fact, by January 2021, the EC had already secured 2.3 billion doses of different vaccines against COVID-19.²⁶ Moreover, they made a great effort to negotiate also stepping up vaccine manufacturing capacity in the region, aiming at producing 3.5 billion doses in 2022 in the EU.²⁷

In Africa, regional and international organisations have a long record in managing crises that transcend national borders. This past experience assisted the AU in developing a 'Joint continental strategy for COVID-19 outbreak'. Member States appeared committed to pull in the same direction, coordinating efforts and available resources to respond in a regional way to the pandemic. The African Vaccine Delivery Alliance (AVDA) became an essential tool to coordinate doses delivery among Member States of the African Union, alongside with the African Vaccine Acquisition Trust (AVAT), a creation of the African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team (AVATT). The AVAT mechanism 'acts as a centralised purchasing agent on behalf of the African Union Member States',²⁸ and it has secured more than 50 million doses. The AVDA, on the other hand, was set

AS DATA SHOW, BY THE END OF 2021, CLOSE TO 80% OF EU'S ADULT POPULATION WAS FULLY VACCINATED, WITH LITTLE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEMBER STATES.

up to facilitate logistics and correct functioning of vaccine deployment based on a whole-of-Africa approach.²⁹

The downturn of this activism is that some of the initial expectations were not met. The aim of the AU was to vaccinate 70% of the population by June 2022; however, only 20% of the adult population was fully vaccinated by then.³⁰ In order to ensure access to vaccines, the AU has established a cooperation with international organisations such as the World Bank³¹ the United Nations, the WHO³² and NGOs as OXFAM.³³

In Latin America, on the other hand, regional institutions have failed to build a coordinated response to COVID-19 and to make joint vaccine acquisitions.

EMPOWERING REGIONAL BODIES: INTER-REGIONALISM IN MOTION

Perceiving itself as a role model of regionalism, the EU is particularly keen on establishing region-to-region frameworks which may include the creation of joint institutions. Very often there is more than one regional organisation per region, particularly when taking into consideration the subregional realities. Therefore, this offers the EU a wide range of options when deciding which partners to choose.

The EU-LAC has been an important inter-regional communication channel for the European Union with the Latin American and Caribbean States Community (CELAC) during the pandemic. These ties rely on bilateral relations between EU Member States and a number of Latin American regional, national and sub-national actors. Among those, we can include the Iberoamerican summits, which have been essential to bring together Spain and Portugal and Latin American countries. At the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of these summits, Rebeca Grynspan acknowledged Europe as one of the greatest suppliers of COVAX.³⁴ Moreover, the Spanish PM committed to donate around 7.5 million doses to the region in the XXVII Iberoamerican Summit of Heads of State and Government.³⁵

The EU-LAC Foundation organised several dialogue sessions on financial initiatives for equitable vaccine distribution against COVID-19 in middle-income Latin American countries, a resilient recovery after pandemic and a study on labour market during and after the pandemic.³⁶ Besides, different policy briefs and papers have been published making recommendations to achieve more effective and fruitful cooperation, such as: ‘COVID-19 Vaccines: The Global Challenge of Equitable Distribution and Access’³⁷ and ‘Relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean in the context of the pandemic: between the past and the future’.³⁸ Regional cooperation also takes place with institutions such as The European Humanitarian Aid providing €0.9 million to the Pan American Health Organisation to strengthen local health systems. The EU also supported the Central American Integration System during the negotiations to secure medical supplies.³⁹

As for the Caribbean, the EU has conceded €8 million to the Caribbean Public Health Agency to treatment, vaccines, test reagents etc.⁴⁰ In addition, €7 million have been

delivered to CARICOM (Caribbean Community) in order to implement a programme coordinated also by the PAHO.⁴¹ The European Investment Bank has partnered with Caribbean Development Bank to deliver €30 million to face health related emergencies.⁴² The EU also follows a multi bi-regional approach when it comes to Africa. African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) will receive €100 million from the EU and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation throughout the next five years, in order to support the African Medicine Agency (AMA) and other similar initiatives at subregional level. Cooperation between the AMA and the European Medicines Agency is expected to increase in the near future. These funds are part of EU's commitment to improve COVID-19 vaccine access, equity and minimum health standards all over the world.⁴³

The European Commission is enforcing its partnership with the WHO, aiming at boosting access to vaccines, medicines and health technologies in Africa, together with boosting local manufacturing. The total contribution consists of €24.5 million and is divided into three categories of action.⁴⁴

In addition, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the African Centre for Disease Control and Prevention launched a four-year partnership in December 2020, financed by the European Development Fund to scale up preparedness for health emergencies. A meeting took place on November 2021 in which experiences together with successes and lessons learnt were shared.⁴⁵

THE EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL AND THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION LAUNCHED A FOUR-YEAR PARTNERSHIP IN DECEMBER 2020, FINANCED BY THE EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT FUND.

COOPERATION AND COMPETITION AMONG ATLANTIC PRODUCERS

Since Biden's administration replaced Trump's, both the US and the EU have maintained a high profile in common multilateral institutions such as the WHO and the UN. Furthermore, they have created a 'US-EU Agenda for Beating the Global Pandemic: Vaccinating the World, Saving Lives Now, and Building Back Better Health Security'.⁴⁶ This initiative brings together the two largest Western vaccine producing powers, a transatlantic alliance aimed at the world's vaccination. To that end, COVAX is the key element; and data shows that US has donated 87% (465.71 million doses) through this mechanism, the EU 85% (400 million doses).⁴⁷

However, some clashes have arisen within the WTO. South Africa and India began a campaign intent on waiving intellectual property protection in vaccines. Countries owning those rights have not welcomed this proposal, except for the US.⁴⁸ In what represented a significant departure from previous positions, Biden backed this proposal instead of trying to persuade its transatlantic partners to jointly discuss how to address the production shortage. This was widely seen as another form of vaccine diplomacy, allowing the US to project itself as a more generous partner than the EU

and the UK, while aware that the policies would not change due to European resistance and [?] would prevent an agreement at the WTO. The EU, and particularly the Commission and some leaders such as Merkel and Macron, reacted by claiming that the EU had been very more generous both in donations and even more so in exports, contributing more decisively than other producers to the world's immunisation.

The EU and the UK also clashed on 17 March 2021, when Italy blocked a shipment of 0.25 million AstraZeneca doses to Australia. The EU protested that it was a moment when the Union suffered a shortage of vaccines and the Member States were expecting UK's vaccines. The latter invoked a shortfall to justify their delay and to send the abovementioned doses to Australia, which was a bigger quantity than the one sent to Member States.⁴⁹

Despite this crisis, the EU and the UK have achieved remarkable agreement on other areas such as the mutual recognition of vaccination certification. The NHS COVID Pass was declared equivalent to the EU certificate, facilitating mobility between them as NHS joined EU Digital Covid Certificate.⁵⁰ Moreover, even if COVID-19 made it more difficult to maintain regular contact post-Brexit between both parties, a few interparliamentary conferences have been organised virtually, including the COSAC conference which the UK attended as an observer.⁵¹

Regarding the intellectual property protection waiving, the UK had the same position as the EU, opposing to it. Hence, the UK has been on the same side as the EC, while the European Parliament was pressuring it to accept the proposal.⁵²

THE GLOBAL GEOPOLITICAL COMPETITION

As seen above, the Atlantic space was part of a global competition between traditional Atlantic powers and re-emerged non-Atlantic ones well before the spread of the pandemic. However, COVID 19 has accentuated this competitive or even conflictual dynamics, somehow anticipating the dynamics that became apparent after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Russia was the first country to announce its vaccine, deliberately portrayed as a national success and a sign that 'Russia is back'. The chosen name (Sputnik V), reminiscent of

VACCINE DIPLOMACY IS USED TO NURTURE
POLITICAL RELATIONS AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL.

the spatial race during the cold war, reinforced the idea that reputation and competition were key ingredients in Russia's vaccine diplomacy. The relative ease of transporting and storing it allows its use in Africa and Latin America,⁵³ thus contributing to position Russia as a relevant actor beyond its traditional areas of influence.

Russia's early entry into Latin America enabled the speedy growth of influence in the region before the US joined the competition. It follows a strategy of challenging the US in its own frontiers, a response to the behaviour of this Western power in Russia.⁵⁴ Moreover, vaccine diplomacy is used to nurture political relations at the highest level as shown with the invitation to the Russian PM to Mexico.⁵⁵

As to Africa, Russia had offered the AU the opportunity to buy 300 million doses of Sputnik V, which was rejected due to the high prices. This Eastern power suffered another major throwback as SAPHRA rejected the approval of Sputnik V. It was a shock for Putin as he took for granted the Indian, Chinese and South African markets. In general, 'Kremlin's vaccine diplomacy in Africa is just one tool in a broader campaign to portray Russia as a development, economic, political, and security partner to the continent'.⁵⁶ In order to do that Russia exploits historical linkages, for example in Angola, pushing Sputnik V's approval.

China's vaccines appear soon after and, following the pattern of the facemask diplomacy, served the goal of changing from being the 'source of the problem' into being the provider of solutions.⁵⁷ China had the unique opportunity to be the binder of non-Western countries, particularly as the West was focused on immunising its own population first.

In this approach, China prioritised those countries with whom it had already established a cooperative relation such as the members of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Latin America and the Caribbean. This includes Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, China aimed also at exploring new relations and reached out to some traditional partners of the US such as Colombia – which in return supported China in the Human Rights Committee at the UN⁵⁹ – and Mexico, furthermore entering the technological sector – pressuring not to exclude Huawei from 5G concessions in Brazil and the Dominican Republic.⁶⁰ The defence of the 'One China' idea is also an important element of this country's vaccine diplomacy. In 2018, El Salvador, Panamá and Dominican Republic backtracked on the recognition of Taiwan as they became members of the BRI. In 2021, Nicaragua did the same in exchange for receiving the first 0.2 million doses from the promised one million.⁶¹

China also gives priority to BRI members in Africa. In fact, they launched the African Vaccine Manufacturing Partnership (AVMP) in cooperation with the African Union. China's foreign policy has focused on promoting cooperation mainly in the fields of health and sustainable development. The latter has been ongoing for years due to the infrastructure built under the BRI and South-South Cooperation Initiative.⁶² The former is clearly patent in the donations of 125 million doses to 47 countries.⁶³ Beyond health, military interests also play a role when choosing where to donate vaccines. China intends to build a naval base in Equatorial Guinea. Consequently, it supplied 0.6 million doses to the country, 0.1 of them being donations.⁶⁴

Moreover, as part of the competition with Western powers, China also entered Eastern Europe and the EU itself, where five million Sinopharm vaccines were purchased. Despite the non-approval of the European Medicines Agency, the eastern neighbourhood of the EU has received a large quantity of doses; some of them with caveats – Ukraine was

required to stop criticising the Uighurs' situation in Xinjiang.⁶⁵ Russia's vaccines provided to Hungary seem to have played a similar role as recently shown with Budapest's stances regarding the war in Ukraine.

Thus, both Russia and China aim at being recognised as major world powers and vaccine diplomacy is a useful tool to reach this foreign policy goal. The Global South was their main target, but they also deployed their vaccine diplomacies in the Global North. The vaccine diplomacy used by India – the other major non-Atlantic producer – presents

INDIA IS THE WORLD'S LARGEST VACCINE PRODUCER, BUT ITS VACCINES ARE NOT PRODUCED BY STATE COMPANIES BUT BY PRIVATE INDUSTRIES WITH STRONG INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS.

some similarities but also a few differences. India is the world's largest vaccine producer, but its vaccines are not produced by state companies but by private industries with strong international connections. A case in point is AstraZeneca, showing how the colonial reminiscence affects the

relation with the UK.⁶⁶ India has played an essential role when it comes to vaccine access in low-income countries, before and after COVID-19. The Indian government has also been one of the drivers of the proposal presented at the WTO aiming at waiving intellectual property protection. All this contributes to project India as the protector of the middle- and low-income countries with initiatives as Vaccine Maitri,⁶⁷ and is reminiscent of the role India played in the non-aligned movement and the support to decolonisation processes.

While this position can be seen as one of competition on the normative and reputation front with the Atlantic producers, there has been another layer of the vaccine diplomacy in which China has been the great contender. India is trying to compete with China as a major Asian and World economy, and this is reflected in areas such as infrastructures, with India developing its own corridors and boycotting the BRI Summit in 2019.⁶⁸ India's health diplomacy in Africa preceded COVID-19, supplying drugs to fight HIV/AIDS and Malaria along with other programmes under SDGs, 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.⁶⁹ The rivalry with China can be seen in East Africa, in countries in the Indian Ocean region, where they project their regional dispute as well. Although not central in this competition, it is worth noting that India's donations in the Atlantic space have prioritised those countries that recognize Taiwan – St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & Grenadines and Belize in the Caribbean, Guatemala and Paraguay in Latin America.⁷⁰

Recipient countries are not passive actors in this global geopolitical race. Instead, they take advantage of the competition among the great powers, prioritising self-interests when making decisions about donation receptions or manufacture allocations.

The case of Mexico clearly illustrates the above. In the absence of major US or European support, the Mexican government purchases Chinese PPE material and the establishment of the air-bridge,⁷¹ which prepared the ground for subsequent agreements on vaccine purchases and production with both China and Russia. This may have improved Mexico's

negotiating position with the US, as Washington likely feared Mexico becoming too dependent on the US' global rivals.⁷² Similarly, Argentina took advantage of the opportunity to strengthen ties with China and Russia, in an attempt to keep IMF and the US satisfied at the same time. In fact, the donations of Sputnik V vaccines may have had a measure of influence in the initial non-condemnation of Russia's intervention in Ukraine. Trinidad and Tobago is a fascinating case too, as both China and India have provided significant amounts of vaccines to this Caribbean country, the former delivering 1.1 million doses whereas the latter supplied the country with 40,000 vaccines.⁷³ Before COVID-19, it showed China's ability to profit from its lending capacities, particularly among countries that aimed at avoiding structural readjustment requirements imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).⁷⁴ As for India, the choice of Trinidad, but also smaller but crucial donations to other Caribbean states such as St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent & Grenadines and St Lucia, indicates that India wants to project itself as a global and not merely as an Asian or Indo-Pacific country, and that while doing so it can take advantage of old people-to-people connections such as the strong links with Trinidad and Tobago through migration during the times of the British colonial rule.⁷⁵ Among African countries, Morocco and South Africa are telling examples of proactive foreign policy. Morocco carried out a facemask diplomacy delivering facemasks and hydroalcoholic gels to fifteen African countries during the summer of 2020.⁷⁶ The EU's approach, as a part of the southern neighbourhood, made possible the recognition of the Moroccan vaccine certification inside the EU, facilitating mobility between them.⁷⁷ Simultaneously, Morocco also strengthened its ties with China, which led to Sinopharm vaccine production and the signing of the BRI implementation, Morocco becoming the first North African country to do so.

The case of South Africa is a complex one. Despite being part of the BRICS, the South African Medical Agency rejected the approval of Sputnik V. Instead, South Africa has coordinated many initiatives, including within the WTO, with India, and in February 2022 the South African regulator approves Sinopharm COVID vaccine.

Smaller countries may also attempt to profit from this geopolitical competition. The cases of Equatorial Guinea and Djibouti are quite telling. Growing security interests translated into significant vaccine deliveries there.⁷⁸

Angola's case is also interesting due to the variety of vaccine providers in the country. China was the first supplying them with vaccines, and it has delivered 7.28 million doses of Sinopharm and Sinovac in total.⁷⁹ This may have been intended to improve Beijing's relations with Joao Lourenço, the new president who has voiced his concern regarding Angola's dependence on China, because of the loans they have received for development and oil infrastructure improving.⁸⁰ Moreover, China is the first destination of Angola's exports, Beijing importing \$14.3 billion of crude oil per year. Russia's interests in the region concern mineral extraction, as it can be seen with the donation of 25,000 Sputnik V and Light doses to the Government by Alrosa, a Russian partially

state-owned diamond mining firm.⁸¹ The colonial past is the key aspect that stands out when we look at donations, as Portugal is the second biggest donor with almost two million doses, which constitutes the 25% of the total Portuguese donations. Moreover, common frameworks as the Community of Portuguese speaking Countries provide an opportunity to strengthen ties between both parties.

CONCLUSION

The study of vaccine diplomacies in the Atlantic space translates into five main conclusions: i) COVID-19 has reinforced previous trends, both in the realm of multilateral cooperation (e.g., inter-regionalism) but also when it comes to competition among major global powers; ii) Although rarely framed as such, the Atlantic space is central as a major vaccine producer, contributing to world immunisation iii) The Atlantic space has been a laboratory for both cooperation and competition initiatives among vaccine producers; iv) recipient countries take advantage both of cooperative frameworks and of the increased competition among major producers to have access to the much-needed vaccines; v) although material interests are a major driver in shaping preferences and strategies, symbolic and normative factors contribute to the configuration of vaccine diplomacies of producers and recipients.

Further efforts of collective research in the Atlantic space and beyond will shed light on the specificities of health and vaccines as an area for cooperation and competition, and the extent to which COVID-19 only reinforced and accelerated previously existing trends and has significantly altered the preferences for cooperation and competition in the Atlantic space. The looming environmental crisis and the global repercussions of the war in Ukraine in areas such as food security stand out as a fertile ground for comparative studies that could allow us to identify, compare and assess the drivers and inhibitors of international, regional, and interregional cooperation. **RI**

Reception date: 8 September 2022 | Approval date: 13 December 2022

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1 This paper was prepared within the framework of the Jean Monnet Atlantic Network 2.0. The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. It was presented at the "Fourth Jean Monnet Atlantic Dialogue: The Atlantic Basin Contributions Towards Multilateralism: An Outlook for the 2020s" Jean Monnet Atlantic Network 2.0 (Brussels, 30–31 May 2022).

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MIGRANT LIFE IN EXCEPTIONAL PANDEMIC TIMES A UNITED EUROPE?¹

Teresa Rodrigues

INTRODUCTION

We live in exceptional times that require new ways of understanding and managing a world with different configurations and unpredictable trends. It also requires the ability to simultaneously react to new global challenges and risks. Among them, security stands out: security of individuals, societies, and other living species.² As the editor of *The Economist* Tom Standage wrote last 14 November,

‘the pandemic marked the end of a period of relative stability and predictability in geopolitics and economics. Today’s world is much more unstable, convulsed by the vicissitudes of great-power rivalry, the aftershocks of the pandemic, economic upheaval, extreme weather, and rapid social and technological change. Unpredictability is the new normal’³.

The COVID-19 has also reshaped human mobility worldwide through the imposition of lockdowns, and reinforced the vulnerability of some specific and already vulnerable individuals. Such as migrants, no matter where or what age or sex. Given the peculiarities of their own circumstances, they became in most regions of the world even more vulnerable than they were before the onset of the sanitary crisis. In host societies, the vast majority faced increased vulnerabilities if compared to the rest of the population, due to their institutional framework, lack of

ABSTRACT

The pandemic accelerated some emerging drifts of change ongoing in the international system and, with it and in its wake, we moved from a VUCA to a BANI world. The COVID-19 has reshaped human mobility worldwide through the imposition of lockdowns, and also aggravated the vulnerability of some specific populations, such as the migrants. They became, in most regions of the world, even more vulnerable than they were before, especially those with an irregular status, refugees and asylum seekers. The purpose of this paper is to offer insights on the vulnerability of migrants in the context of COVID-19, focussing on the case of European countries.

Keywords: migrations, irregular migration, Europe, COVID-19 pandemic.

RESUMO

A pandemia acelerou algumas mudanças em curso no sistema internacional e, com ela e na sua esteira, passámos de um mundo VUCA para um mundo bani. A COVID-19 remodelou a mobilidade humana em todo o mundo através da imposição de confinamentos, e também agravou a vulnerabilidade de algumas popula-

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ções específicas, tais como os migrantes. Estes tornaram-se, na maioria das regiões do mundo, ainda mais vulneráveis do que eram antes, especialmente aqueles com um estatuto irregular, refugiados e requerentes de asilo. O objectivo deste documento é oferecer uma visão sobre a vulnerabilidade dos migrantes no contexto da COVID-19, centrando-se no caso dos países europeus

Palavras-chave: migrações, migrações irregulares, Europa, pandemia da COVID-19.

or unclear formal rights and information, constraints to access health care and social security systems, isolation, lack of or limited sources of income. And also to the difficulty in maintaining their jobs in a time of economic uncertainty, despite the fact that it has often been pointed out the importance of migrant workers in some basic sectors of society.⁴ Furthermore, the pandemic also affected long-term migrants due to the expected economic breakdown, with many countries facing an economic crisis with no predictable end.

Our purpose is to offer insights on migrants' vulnerability in the context of the sanitary crisis. In a diverse Europe running at different speeds, the pandemic outbreaks and the exceptionality required for its management has exposed persistent social and economic idiosyncrasies that intensified the already existing contexts of vulnerability for migrants, even though the specific consequences vary. With the effects of the pandemic as our framework, we include a brief introduction on the multiple reasons that justify the global migration process, and discuss the conceptual basis that links migrants' vulnerability with the concept of human security. We also add some examples of measures taken by European countries to face the pandemic effects during the initial years and the way they covered migrant populations, namely through the implementation of exceptional legislation due to the recognition of their specific circumstances in host societies.

A WORLD ON THE MOVE. MULTIPLE REASONS TO GET GOING

The COVID-19 accelerated some trends of change that were on the horizon in the international system and, swept by it and in its wake, we moved from the VUCA to the BANI world.⁵ This BANI world coexists with a paradigm shift centered on individual human beings and based on holistic and cooperative ways of seeing and acting. The new features enhance the migratory phenomenon because they produce and accentuate the distance between expectations and real living conditions, facilitated by access to profuse information and fast mobility options. Will, necessity and ease are three pillars of contemporary migrations, but only 3.6% (a total of 281 million) of them are international migrants.⁶

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the characteristics of migration changed considerably. They became different in their causes, and more sensitive and reactive to political and socioeconomic conjuncture change, in prevailing profiles (due to the feminization of migration), arrangements (all countries have emigrants, immigrants and various types of migrants – workers, refugees, asylum seekers), origins and destinations (with the increase of south-south migrations), and also the politicization of which they are targeted.

All countries are today simultaneously receivers and emitters of migrants, regardless of their economic and human development rate, and the variety of migratory causes has increased, although economic motivations continue to prevail. Migration dynamics elude predictability logics, given the interference of a set of multiple exogenous factors, which condition and determine volumes, trends and migratory routes: from the tangible effects of climate change to the succession of geopolitical events, the understandings and political agreements between states and international organizations, the social and identity perceptions of the citizens of host societies, challenges of the labor market profiles and their balances.⁷

ALL COUNTRIES ARE TODAY SIMULTANEOUSLY RECEIVERS AND EMITTERS OF MIGRANTS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR ECONOMIC AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT RATE, AND THE VARIETY OF MIGRATORY CAUSES HAS INCREASED, ALTHOUGH ECONOMIC MOTIVATIONS CONTINUE TO PREVAIL.

Along with the growing complexity of the migration causes, the volume of forced migration also grew. At the end of 2021, 89.4 million people lived away from their birthplace, about 39% due to new and old conflicts and the remaining 61% due to natural disasters (floods, droughts, storms). The impact of these human displacements affects both host and transit regions, where many remain for long periods.⁸ More than 80% of forced migration occurs in countries with low human development indicators and acts as a likely element of social tension and political instability. These are the places from which an overwhelming majority of irregular migrants depart, most of them in particularly vulnerable situations. Chapter 6 of the *World Migration Report 2022*, entitled 'Peace and security as drivers of stability, development and safe migration'⁹ speaks of a 'birth lottery' that punishes those who, having been born in poor regions, are this reason the main victims of the difficult migration process, which, even when voluntary, tends to be done in less safe conditions. The *Sustainable Development Goal 16* also focuses on this topic, and highlights the duty of the states to ensure their citizens the right to peace, justice and strong institutions.

One in every seven individuals is a migrant, whether with the status of unqualified worker, refugee, student, highly qualified professional or other, and every minute 24 individuals leave their usual residence. We are talking mainly of short-distance movements, but in the context of rapid changes (induced by climate change and the relative globalization of conflicts) the areas of destination of those internally displaced persons (IDPs) will probably amplify. By generating forced collective migration processes, environmental changes act as multipliers of risks and threats and as potential catalysts of tensions and conflicts related to food insecurity processes, struggle for access to clean water, energy and other vital resources. A total of 59.1 million are today IDPs, 26.4 million are refugees and 4.1 million asylum seekers.¹⁰ The coming decades will be affected by the unavoidable increase of environmental migration, internal and international in the south-south context.¹¹

A UNITED EUROPE?

With 748.8 million residents,¹² Europe needs migrants. The old continent faces a peculiar situation in the context of demographic dynamics, which might generate several constraints in the medium term. These are related with the undergoing and consistent demographic ageing phenomenon, the insufficient fertility levels to ensure the replacement of generations, the increasing dependency on migration balance to assure population volumes. In more than 67% of European countries, the annual total of deaths exceeds or is about to surpass that of births, and dependence on migration continues to rise. Migration can mitigate the unwanted effects (namely economic) of this ‘demographic winter’, as the European destiny continues to be the one most coveted at a global scale. So, we may assume that the future of European societies relies on their capacity to manage the consequences of ageing phenomenon and migration flows, particularly in the sectors of economic activity, the labor market and the social protection systems.

The same need for working age population occurs in the European Union (EU), although with significant differences between member states (MSs) associated to unequal migratory attractiveness capacity.¹³ After the decline in population growth in 2020 due to COVID-19, the EU’s population decreased again in 2021.¹⁴ The present EU’s inability to hold on to its residents (446.8 million in 2022) is perceived as a weakness, with geopolitical and economic negative costs. According to demographic projections, the EU population might recover within a few years if migration balances rise, but the average age of the residents will also rise, the relative weight of population below 64 years old will drop, and a decline on GDP is expected (from 1.25 to 2.25% per year) as a direct consequence of the ageing phenomenon.¹⁵

The profiles of migrant communities based on different MSs reflect the different national histories (former empires, privileged political or diplomatic relations, common official language). In total, the EU has 39 million legal migrants (2021), 23.7 million from third countries and 15 million from non-EU European countries. These numbers are annually increased by 1.5-2 million new arrivals. Altogether, migrants living in the EU represent 8.4% of the resident population, refugees 0.6% (but rising). The number of asylum seekers doubled between 2014 and 2015 and, in 2021, it stood at 630,500 (an increase of 33% compared to 2020, but a reduction of 10% compared to 2019). Irregular entries in 2020 were the lowest of the previous seven years (125,000) but increased by 60% in 2021 (c. 200,000). Around 199,000 individuals remain undocumented.¹⁶

Through migration, ‘old Europe’ guarantees demographic stability, increased productivity and liquid contributions.¹⁷ But migration flows also create mistrust in European countries, related to possible threats to sovereignty, national identity, international terrorism, and human trafficking. The connection between migration and security has become, in the last decades, a priority issue on the international political agenda, since it entails the management of an existing complex and growing phenomenon of

uncertain evolution. The feeling of insecurity post 11 September created the conditions for the development of securitization theories. Seizing migration as a security problem results from the construction of a new set of threats, in which migrant flows are seen as a potential threat to the freedom and sovereignty of host societies. However, caution is advisable in what concerns speeches and practices, as we are experiencing an era of uncertainty and re-evaluation as to the future evolution of migration and the risks associated. The consequences will be vast and at various levels. Cooperation between the host and origin countries is essential to create common responses, efficient mechanisms, and inclusive and comprehensive migration policies that promote the integration of immigrants, but without relinquishing the defences against potential individual agents of disturbance.

This explains why the EU27 continues to have an ambiguous relationship with regard to the management of migration flows. And why it continues to privilege the consolidation of a common policy, structured in the control of migratory flows, the fight against illegal immigration, the bet on integration policies, and the development of cooperation policies to assure standard procedures. The response to the recent humanitarian crises in the Mediterranean and Ukraine, and the significant increase of the number of regular migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, tested the validity of the existing practices to deal with unprecedented volume of entry requests, without denying the values that frame EU common policies. A huge number of initiatives has been taken since then, but they rely mostly in reactive responses to the increasing complexity of migration management.¹⁸ Millions of migrants from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East remain today in the EU territory, many of them in an illegal situation, either because they crossed the borders in violation of the law (clandestinely or with falsified documents) or as they remained in the EU without legal ground.¹⁹ Due to this status, in most circumstances they do not have the same rights and guarantees as regular migrants.²⁰ For European countries to maximize positive aspects and mitigate the challenges facing international migrants, it is essential to preserve sustainable migration policies based on the principles of multidimensional integration. They must be grounded on the values of state sovereignty, the sharing of responsibilities, political dialogue between states, non-discrimination and respect for human rights. The *Global Compact for Migration* represents the best example of the humane approach, centered on the analysis of the different levels of vulnerability, and the goal of guaranteeing the conditions for a safe migratory project preserving individual and collective human rights. At the heart of this human security-based approach to migration, governance is the recognition of migrants' vulnerability, which can be mitigated by a regime based on an international human rights law sensible to different categories of migrants.²¹ But, as we know, the Pact has divided opinions and exposed the dissent within the EU on migration issues. About a quarter of MSs refused to subscribe to the document.²² These very different understandings of the States were only partly altered by the pandemic.

Despite current legislation and the availability of human and technological means to ensure compliance and to monitor the good implementation of a complex yet solid migration and asylum policy, political officials face a difficult moment. Pressure at the EU's external borders and fears regarding border management incapacity remain on

PRESSURE AT THE EU'S EXTERNAL BORDERS AND FEARS REGARDING BORDER MANAGEMENT INCAPACITY REMAIN ON THE AGENDA, PARTICULARLY FROM THE DOMESTIC POINT OF VIEW. IS IT POSSIBLE THAT TOLERANCE LIMITS HAVE BEEN REACHED IN EUROPEAN SOCIETIES?

the agenda, particularly from the domestic point of view. Is it possible that tolerance limits have been reached in European societies? The rise of anti-immigration feelings and the spread of populism and right-wing parties across Europe are grounded in ideas and speeches that equate major migratory flows with 'invasion' and loss of quality of

life or national identity. Geography matters when it comes to perception about daily (visible) issues of migratory impact, and that explains why migration ranks for societies of both sides of the Atlantic is an important security challenge, according to the '2022 Transatlantic Trends'²³.

THE LIFE OF EUROPEAN MIGRANTS IN EXCEPTIONAL PANDEMIC TIMES

This is the Europe that the pandemic will find. A Europe that remains divided regarding too many essential issues. Migration management is undoubtedly one of them, testified by individuals from all over the world who seek access to it, either legal migrants (mainly economic ones), refugees or asylum seekers.

In fewer areas is political commitment and collaborative exchange as crucial as in global health security. During the initial stages of the sanitary fight, the outbreak allowed in fact a greater alignment, on a global scale, with a view to finding solutions including scientific knowledge exchanges, Research and Development, and even economic mitigation solutions. But it did not nullify the mistrust among states or regions, or their specific idiosyncrasies and agendas. That is why the health crisis affecting Europe in 2020 has generated a huge perception of individual and collective insecurity. It accelerated previously existing trends and triggered new dynamics that might redefine global geopolitics. It also legitimized the (re)creation of robust political boundaries. Human flows were identified as the propagating agents of the disease, facilitated by the speed and intensity of transport and exchanges in the global village, and initial efforts were unanimous as to the need to ban mobility. However, the securitization of migration as responsible for the spread of the disease never happened. On the contrary, even in the most reluctant MSs concerning migration advantages, the prevalence of a humane security approach seemed to overcome, in compliance with human rights standards that inform the EU matrix. In fact, Europe and the EU were not the worst places in which to be a migrant during the pandemic.

A wide range of emergency measures were implemented despite their temporary nature. The problem was that, once again, European countries often failed to address migrants' specific vulnerabilities and material needs. The exception measures applied to all residents are synthesized in table 1 and identify three major goals: containment and closure policies, safeguarding access to health care, concern to minimize the negative socio-economic impact of the health crisis. These measures had also positive impacts for migrants, mostly for those with regular conditions of permanence. For the others, the applicability of some of them was difficult and with different practical effects.

Table 1 > General areas of intervention in EU countries to face COVID-19

ACTIONS	MAIN GLOBAL MEASURES				
Containment and closure policies	Closure of schools and workplaces	Restrictions of social meetings	Public transport limitation	Stun of the population	Restrictions on movement and travel
Safeguarding access to health care	Massive testing	Contact tracking	Public information Campaigns	Use of masks	Mass vaccination
Minimize the socio-economic impact	Support for lower income families	Support for unemployed or with low income population	Support for enterprises (grants, lay-off, tax incentives)	Extended unemployment subventions	General supports for municipalities

Source: Own elaboration, based on Susana Ferreira.²⁴

‘One size fits all’ is not always the best solution. The pandemic has stressed the risks to which migrants were exposed since the beginning of the crisis, and as the months went by, their vulnerability to its direct and indirect effects became clear.²⁵ As European governments began setting lockdowns to ‘flatten the curve’ of the virus, migrants’ vulnerabilities were exacerbated. Although they are entitled to the same human and health rights as any other individual within the host society, they bump into obstacles to attain such rights (especially the irregular migrants, fearful of resorting to healthcare and being reported to the national immigration authorities). Language and cultural barriers are also daily problems, as well as access to work and working conditions. According to the Migration Data Portal, migrant workers were highly affected, even if their workforce was vital to assure the functioning of critical sectors that remained operative throughout the pandemic, such as agriculture, logistics, personal care and health-care provision, cleaning services and others.

The announcement of exceptional measures adjusted to migrant populations was undertaken in some EU countries, but it did not fully address their ‘situational’ vulnerability within host countries. Those procedures covered four main dimensions (figure 1): to regularize migrants with pending requests and other legal procedures, to guarantee their access to national healthcare systems when needed, to guarantee the possibility of benefiting from essential welfare services similar to all national residents, as well as the right to work conditions surveillance and access, no matter their legal status in host countries or wherever COVID-19 happened to trap them.

Figure 1 > The social inclusion of migrants. Adoption of exceptional measures & centrality of human rights



Source: Own elaboration, based on Susana Ferreira and Teresa Rodrigues.²⁶

The general closure of the national migration services, even when substituted by telework conditions, stopped the normal procedures towards migrants’ document regularization/legalization (namely concession or renewal of residence permits). A practical measure

A PRACTICAL MEASURE IN LINE WITH HUMAN SECURITY AGENDA, AND ONE OF THE MOST COMMON DECISIONS BETWEEN MSS COMPRISED THE ADOPTION OF EXCEPTIONAL INSTRUMENTS TO SOLVE THE LEGAL SITUATION OF MIGRANTS WITH REQUESTS THAT WERE PENDING WHEN THE PANDEMIC BEGAN (PORTUGAL WAS A PIONEER IN THIS FIELD).

in line with human security agenda, and one of the most common decisions between MSS comprised the adoption of exceptional instruments to solve the legal situation of migrants with requests that were pending when the pandemic began (Portugal was a pioneer in this field). This policy measure simultaneously tackled a bureaucratic problem created by the state of emergency, and ensured migrants’ human rights, granting

them the same rights as all other citizens to help them get through those exceptional times. Depending on national decision, those documents worked as temporary authorisations and were considered valid for access to essential or to all public services (obtaining a health user number and access to the National Health Service and other healthcare rights, access to social support benefits, signing house rental agreements

and employment contracts, opening bank accounts and contracting other public services). However, there were gaps between political decisions and practice. The strategy of temporarily considering expired documents as valid for an extended period raised numerous practical obstacles in migrants' daily life (the conclusion of employment contracts, leases, effective access to healthcare services).

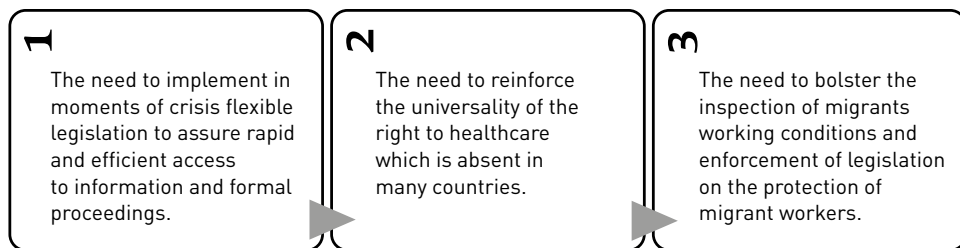
The prevalence of precarious jobs among migrant communities explains why they were the first ones to feel the impact of the pandemic. They were one of the populations most affected by unemployment, predominantly the informal economy workers, exposed to the lack of protection in situations of unemployment, and also the most vulnerable to bankruptcies due to confinement measures. The consequences of job loss had obvious negative consequences, such as how to ensure housing and food. In some countries, the loss of contractual employment ties also meant the loss of formal conditions to remain in the host country. Not all MSs seem to identify this aspect as a core issue, but indeed it constituted a vulnerability and had considerable repercussions on migrants' socio-economic dimensions.

COVID-19 has made a clear case for the need to adopt EU27 common effective integration policies guided by a human-rights approach. Migrants' social inclusion is a pivotal axis in migration governance, since migrants are at a disadvantage vis-à-vis destination societies, particularly in the early stages of the migration process. The lack of knowledge of the language, culture, social and political organization, the educational system and the way in which society works in general hinder the process of integration of these citizens, which became more strained due to the pandemic. As a response to migrants' vulnerability during the pandemic, the centrality of human rights is paramount to safeguard migrants' needs and particular circumstances.

FINAL REMARKS

When COVID-19 reached the EU, the political and social responses were different at a preventive and prophylactic level, according to MSs political, economic and social specificities. An outline of those differences has been already provided.²⁷ The pandemic had a particularly negative effect on migrants, exacerbating the already existing cleavages and integration problems. There is still a long way to go to reduce the differences between migrants and European host populations.²⁸ The pandemic crisis has exposed the already existing discrepancies in various ways: directly in the solutions offered to guarantee the legal right to remain in the country and to be recognized the permission to access health care systems; indirectly in safeguarding access to welfare services (such as housing, adequate isolation conditions, if necessary, food supply), and to guarantee subsistence (through work offer and/or reliable working conditions, temporary benefits). The degree of success of those initiatives varied, and helps us to identify the most relevant lessons learned in the management of migrants during the pandemic crisis, which can be replicated in future crisis conjunctures, whether they will be caused by a health crisis or by something else (figure 2).

Figure 2 > Migration management in a time of crisis. Lessons learned



Source: Own elaboration, based on Susana Ferreira and Teresa Rodrigues.²⁹

EU countries differed in their willingness and capacity to cope with these general lines of action, and most of them opted to assume a standard approach in the fight against the disease, without implementing comprehensive measures requiring adjustments to different profiles or minority communities living under their flag. The common solutions had mostly practical goals and three main areas of intervention. The first highlights the need, in times of emergency, for the necessary legislative flexibility to implement exceptional measures that may assure rapid and efficient access to information and to formal proceedings, and guarantee to all migrants, regardless of their legal condition, the full maintenance of its rights (such as the possibility to remain in the country even if their legal status is not yet defined, and to be granted basic human rights besides health, housing, food, education and employment).

The second reinforces the right to equal access to healthcare regardless of status or birthplace. Protecting the right to health becomes even more important for vulnerable groups, often threatened by social exclusion, as they tend to present lower health levels due to their own socioeconomic circumstances (deficient living and working conditions, unfamiliarity with the health system, language barriers and cultural differences). In international human rights law, this right does not allow discrimination based on the migratory status, but there is an omission regarding irregular migrants, which turns into a symbolic discrimination in national laws. Thus, providing free access to irregular migrants to the healthcare system and ensuring that they remain undetected by immigration authorities is imperative to ensure their human right to health care, enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (art. 35th).

The third identifies as urgent the need to bolster the inspection of migrants' working conditions and the enforcement of legislation on migrant workers' protection. Examples of employers' abuse and economic illicit traffic are constant and made public by the media. A robust inspection on working conditions in some economic sectors would avoid the risk that less informed migrants might fall into the traps of illegal work.

COVID-19 has disproportionately affected migrant people at the confluence of a health crisis, a socio-economic crisis and a protection crisis. To assure a strong, sustained and truly inclusive post-pandemic recovery, European countries must invest in more effective integration policies, and assume a dynamic approach with the developing countries from which most migrants come from. This is an opportunity to strengthen the sharing of responsibilities and international migration governance under the goals of the 2030 Agenda. A human rights-based approach to migration ensures the human security of migrants and produces more lasting and sustainable outcomes.

Thus, the crisis has generated the momentum EU was lacking to consolidate a new migration paradigm that places human rights at the core of migration and integration policies. But there is still a long road ahead. As far as the EU is concerned, the different approaches to migration and migrant integration policies will continue to be tested in a volatile reality, in which different views persist on the advantages and disadvantages of migrants who will continue to arrive in Europe, who needs this young population to mitigate the unwanted effects of its own demographic winter. ^{RI}

Reception date: 8 October 2022 | Approval date: 14 December 2022

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ENDNOTES

¹ This paper was prepared within the framework of the Jean Monnet Atlantic Network 2.0. The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

² RODRIGUES, Teresa; INÁCIO, António, eds. – *Security at a Crossroad. New Tools for New Challenges*. New York: NOVA Publishers, 2019.

³ STANDAGE, Tom – 'Ten trends to watch in the coming year'. In *The Economist*. Available in: <https://www.economist.com/the-world-ahead/2022/11/14/ten-trends-to-watch-in-the-coming-year>.

⁴ As cleaning and health related activities. FERREIRA, Susana; RODRIGUES, Teresa – 'Guaranteeing migrants' rights in a time of pandemics: the Portuguese exception'. In STANDFORD, Ben; FOSTER, Steve; BERDUU,

Carlos Espaliu, eds. – *Global Pandemic, Security and Human Rights. Comparative Explorations of COVID-19 and the Law*. London: Routledge, 2022, pp. 90–111.

⁵ VUCA is the acronym for 'volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity'. The US Army War College used this concept to explain the world in the post-Cold War context in the 1990s, but only recently it begun to be used in other social and economic sectors. BANI is the acronym of 'brittle, anxious, nonlinear and incomprehensible'. The term was created in 2018 by Jamais Cascio. Post-COVID societies are increasingly fragile and exposed to unpredictable events, a factor that enhanced feelings of anxiety. These events do not appear linearly, which makes long-term planning irrelevant, paving the way for misunderstanding and uncertainty. More information: 'BANI: How to make sense of a chaotic world?'. Think Insights. Available in: <https://thinkinsights.net/leadership/bani/>.

⁶ INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION – *World Migration Report 2022*. Geneva:

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⁷ RODRIGUES, Teresa – *A Demografia Mundial 2050 Foresight Portugal 2030. Enquadramento Mundial e Europeu*. Lisbon: FCG, 2022, vol. 2, pp. 15–46. Available in: <https://gulbenkian.pt/publications/foresight-portugal-2030-volume-02/>.

⁸ FERNANDES, João – *Refugiados, Territórios de Espera e Insegurança: A Europa, o Mediterrâneo e as Deslocações Precárias na Crise de 2015*. Coimbra: CEIS20/Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra. Forthcoming.

⁹ INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION – *World Migration Report 2022*.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Until 2050, around one billion people will be forced to leave their home: 75% due to major crises, 15% to effects related to climate change, the remaining 10% to conflicts and

fear of human rights violations (*Ibid.*). UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME – *World Drug Report 2021*. Vienna: UNODC, 2021. Available in: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/wdr2021.html>.

12 UNITED NATIONS, DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, POPULATION DIVISION – *World Population Prospects 2022*. New York, 2022. Available in: https://population.un.org/wpp/publications/Files/WPP2022_Data_Sources.pdf.

13 Unequal migratory attractiveness allows for some of the wealthier countries (like Germany) to mitigate their very negative natural balance. For Eastern Europe (Romania and Bulgaria), several Baltic countries (Latvia and Lithuania), Portugal and Greece face the worst situation, as there are not particularly attractive to international migration.

14 From 447 million on 1 January 2021 to 446.8 on 1 January 2022. The negative natural change (more deaths than births) outnumbered the positive net migration, most likely due to the impact of the pandemic. In the EU, there were 531 000 more deaths in 2020 than in 2019 to be compared to 113 000 more deaths in 2021 than in 2020 (EUROSTAT – ‘Database. Population and demography’). Available in: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20220711-1>.

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SECURITY AND INEQUALITY EVIDENCE FROM PORTUGAL¹

Bruno P. Carvalho | Mariana Esteves | Susana Peralta

INTRODUCTION

Through a narrow security lens, that of absence of physical threats, Portugal is considered relatively safe. According to the Institute for Economics and Peace, Portugal is ranked as the sixth most peaceful country in the world.² Concerns with crime and terrorism are one of the country's least relevant issues.³ In fact, in 2020, 6.3% of people in Portugal reported they lived in areas with crime, violence, or vandalism, contrasting with 10.8% in the European Union (EU), according to the Survey for Income and Living Conditions.⁴ Still, 15.8% of Portuguese residents report they have felt unsafe or very unsafe walking alone after dark, and more than 83% believe a strong government to ensure safety is important, according to data from the European Social Survey (ESS).⁵

One can extend this statement in two directions. On the one hand, the extent to which security hinges on this narrow definition related to crime is questionable. On the other hand, even if the average perception of security in a given society is high, it may hide considerable heterogeneity amongst different individuals, depending on their socioeconomic position. In this short paper, we extend the analysis of security in Portugal in these two directions. Humankind entered the 21st century with a revival in the interest on *human security*.⁶ According to the prominent economist and moral philosopher, this revival is due to both positive and negative reasons. On the negative side, Sen identifies the emergence of 'newly developed dangers

ABSTRACT

This paper analyses human security in Portugal, and how it interact with inequality. We use representative survey data to discuss the individual determinants of several dimensions of human security that go beyond the narrow conception of the absence of physical threats, into a multidimensional perspective, encompassing environmental security, and living conditions. Albeit Portugal is one of the safest countries in the world, we document that women, low income groups, the elderly and younger people often feel less safe. We show, however, that in a broader perspective, Portugal fares less well, as income, food, housing and health security are, in many cases, higher in the country than in many other European Union countries.

Keywords: human security, inequality, Portugal, European Union.

RESUMO

SEGURANÇA E DESIGUALDADE: O CASO PORTUGUÊS

Este artigo analisa a segurança humana em Portugal e a forma como esta interage com a desigualdade. Utilizamos dados representativos



de inquéritos para discutir os determinantes individuais de várias dimensões da segurança humana que vão para além da estrita conceção da ausência de ameaças físicas, numa perspetiva multidimensional, abrangendo a segurança ambiental e as condições de vida. Embora Portugal seja um dos países mais seguros do mundo, documentamos que as mulheres, os grupos com baixos rendimentos, os idosos e os jovens sentem-se frequentemente menos seguros. Mostramos, no entanto, que numa perspetiva mais ampla, Portugal tem menos segurança, pois o rendimento, a alimentação, a habitação e a segurança sanitária são, em muitos casos, mais elevados no país do que em muitos outros países da União Europeia.

Palavras-chave: segurança humana, desigualdade, Portugal, União Europeia.

and adversities', due to public health concerns, civil wars, and genocides.⁷ While Sen was writing these lines at the turn of the century, it is fair to say that the problems have been accentuated in the last two and a half decades.⁸ Currently, humankind is slowly moving out of a pandemic, and the European land is home to a war of aggression unseen in the recent past.

On the positive side, Sen reckons the 'enhanced possibility [...] to put our efforts and understanding together to achieve a better-coordinated resistance to the forces that make human survival so insecure'.⁹ Indeed, scientific advances in natural and social sciences enhance the opportunities to deal with these challenges. But what, then, is human security? Sen posits that, while human security is related with the human development and human rights approaches to the analysis of societal achievements, it is a distinct concept.¹⁰

The concept of human security encompasses several distinct elements. First, it focuses on individual human lives, as opposed to, e.g., the military concept of national security. Moreover, with regards to this latter, human security expands the set of threats considered, to include food, health, political, and environmental security, amongst others, and includes 'the construction of safeguards and opportunities for people's strengths and aspirations'.¹¹ Second, it must include the analysis of society and social arrangements that improve security. Third, in contrast to the concept of human development (as put forward by Sen¹²), which aims at expanding positive freedoms, human security concentrates on downside risks. Concomitantly with this narrower focus, it ought to concentrate on the more elementary human rights, whereas human development covers the whole range of such rights.

Indeed, modern perceptions of security are multidimensional and interconnected, as they are closely linked to global threats, such as climate change, recurrent economic crises, or increased inequality, amongst others. Characterisation of human security calls, on the one hand, for both objective and subjective dimensions of the concept¹³ and, on the other hand, to the utilisation of individual-level information. Moreover, the individual dimension is crucial to study the interconnection between inequality and security.

An important related piece of research is Palma, Jardim and Monteiro, who provide an interesting analysis of security in Portugal, focusing on 20 municipalities.¹⁴ The authors collected their own data, relying on a random sample of 3757 individuals. Their survey has a lot of detail about the perception of crime rates of different kinds, which the

authors relate to objective measures from official statistics. Palma, Jardim and Monteiro show that both objective and subjective measures of security are positively associated with subjective well-being in Portugal and it varies across different regions.¹⁵ Women, elderly individuals, and those with lower incomes are the ones with the most vulnerable sense of security. A decade later, these results remain unchanged, as we will show in greater detail in this analysis.

Acknowledging the importance of objective security measures, we will mainly focus on subjective security, since these can be critical in creating a sense of trust and confidence amongst citizens. We rely on individual-level data, from the ESS, the European Union Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), and the Eurobarometer, to analyse how safety and safety perceptions vary for different groups of the population, depending on their socio-demographic characteristics.¹⁶ Furthermore, we focus on a set of dimensions that combine the above theoretical considerations about the concept of human security with data availability, namely: environment, income, food security, housing quality, and health.

This analysis is organized as follows. Section 2 analyses the heterogeneity of safety perceptions in Portugal and the objective crime rates, in parallel with other European countries. Section 3 looks at the environmental side of security. Section 4 onward focuses on security in living conditions, namely regarding income, food, housing, and health. Section 5 concludes.

SECURITY, SAFETY AND CRIME

HOW MUCH DO WE VALUE SAFETY?

Table 1 shows the share of respondents, from the European Union (EU27) and Portugal (PT), who have identified each of the 15 possible issues facing their countries as the most important, ordered by the prevalence in the EU27. Most residents in Europe identify the rising prices, inflation, and cost of living, followed by energy supply and the economic situation. Note that this data was collected after the COVID-19 pandemic and before the war caused by the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. In the last column, red (green) highlights the issues more (less) frequently mentioned by residents in Portugal, compared to the EU27 average. The concerns directly linked to safety, such as crime and terrorism, ranked 11 and 15, respectively, for the EU27. On average, only 6% and 2% of residents in Europe believe these are the most important issues facing their countries right now. In Portugal, these percentages drop to only 1%.

THE CONCERNS DIRECTLY LINKED TO SAFETY, SUCH AS CRIME AND TERRORISM, RANKED 11 AND 15, RESPECTIVELY, FOR THE EU27. ON AVERAGE, ONLY 6% AND 2% OF RESIDENTS IN EUROPE BELIEVE THESE ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING THEIR COUNTRIES RIGHT NOW. IN PORTUGAL, THESE PERCENTAGES DROP TO ONLY 1%.

Table 1 > What do you think are the two most important issues facing the country now?
European Union vs Portugal, 2020 (%)

	EU27 (%)	PT (%)	Diff. (pp)
Rising prices/ inflation/ cost of living	54	55	1
Energy supply	22	3	-19
Economic situation	20	27	7
The environment and climate change	15	6	-9
Health	14	40	26
The international situation	12	8	-4
Unemployment	9	14	5
Government debt	8	6	-2
Immigration	8	4	-4
Pensions	7	9	2
Crime	6	1	-5
Housing	6	5	-1
The education system	6	4	-2
Taxation	5	7	2
Terrorism	2	1	-1

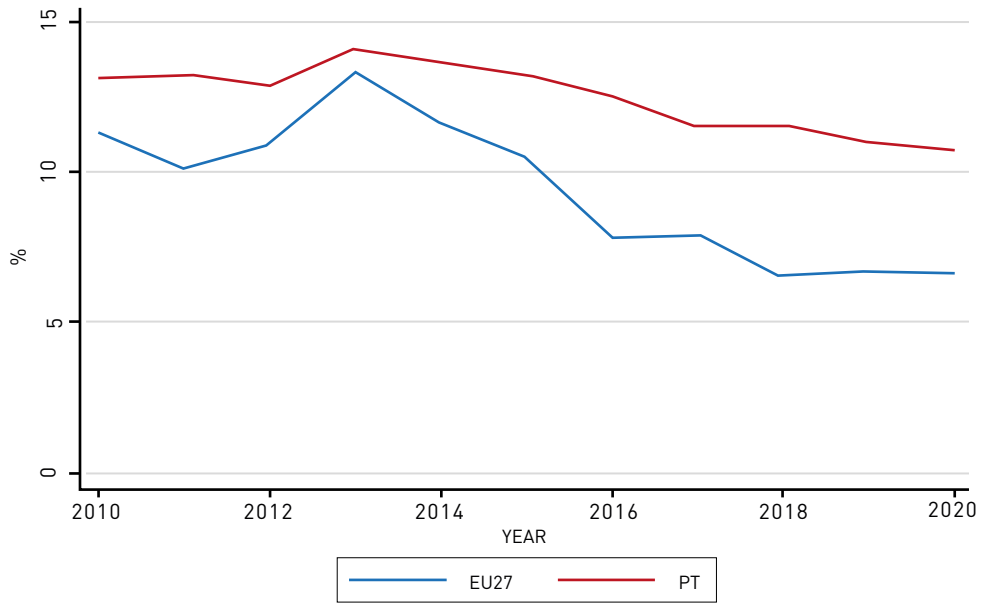
Source: Eurobarometer.¹⁷

These findings are consistent with the information collected by the EU-SILC.¹⁸ Fewer people in Portugal report living in an area with crime, violence, or vandalism, compared to the EU average (figure 1). In 2020, 6.6% of the Portuguese residents said they faced a problem of crime, violence, or vandalism in their neighborhood, compared with 10.7% for the EU27. This proportion has fallen progressively since 2013 (with peaks of 13.3% for Portugal and 14.1% for the EU27). In 2020, 6.7% of people in Portugal and 10.7% in EU27 reported this issue. The figures presented so far necessarily average out important heterogeneity. As expected, for instance, people who live in cities reported these problems over three times more often than people in rural areas in 2020 (8.7% vs. 4.4%), as shown in figure 2. The same tendency is found in the remaining EU countries (16.3% vs. 5.8%). The relative advantage of Portugal, regarding safety, is larger in cities.

IS PORTUGAL A SAFE COUNTRY?

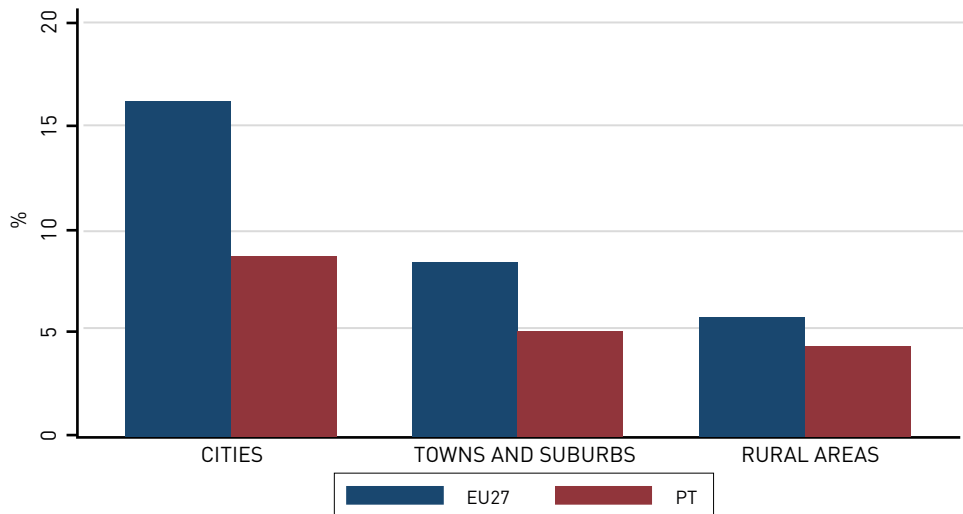
The 2022 ESS reports that 81% of people in the 19 European countries who responded to the survey believe it is essential to live in secure and safe surroundings.¹⁹ Table 2 shows that Portugal is above this average, with 87% of people stating secure and safe surroundings are important. The country for which this dimension is more important is Slovenia (90.9%) and the one for which it is less important is Norway (65.4%).

Figure 1 > Proportion of population who live in an area with crime, violence, or vandalism:
Portugal vs European Union, 2010–20



Source: EU-SILC.²⁰

Figure 2 > Proportion of population who live in an area with crime, violence, or vandalism:
by degree of urbanization, Portugal vs European Union, 2020



Source: EU-SILC.²¹

Another question related to security perceptions included in the 2022 ESS is whether people believe it is important that the government is strong and ensures safety.²² For countries like Slovenia and Greece, there appears to be a positive correlation between attributing importance to living in secure and safe surroundings and expecting the

IN COUNTRIES LIKE ITALY AND PORTUGAL, IN TURN, THE CORRELATION SEEMS TO BE NEGATIVE: INHABITANTS HAVE HIGHER CONCERNS FOR SAFETY, BUT LESS OFTEN BELIEVE THIS SHOULD BE ENSURED BY A STRONG GOVERNMENT.

government to play an active role in ensuring it. In countries like Italy and Portugal, in turn, the correlation seems to be negative: inhabitants have higher concerns for safety, but less often believe this should be ensured by a strong government. Nonetheless, there is still a high percentage of people who consider the government should

play a key role in ensuring safety in all the EU countries considered (from 92.8% in Slovenia to 59.7% in Italy). In Portugal, this share amounts to 75.5%.

Perhaps a more tangible measure of the degree of safety of a country is the question about whether respondents feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood after dark. Among the countries surveyed, Portugal is the one where more people feel safe (95%), followed by Finland and Slovenia. Greece, in turn, is where the population feels less safe walking alone in their neighborhood after dark (58%).

Table 2 > Perception on safety in European Union countries, 2020 (%)

	Safe at night		Safety important		Strong gov	
1	Portugal	94.9	Slovenia	90.9	Slovenia	92.8
2	Finland	93.6	North Macedonia	89.4	Bulgaria	91.9
3	Slovenia	93.0	Italy	89.1	Netherlands	90.6
4	Italy	92.1	Slovakia	88.8	Greece	89.2
5	Hungary	91.4	Montenegro	88.5	Lithuania	88.0
6	Croatia	89.9	Greece	87.9	Iceland	87.4
7	North Macedonia	89.2	Portugal	87.1	Switzerland	86.8
8	Norway	87.6	Hungary	86.7	North Macedonia	85.1
9	Netherlands	86.8	Bulgaria	86.4	Estonia	81.5
10	Estonia	86.0	Croatia	84.3	Slovakia	81.3
11	Iceland	86.0	Finland	81.4	Finland	80.5
12	Slovakia	82.1	Estonia	79.8	Croatia	80.3
13	Switzerland	78.6	Czechia	78.9	Hungary	79.2
14	Czechia	78.4	Lithuania	78.3	Montenegro	78.4
15	France	75.6	Switzerland	78.0	Czechia	77.3
16	Montenegro	75.6	Netherlands	73.4	Norway	75.9

[Cont.]

17	Lithuania	71.8	Iceland	73.3	Portugal	75.5
18	Bulgaria	67.8	France	72.7	France	75.4
19	Greece	57.8	Norway	65.4	Italy	59.7
Total average		83.1		82.1		81.9

Source: ESS.²³

As might be expected, feeling safe walking alone after dark presents some heterogeneity between groups of the population. In all 19 countries currently included in the 2022 European Social Survey, women more frequently report feeling unsafe, when compared to men.²⁴ In 2020, on average, this concern is reported by 30% of females and 12% of males. In Portugal, this gender gap is present, albeit smaller: 20.4% of women expressed the same concern, compared to 13.2% of men.

The position in the income distribution also matters for concerns about safety. Table 3 shows that 25% of people in the poorest quintile (Q1) report feeling unsafe, compared with 7.1% in the richest quintile (Q5)²⁵. A similar difference is observed for the EU average (32.1% vs. 13.5%).

Table 3 > Proportion of people who feel unsafe walking alone in local area after dark, by income quintile, Portugal vs. European Union, 2020 (%)

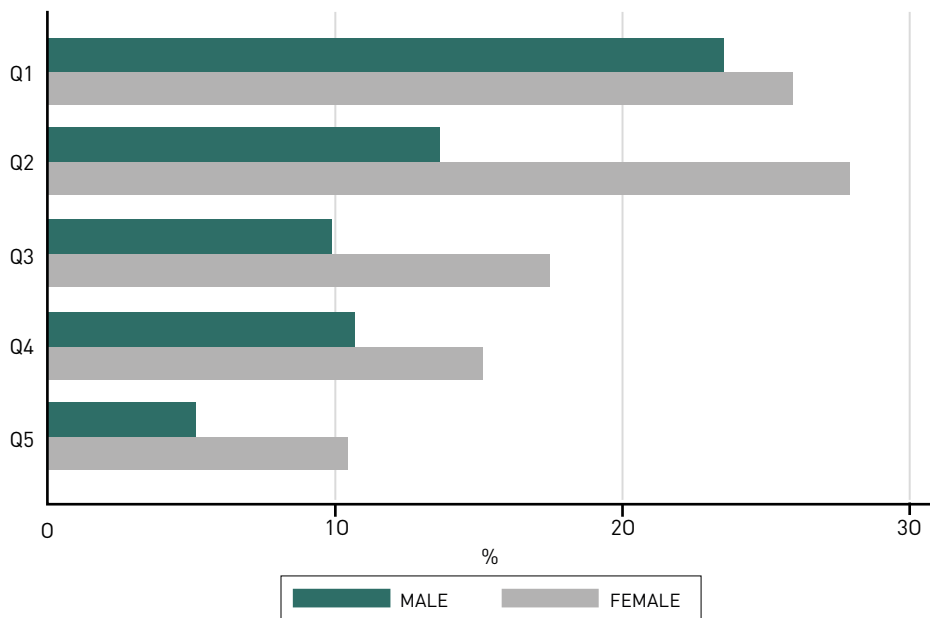
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Diff. (Q5-Q1)
PT	25.0	21.7	14.4	12.7	7.1	-17.9 pp.
EU average	32.1	24.6	20.4	16.4	13.5	-18.6 pp.

Source: ESS.²⁶

If we cross the gender and income dimensions, as shown in figure 3, it becomes apparent that women in all quintiles report more often they feel unsafe. The gender difference is smallest in the poorest quintile (Q1), where 26% of women and 24% of men feel unsafe. This compares to 10% of women and 5% of men in the richest quintile (Q5). Nevertheless, is in the second quintile Q2 that more women report feeling unsafe (27.8%), and where the gender gap is larger.

An interesting difference between Portugal and the remaining EU countries is that, in Portugal, eighth individuals aged 15-17 years old are the group who more often reports feelings of non safety walking on the street after dark (27% vs. 19% in the EU average). In most of the other countries, the oldest group (65+) has the highest prevalence of non safety feelings.

Figure 3 > Proportion of people who feel unsafe walking alone in local area after dark, by gender and income quintile, Portugal 2020



Source: ESS.²⁷

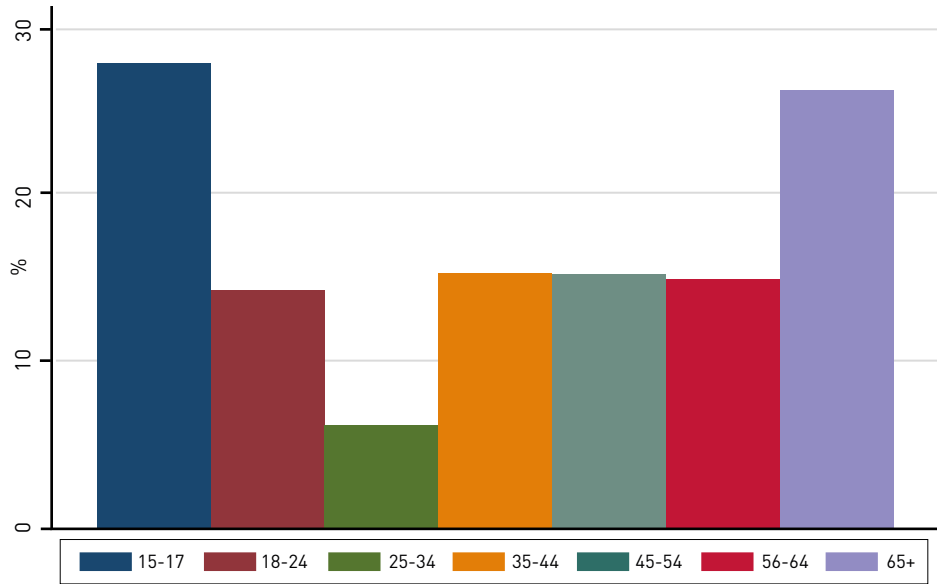
These differences necessarily reflect different behaviours with regards to the frequency with which individuals are outside after dark. In particular, it is conceivable that those who report less safety also tend to go out less often. In that case, for equivalent behaviours, we would observe even higher levels of heterogeneity.

Figure 5 shows how this concern varies with the relation with the labor market. Unemployed people tend to express higher concern regarding this matter (> 40%), while employed people (10.4%) and students (5.5%) tend to feel less unsafe. Note that disabled people felt more unsafe than non-disabled people (31.9% vs. 17.1%).

To further ascertain the relevance of the heterogeneity dimensions documented so far, we estimate the following linear probability model, where i stands for the respondent:

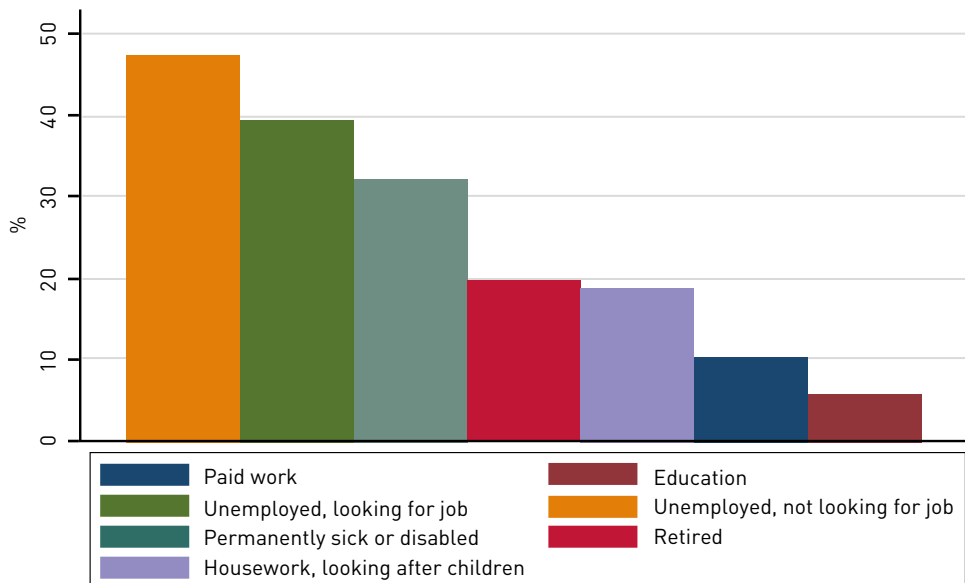
$$\begin{aligned}
 y_i = & \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Higher education} + \beta_2 \text{Higher education}_i + \\
 & \beta_3 \text{Age}_i + \beta_4 \text{Age}_i^2 + \beta_5 \text{Unemployment}_i + \beta_6 \text{Retired}_i + \\
 & \beta_7 \text{Disabled}_i + \beta_8 \text{Married}_i + \beta_9 \text{Divorced}_i + \beta_{10} \text{Widowed}_i + \\
 & \beta_{11} \text{Norte}_i + \beta_{12} \text{Centro}_i + \beta_{13} \text{Alentejo}_i + \beta_{14} \text{Algarve}_i + \\
 & \beta_{15} \text{Q2}_i + \beta_{16} \text{Q3}_i + \beta_{17} \text{Q4}_i + \beta_{18} \text{Q5}_i + \varepsilon_i
 \end{aligned}$$

Figure 4 > Proportion of people who feel unsafe walking alone in local area after dark, by age group, Portugal 2020



Source: ESS.²⁸

Figure 5 > Proportion of people who feel unsafe walking alone in local area after dark, by main activity



Source: ESS.²⁹

The binary dependent variables, y_i will measure, in turn, whether respondents feel unsafe at night, whether they consider safety is important, and whether they consider that a strong government is important. Each outcome is regressed on a set of socio-demographic characteristics: gender, education level, age, labor market situation, legal marital status, region, and income quintile. All explanatory variables are binary, with the exception of age. Table 4 shows the results.

Table 4 > Linear Probability Model

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Unsafe at night	Safety important	Strong gov
Female	8.746*** (1.854)	2.702 (1.603)	2.461 (1.839)
Higher education	-5.890* (2.410)	-3.217 (2.084)	-3.315 (2.390)
Age	-0.779** (0.284)	0.120 (0.245)	0.231 (0.281)
Age 2	0.010*** (0.003)	-0.000 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.003)
Unemployed	24.061** (8.431)	11.180 (7.291)	16.241 (8.362)
Retired	-3.504 (4.595)	-0.472 (3.973)	-5.706 (4.557)
Disabled	5.906 (10.640)	9.285 (9.201)	7.234 (10.554)
Married	-2.650 (5.847)	-1.597 (5.057)	-1.649 (5.800)
Divorced	2.938 (2.898)	1.483 (2.506)	-5.562 (2.875)
Widowed	-1.075 (3.204)	0.270 (2.770)	-1.954 (3.178)
Norte	-0.775 (2.330)	8.069*** (2.015)	6.200** (2.311)
Centro	-5.087* (2.441)	3.215 (2.111)	2.453 (2.421)
Alentejo	2.129 (3.728)	-0.941 (3.224)	0.466 (3.698)
Algarve	4.167 (4.282)	-33.987*** (3.703)	-54.810*** (4.247)

[Cont.]

Q2	-0.131 (2.527)	-4.492* (2.186)	0.043 (2.507)
Q3	-4.810 (2.750)	2.255 (2.378)	4.850 (2.727)
Q4	-2.814 (3.027)	1.513 (2.618)	3.561 (3.003)
Q5	-7.785* (3.813)	2.757 (3.298)	6.287 (3.782)
Constant	27.549*** (7.036)	78.333*** (6.085)	71.406*** (6.979)
Observations	1837	1837	1837
R ²	0.061	0.083	0.126

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

All in all, we find evidence that being female and being unemployed increases the probability of feeling unsafe walking alone in the local area after dark. Those who live in the center of Portugal (Centro) report feeling less unsafe. The richest people (Q5) also feel less unsafe.

Those who live in the northern (Norte) region tend to value more living in secure and safe surroundings and want a stronger

government to ensure safety than those in the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon. The opposite happens in Algarve, where people seem to value less the fact of living in a secure and safe place; they also attribute less importance to having a strong government ensuring safety.

To validate these results, we ran these regressions including covariates one by one. The results, which are unchanged with this robustness check, can be found in table 21, 22, and 23 of the Appendix.

WE FIND EVIDENCE THAT BEING FEMALE AND BEING UNEMPLOYED INCREASES THE PROBABILITY OF FEELING UNSAFE WALKING ALONE IN THE LOCAL AREA AFTER DARK.

CRIME

Until now we have been analysing perceptions of safety. Now we will look at the actual recorded crimes in Portugal and in the EU-27. Table 5 shows that the share of intentional homicides and thefts types offences declined, between 2010 and 2020, for both Portugal and EU-27. Crimes of sexual assault and sexual violence increased in Portugal by 22.1% and 13.3%, respectively, in this period.

While crimes such as homicides are measured objectively, other types of offences, in particular sex-related ones, depend a lot on the social norms, that determine the reporting behaviour of the potential victims. Therefore, when analysing these figures, it is important to keep in mind that they reflect the compound effects of prevalence and reporting.

Table 5 > Recorded offences by category, per hundred thousand inhabitants, Portugal vs EU27, 2010 vs 2020

Crime		2010	2020	Diff. (%)
Intentional homicide	Portugal	1.2	0.8	-32.5
	EU27 average	1.7	1.2	-28.1
Theft	Portugal	899.1	632.9	-29.6
	EU27 average	1 518.3	896.0	-41.0
Rape	Portugal	4.0	3.1	-23.5
	EU27 average	9.8	14.3	45.6
Sexual assault	Portugal	16.9	20.6	22.1
	EU27 average	22.7	21.8	-3.8
Sexual violence	Portugal	20.9	23.6	13.3
	EU27 average	34.4	35.5	3.2

Source: Eurostat.³⁰

ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

The environment is associated with physical and mental health and is prone to induce risks for individuals. Recall from figure 1 that the environment is referred to by 15%

AROUND 13.2% OF THE POPULATION IN PORTUGAL REPORTS PROBLEMS IN THE HOUSEHOLD CAUSED BY POLLUTION, GRIME, OR OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS, SLIGHTLY BELOW THE EU27 AVERAGE.

(resp., 6%) of individuals in the EU-27 (resp., Portugal) as an issue of concern. We now show the available statistics involving environmental risks.

Pollution Smoke, dust, unpleasant smells, or polluted water can be a real danger to health and security. Around 13.2% of the

population in Portugal reports problems in the household caused by pollution, grime, or other environmental problems, slightly below the EU27 average (13.7%, table 6). Those from the poorest income quintile (Q1) are the most affected ones, with 17% of people living with these issues (table 7). The Metropolitan Area of Lisbon (AML) is the most affected (15%), followed by Algarve (14.7%) and Alentejo (14.6%).

Air pollution According to the European Environment Agency (EEA), air pollution levels are too high in many countries across the European Union.³¹ Nearly 75% of the

EU's urban population is exposed to fine particles, known as PM_{2.5}, in excessive concentrations. Table 8 shows how many years of life we lose, on average, due to exposure to these particles. Both Portugal and the EU-27 improved, between 2010 and 2020, with around less 40% of years lost. In Portugal, in 2020, the number of lost years of life amounted to 264 years per 100,000 inhabitants, which compares to 545 years in the EU-27 average.

Table 6 > Pollution, grime, or other environmental problems in the local area, Portugal vs EU27, 2020 (%)

	Portugal	EU27
Pollution, grime, or other environmental problems in the local area	13.2	13.7

Source: EU-SILC.³²

Table 7 > Pollution, grime, or other environmental problems in the local area, Portugal 2020 (%)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
Pollution, grime, or other environmental problems in the local area	17.0	12.0	12.7	13.0	12.0

Source: EU-SILC.³³

Table 8 > Years of life lost due to exposure to fine particles (PM_{2.5}) per 100,000 inhabitants

Country	2010	2020	Diff. (%)
Portugal	451	264	-41.5
EU27 average	987	545	-44.8

Source: Pordata.³⁴

Wildfires are a serious problem in Europe, and Portugal is one of the most affected areas. According to the report Forest Fires in Europe, Middle East and North Africa 2017, 2017 was the year with more reported wildfires (21,006) and burnt area (540,630 ha) in Portugal. It represented 59% of the total area burned that year in the five Southern EU27 Member States (Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, and Greece).³⁵ In 2021, Portugal reported 8 186 wildfires (61% less than in 2017) and 28 360 (94% less than in 2017) burnt areas. This represented only 5% of the total in the EU27

(500 566 ha). The most affected region was the North, with 42% of the total burnt area. The period between July and August represented around 51% of the 2021 total burnt area.³⁶

Regarding the impact of fires on the loss of human lives, 2017 was marked by two tragic episodes that resulted in 66 fatalities (65 civilians and 1 firefighter). In 2021, there were 6 fatalities, of which 2 were firefighters and 4 civilians (see table 9).

Table 9 > Area burned (hectares) and the loss of human lives, Portugal, 2017 vs 2020

Year	Burned area (ha)	Casualties
2017	539 921	66
2021	28 360	6

Source: JRC PUBLICATIONS REPOSITORY.³⁷

LIVING CONDITIONS

Human security is a broad concept that overlaps with all aspects of life. At the beginning of the century, King and Murray rethink the concept of security and propose a human security index that leaves violence aside and measures the ‘years lived outside a state of generalized poverty’.³⁸

In this section, we look into different dimensions of human security that threaten the everyday lives of the most vulnerable: income, food, housing and health security. As highlighted by Alkire, putting human security into practice entails facing these challenges.³⁹

INCOME SAFETY

According to Eurostat, people are considered at risk of monetary poverty when their equivalised disposable income (after social transfers and taxes) is 60% of the median

IN PORTUGAL, IN 2020, 1.9 MILLION PEOPLE WERE BELOW THE AT-RISK-OF POVERTY THRESHOLD OF 554€ PER MONTH. THUS, 18.4% OF THE POPULATION IN PORTUGAL IS POOR, WHICH IS ABOVE THE EU AVERAGE OF 16.7%..

national income (which was 924€ per month in 2020). In Portugal, in 2020, 1.9 million people were below the at-risk-of poverty threshold of 554€ per month. Thus, 18.4% of the population in Portugal is poor, which is above the EU average of 16.7%.

The likelihood of being at-risk-of-poverty is not the same for all population groups.

Table 10 shows the most vulnerable groups in Portugal are women, children, young adults and the elderly, and non-Portuguese residents. The type of household is determinant to understand the risk of poverty, with lone parent households being especially

at risk (29.9%). Non-Portuguese have a risk of poverty 1.5 times higher than Portuguese in Portugal. With regards to the relation with the labour market, the unemployed are almost 2 times more likely to be at-risk-of-poverty than the employed. The autonomous regions of Madeira and Azores are the most affected (24.2% and 21.9%, respectively). In the mainland, the risk of poverty rate is greater in Algarve (21.6%). Due to their over-dependence on tourism, these regions were strongly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Monetary strain can also be assessed by the inability to face financial commitments or unexpected expenses. In Portugal, in 2021, 2.5% of the population had arrears on mortgage or rent payments, 5.3% had arrears on utility bills, 2% reduced utility costs, and 1.7% had arrears on other loan payments. Additionally, 31.2% report not being able to meet unexpected expenses with their own resources (has to ask for financial help from somebody to pay in due time).

Table 10 > At-risk of-poverty rate (%)

	(%)
Total	18.4
Gender	
Male	17.5
Female	19.2
Age group	
0–17	20.4
18–24	20.9
25–34	13.7
35–44	16.2
45–54	16.2
55–64	20.6
65+	20.1
Household type	
Couple without any child(ren)	15.9
Couple with at least one child aged less than 25	16.0
Lone parent with at least one child aged less than 25	29.9
Citizenship	
Portuguese	18.2
Other	27.2
Relationship with labor market	
Working	12.1
Unemployed	40.7
Fulfilling domestic tasks	18.5

[Cont.]

	[%]
Student, pupil	36.5
Unable to work due to long-standing health problems	37.5
Retired	19.8
Other	21.4
Region	
Norte	21.1
Algarve	21.6
Centro	19.9
AML	12.8
Alentejo	17.1
Açores	21.9
Madeira	24.2

Source: EU-SILC.⁴⁰

Table 11 shows that Portugal is close to the EU27 average. The big discrepancy is visible between income groups, as shown in table 12. Households with low income are more often unable to fulfill financial commitments, and thus tend to not be able to afford bills and house maintenance in due time. Poorer households (Q1) are 2 times more likely to be unable to pay an unexpected bill and overdue mortgage or rent payments than Q5 households.

FOOD SECURITY

Living conditions are strongly conditioned by the ability to address basic needs, including access to food. The Rome Declaration on World Food Security defines food security as ‘all people, at all times, [to] have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life’.⁴¹

For this reason, in 2018, the Food Agriculture Organization (FAO) proposed that countries included eight questions about food insecurity in annual household surveys. In the EU, this is done in the SILC survey. The project is known as the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) and, between 2018 and 2020, 18 countries had already implemented it. Portugal joined in 2021, with relevant findings.

In Portugal, in 2021, 6% of the total population reports concerns about not having enough food to eat, 10% state they can only afford to eat some kinds of food, 4% report they ate

less than they thought was necessary, 2% ran out of food, and 3% were unable to afford meals with meat, chicken, fish (or vegetarian equivalent) every second day.

Table 11 > Inability to meet financial commitments or unexpected expenses, Portugal vs EU27, 2021 (%)

	Portugal	EU27
Arrears on mortgage or rent payments	2.5	3.2
Arrears on utility bills	5.3	6.4
Arrears on hire purchase instalments or other loan payments	1.7	2.5
Inability to face unexpected financial expenses	31.2	30.1

Source: EU-SILC.⁴²

Table 12: Inability to meet financial commitments or unexpected expenses, by income quintiles, Portugal 2021 (%)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
Arrears on mortgage or rent payments	4.2	4.4	3.7	1.7	0.5
Arrears on utility bills	8.9	7.9	6.6	5.0	1.7
Arrears on hire purchase instalments or other loan payments	2.5	1.9	2.5	2.6	0.2
Inability to face unexpected financial expenses	57.9	49.2	37.2	26.4	12.3

Source: EU-SILC.⁴³

As this is a recent set of questions and it is not yet implemented in all the countries of the EU-SILC, it cannot be compared to the EU27. Nonetheless, we know that the share of the population unable to afford a meal with meat, fish, or a vegetarian equivalent, every second day in 2021 in the EU27 average was 7.3%, which compares to 2.3% in Portugal. The EU27 average is skewed by countries like Bulgaria and Romania, with 22.4% and 19.2% of people in this situation.

Table 13 shows that food security in Portugal is strongly conditioned by income: around 20% of the population in the lowest quintile of the income distribution (Q1) report they cannot afford enough food, 30% ate only a few kinds of food, and 17% ate less than thought he/she needed.

Table 13 > Food security, by income quintile, Portugal, 2021 (%)

	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
Worried that would not have enough food to eat	6.0	20.4	12.8	8.3	4.7	2.6
Unable to eat healthy and nutritious food	6.2	23.0	13.0	5.6	3.0	1.9
Ate only a few kinds of food	10.4	30.0	21.5	10.1	8.9	3.2
Skipped a meal	2.2	11.9	5.2	2.6	0.7	0.9
Ate less than thought he/she needed	4.1	17.0	9.8	5.1	3.5	1.4
Ran out of food	2.1	12.2	4.9	1.9	0.6	2.0
Was hungry and did not eat	2.0	9.8	4.6	2.8	0.7	0.9
Went without eating for a whole day	0.6	4.2	1.0	1.5	0.3	0.1

Source: EU-SILC.⁴⁴

HOUSING SECURITY

Having a fixed and safe place to return to at the end of a work or school day is an essential component of one's safety. In Portugal, in 2021, 16.4% of the population lived in energy poverty, i.e., were unable to keep their home adequately warm (6.9% EU27). In 2020 (last available data), 6.8% of the population considered their dwellings were too dark (6.5% in EU27), 0.6% did not have an indoor private flushing toilet (1.8% in EU27) and 25.2% lived in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation, or rot in window frames or floor (14.8% in EU27). Table 14 summarises this reality. Once again, those with lower income are the ones in a more unsafe situation. Table 15 shows that 1 in 3 people in Q1 is unable to keep their home adequately warm (vs. 5% in Q5). Leaking dwellings are present across all income groups, with almost 40% of people in Q1 and 15% in Q5 reporting this issue.

Table 14 > Housing conditions, Portugal vs EU27, 2021 (%)

	Portugal	EU27
Unable to keep their home adequately warm	16.4	6.9
Dark dwellings	6.8	6.5
No indoor private flushing toilet	0.6	1.8
Leaking dwelling	25.2	14.8

Source: EU-SILC.⁴⁵

Note: Inability to keep home adequately warm corresponds to 2021 and all remaining variables to 2020.

HEALTH SECURITY

All the security factors covered so far affect one crucial aspect of security, which is one's health. Access to medical care in the Portuguese population is, in principle,

ensured on equal grounds, thanks to the existence of a National Health Service (NHS). Nonetheless, differences of access persist across income groups, as shown in table 17. These differences likely result from the combination of private health care top-ups, and lack of access to the public supply due to transaction costs, such as waiting lists or system illiteracy.

Table 15 > Housing conditions, by income quintiles, Portugal 2021 (%)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
Unable to keep their home adequately warm	33.8	24.2	16.7	12.5	5.2
Dark dwellings	9.8	8.8	7.2	4.8	4.5
No indoor private flushing toilet	1.4	1.0	0.5	0.2	0.2
Leaking dwelling	36.8	27.4	26.4	23.9	14.9

Source: EU-SILC.⁴⁶

Note: Inability to keep home adequately warm corresponds to 2021 and all remaining variables to 2020.

Those in the poorest quintile (Q1) are 3 times more likely to miss medical examinations/treatments due to a lack of financial means. The fact that dental care is not provided by the NHS worsens the access of the poorer groups to this type of health care. In 2021, almost 19% of the poor indicate that there was at least one occasion when they needed a dental examination or treatment but did not have access (compared to 7% of the total population).

Table 16 > Share of people reporting unmet needs for medical/dental care for reasons of expense, Portugal vs EU27, 2021 (%)

	Portugal	EU27
Medical	1.7	1.0
Dental	8.8	2.6

Source: EU-SILC.⁴⁷

Table 17 > Share of people reporting unmet needs for medical/dental care for reasons of expense, by income quintile, Portugal 2021 (%)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
Medical	5.1	3.1	1.0	0.9	0.4
Dental	18.8	15.1	7.4	5.0	2.0

Source: EU-SILC.⁴⁸

CONCLUSION

The objective of this paper was to extend the narrow concept of security related to (the absence of) physical threats into Sen's multidimensional human security.⁴⁹ Moreover, we sought to show how the heterogeneous position of individuals in society influences the security of their human lives.

The actual dimensions of human security discussed in the paper resulted from the combination of the dimensions of interest and data availability. In particular, we tried, to the extent possible, to rely on individual-level data, that would allow us to characterise asymmetries with regard to security.

Overall, people in Portugal generally feel safe. Portugal is the sixth safest country in the world according to Institute for Economics and Peace.⁵⁰ However, there are still concerns about safety, especially for certain groups of the population. Women, low-income groups, elderly, and younger people are among the groups of the Portuguese population who feel less safe. Regarding subjective security, Portugal is the country where more people feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood after dark (95%), followed by Finland and Slovenia. The unemployed are 4 times more likely to feel unsafe than the employed. Disabled people also feel more unsafe than non disabled people (31.9% vs. 17.1%).


Since 2013, Portugal has been following the EU trend of decreasing the proportion of the population living in areas with crime, violence, or vandalism. People who live in cities reported these problems over three times more often than people in rural areas of the country.

Turning to objective security, between 2010 and 2020, crimes related to sexual assault and sexual violence are the ones that most increased for both Portugal and EU27 (22.1% and 13.3%, respectively). Regarding environmental security, low-income individuals are the most affected by pollution in their local areas. Although the levels of air pollution have decreased in the last decade, extreme phenomena, such as wildfires, still have devastating effects.

In 2020, the at-risk-of-poverty rate in Portugal was 18.4%, which is above the EU average of 16.2%. With a median equivalised disposable income of 924€ per month in 2020, the Portuguese population still faces significant challenges in making ends meet. Around 1 in 3 are not able to meet unexpected expenses with their own resources. Food security is also strongly conditioned by income: around 20% of the population in the lowest quintile of the income distribution (Q1) cannot afford enough food, 30% ate only a few kinds of food, and 17% ate less than thought they needed. Poor housing conditions are present in a significant proportion of households in Portugal, with 1 in 3 people from Q1 unable to keep their home adequately warm (vs. 5% from Q5). Leaking dwellings are present across all income groups, with almost 40% of people in Q1 and 15% in Q5 reporting this issue. Finally, although the country has widely spread access to the National Health Service (NHS), those in Q1 are 3 times more likely to miss medical examinations/treatments due to a lack of financial means. The difference between income

groups is most visible in dental care, which is not provided by the NHS. In 2021, almost 19% of the poor indicate that there was at least one occasion when they needed a dental examination or treatment but did not have access (compared to 7% of the total population).

Our main conclusions are as follows. Firstly, Portugal remains a relatively secure country in the context of the EU, even when considering the broader concept of human security. Secondly, one tends to find more prevalence of insecurity in other dimensions beyond the one related to crime and physical threats. Thirdly, and most importantly, the relative security of the country hides considerable heterogeneity amongst socioeconomic groups, which highlights the crucial role of personal circumstances and the importance of targeting public policies at these groups that are more prone to experience insecurity.

Recall that, according to Sen human security concentrates on downside risks, and on the more elementary human rights.⁵¹ These inequalities in human security are, therefore, not second order. 

Reception date: 27 October 2022 | Approval date: 15 December 2022

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A.1 DATA

This report relies mainly on survey individual-level data from data Eurobarometer, European Social Survey (ESS), and Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC). Table 18 summarises some important aspects of these databases.

Table 18 > Databases used in this report

Database	Edition	Year	Type	Sample size		Reference period
				EU27	Portugal	
Eurobarometer	Standard 97 - 2022 Summer 2022	2002	Survey	26 468	1009	Jun.–Jul.
European Social Survey (ESS)	ESS round 10	2020/2022	Survey	33 351	1838	Sep. 2020–May 2022
Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC)	-	2021	Survey	282 150	32 325	Apr.–Jun. 2020

The Eurobarometer began in 1974 and aims at monitoring regularly the state of public opinion in Europe on issues related to the European Union as well as attitudes on subjects of political or social nature. Eurobarometer surveys rely on a randomly selected sample of at least 1000 persons aged 15 years and more per country or territory reported. In this report we focus on the Standard Eurobarometer – conducted twice a year and focused on monitoring key trends in each country and contemporary socio-political events.

The European Social Survey (ESS), a biennial survey of attitudes and behavior in European countries. The ESS is held every two years and has been held since 2001 in different European countries. It results from an academic consortium led by the University of London, in the United Kingdom. In Portugal, coordination is the responsibility of the Institute of Social Sciences of the University of Lisbon, together with ISCTE-IUL and ISCSP. The most recent data refer to 2016 and cover 23 countries, including Portugal. Interviews are conducted face-to-face with computer assistance. The Azores and Madeira regions are excluded.

Finally, the Survey on Living Conditions and Income (EU-SILC) is a survey carried out by the National Institute of Statistics, in European coordination. It is considered the reference source for comparative analyzes on social inclusion and income distribution, providing multidimensional, cross-sectional (i.e., referring to the year under review) and longitudinal (i.e., over time) microdata (i.e. at the individual and family level)) on income, poverty, living conditions, social exclusion, work, health and education. It was

implemented in seven countries in 2003, a year later in Portugal.

Main outcome variables used in this report:

- ‘Safe at night’ – Feeling of safety of walking alone in local area after dark. This is a self-reported variable in which the respondents choose between four levels of safety: ‘Very safe’, ‘Safe’, ‘Unsafe’ and ‘Very unsafe’. In this report we grouped it into two categories: ‘Safe at night’ encompass ‘Very safe’ and ‘Safe’ and ‘Unsafe at night’ encompass ‘Very unsafe’ and ‘Unsafe’. The proportion of people who do not answer, refuse to answer or do not know is 0.8%.
- ‘Safety important’ – Important to live in secure and safe surroundings. In this question, respondents identify if the affirmation ‘Important to live in secure and safe surroundings’ is something they would agree with. There are six categories: ‘Very much like me’, ‘Like me’, ‘Somewhat like me’, ‘A little like me’, ‘Not like me’ and ‘Not like me at all’. In this report, we grouped it into two categories, in which ‘Safety important’ includes those who say that the affirmation sounds ‘Very much like me’, ‘Like me’ or ‘Somewhat like me’. The proportion of people who do not answer, refuse to answer, or do not know is 1.1%.
- Strong gov = Important that government is strong and ensures safety. In this question, respondents identify if the affirmation ‘Important that government is strong and ensures safety’ is something they would agree with. There are six categories: ‘Very much like me’, ‘Like me’, ‘Somewhat like me’, ‘A little like me’, ‘Not like me’ and ‘Not like me at all’. In this report, we grouped it into two categories, in which ‘Safety important’ includes those who say that the affirmation sounds ‘Very much like me’, ‘Like me’ or ‘Somewhat like me’. The proportion of people who do not answer, refuse to answer, or do not know is 1.9%.
- Pollution, grime or other environmental problems in the local area Format of the question: ‘Do you have any of the following problems related to the place where you live: pollution, grime or other environmental problems in the local area such as smoke, dust, unpleasant smells or polluted water?’ The objective is to assess whether the respondent feels ‘pollution, grime, etc.’ to be a problem for the household (not whether they are bothered by the problem).

Table 19 > Income quintiles monthly and annual income, Portugal 2020, ESS

Income quintile	Monthly income (€)	Annual income (€)
Q1	0–700	0–8500
Q2	701–1100	8501–13500
Q3	1101–1600	13501–19000
Q4	1601–2300	19001–27500
Q5	>2301	>27501

Source: ESS.⁵²

Note: Respondents were asked to choose from 10 income groups the one which better described their household’s total income (after tax and compulsory deductions).

Table 20 > Average monthly and annual income, by income quintile, Portugal 2020, EU-SILC

Income quintile	Monthly income (€)	Annual income (€)
Q1	350	4 200
Q2	1 098	13 176
Q3	2 128	25 536
Q4	3 341	40 092
Q5	6 537	78 444

Source: EU-SILC. ⁵³

Note: Respondents reported their total disposable household income (after tax and compulsory deductions).

A.2 ROBUSTNESS CHECKS

Table 21 > Linear Probability Model - Unsafe at night

Unsafe at night	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Female	9.420*** (1.804)	9.009*** (1.808)	9.035*** (1.834)	9.060*** (1.839)	8.746*** (1.854)
Higher education	-7.777*** (2.283)	-7.417** (2.282)	-7.265*** (2.289)	-7.336** (2.303)	-5.890* (2.410)
Age	-0.690* (0.271)	-0.748** (0.271)	-0.826** (0.283)	-0.824** (0.283)	-0.779** (0.284)
Age ²	0.009*** (0.003)	0.010*** (0.003)	0.010*** (0.003)	0.010*** (0.003)	0.010*** (0.003)
Unemployed		24.089** (8.402)	24.024** (8.406)	25.002** (8.407)	24.061** (8.431)
Retired		-3.970 (4.567)	-4.078 (4.583)	-3.514 (4.594)	-3.504 (4.595)
Disabled		4.238 (10.623)	3.901 (10.633)	5.037 (10.625)	5.906 (10.640)
Married			-2.675 (5.842)	-2.362 (5.838)	-2.650 (5.847)
Divorced			3.591 (2.887)	3.368 (2.893)	2.938 (2.898)
Widowed			-0.362	-0.439	-1.075

[Cont.]					
			(3.191)	(3.187)	(3.204)
Norte				-0.868	-0.775
				(2.330)	(2.330)
Centro				-4.627	-5.087*
				(2.430)	(2.441)
Alentejo				2.697	2.129
				(3.722)	(3.728)
Algarve				5.732	4.167
				(4.188)	(4.282)
Q2					-0.131
					(2.527)
Q3					-4.810
					(2.750)
Q4					-2.814
					(3.027)
Q5					-7.785*
					(3.813)
Constant	23.222***	24.102***	25.569***	26.418***	27.549***
	(6.796)	(6.799)	(6.926)	(7.003)	(7.036)
Observations	1837	1837	1837	1837	1837
R ²	0.047	0.051	0.052	0.057	0.061
Standard errors in parentheses					
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$					

Source: ESS.⁵⁴

Table 22 > Linear Probability Model - Safety important

Safety important	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Female	3.108	2.819	2.787	2.529	2.702
	(1.614)	(1.618)	(1.643)	(1.591)	(1.603)
Higher education	-2.782	-2.602	-2.574	-2.196	-3.217
	(2.042)	(2.043)	(2.051)	(1.992)	(2.084)
Age	0.196	0.157	0.141	0.129	0.120
	(0.242)	(0.243)	(0.253)	(0.245)	(0.245)
Age	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	-0.000

[Cont.]

	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Safety important	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Unemployed		12.761 (7.523)	12.707 (7.531)	9.486 (7.273)	11.180 (7.291)
Retired		3.435 (4.089)	3.444 (4.105)	-0.212 (3.974)	-0.472 (3.973)
Disabled		12.667 (9.512)	12.631 (9.525)	9.797 (9.192)	9.285 (9.201)
Married			0.495 (5.233)	-1.106 (5.050)	-1.597 (5.057)
Divorced			1.035 (2.586)	1.219 (2.503)	1.483 (2.506)
Widowed			0.206 (2.859)	0.228 (2.757)	0.270 (2.770)
Norte				8.146*** (2.016)	8.069*** (2.015)
Centro				2.626 (2.102)	3.215 (2.111)
Alentejo				-1.184 (3.219)	-0.941 (3.224)
Algarve				-33.947^*** (3.623)	-33.987*** (3.703)
Q2					-4.492* (2.186)
Q3					2.255 (2.378)
Q4					1.513 (2.618)
Q5					2.757 (3.298)
Constant	78.887*** (6.079)	79.652*** (6.087)	79.950*** (6.204)	78.491*** (6.058)	78.333*** (6.085)
Observations	1837 0.005	1837 0.008	1837 0.008	1837 0.079	1837 0.083

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Source: ESS. ⁵⁵

Table 23 > Linear Probability Model- Strong government is important

Strong gov	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Female	3.150 (1.897)	2.771 (1.903)	3.060 (1.930)	2.191 (1.824)	2.461 (1.839)
Higher education	-2.283 (2.401)	-1.992 (2.403)	-2.277 (2.408)	-2.074 (2.284)	-3.315 (2.390)
Age	0.242 (0.285)	0.188 (0.286)	0.259 (0.298)	0.274 (0.281)	0.231 (0.281)
Age ²	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)
Unemployed		18.892* (8.845)	19.175* (8.844)	15.280 (8.337)	16.241 (8.362)
Retired		-0.745 (4.808)	-0.945 (4.822)	-5.723 (4.556)	-5.706 (4.557)
Disabled		11.354 (11.184)	11.540 (11.186)	7.764 (10.537)	7.234 (10.554)
Married			0.968 (6.146)	-1.822 (5.789)	-1.649 (5.800)
Divorced			-6.196* (3.037)	-5.966* (2.869)	-5.562 (2.875)
Widowed			-2.632 (3.357)	-2.576 (3.160)	-1.954 (3.178)
Norte				6.316** (2.311)	6.200** (2.311)
Centro				1.984 (2.409)	2.453 (2.421)
Alentejo				-0.077 (3.691)	0.466 (3.698)
Algarve				-56.327*** (4.153)	-54.810*** (4.247)
Q2					0.043 (2.507)
Q3					4.850 (2.727)
Q4					3.561 (3.003)

[Cont.]

Strong gov	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Q5					6.287 (3.782)
Constant	73.053*** (7.148)	73.990*** (7.158)	72.508*** (7.286)	72.603*** (6.944)	71.406*** (6.979)
Observations	1837	1837	1837	1837	1837
R2	0.002	0.005	0.008	0.123	0.126

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Source: ESS.⁵⁶

ENDNOTES

1 This paper was prepared within the framework of the Jean Monnet Atlantic Network 2.0. The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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SOCIAL UNREST AND (URBAN) INEQUALITIES IN THE ATLANTIC REGION IN THE COVID-19 ERA¹

Eva Garcia Chueca²

We are living turbulent times, not unlike those that marked the early years of the 20th century when the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic caused forty million deaths within three months.³ This global health crisis was compounded by the deadly effects of the First World War and both calamities led to a major series of protests in subsequent years. From the second half of the 20th century through to the present day, there have been other times of serious social unrest, among them those of 1968 with the workers' and students' revolts, the Arab Spring of 2011, the Occupy movement, and the indignados movement. The past decade has been notorious for high levels of contestation worldwide, largely triggered by the 2008 financial crisis and the effects of austerity policies.⁴

This is the context in which the 2020 global health crisis erupted as a result of the COVID-19 virus, a variant of the SARS-CoV virus (2003), giving rise to new protests and intensifying those that had marked the previous years. The emergence of the new pathogen was recorded in November 2019 in the Chinese city of Wuhan and, according to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, the virus had already infected more than 96 million people and caused two million deaths by January 2020. The speed at which COVID-19 spread worldwide posed a major challenge for the institutions, first in managing the resulting health crisis and, afterwards, the ensuing social and economic effects. Although pandemics are not a rare phenomenon in modern history – with at

ABSTRACT

The global health crisis caused in 2020 by the covid-19 pandemic has given rise to new protests in the social sphere and intensified those that marked earlier years. This study aims to contribute empirical material that could help understanding of this social unrest and its link with (especially urban) inequalities in the Atlantic region. In particular, it sets out to answer two questions: i) to what extent is inequality related with increasing social protests in situations of health crisis, and ii) what form do these phenomena (pandemic, inequalities, and protests) have in cities?

Keywords: inequalities, protests, cities, COVID-19.

RESUMO

A crise de saúde global causada em 2020 pela pandemia de covid-19 levou a novos protestos na esfera social e intensificou os que haviam marcado os anos precedentes. Este artigo visa fornecer material empírico para ajudar na compreensão desta agitação social e a sua ligação com as desigualdades (especialmente as urbanas) na região atlântica. Especificamente, o artigo visa responder a duas questões: i) até que ponto a desigualdade está relacio-



nada com o aumento de protestos sociais em situações de crise sanitária, e ii) que forma assumem estes fenómenos (pandemia, desigualdades e protestos) nas cidades.

Palavras-chave: desigualdades, protestos, cidades, covid-19.

least eight documented in the last century – tackling them effectively remains a difficult task for governments.⁵

The problems unleashed by the pandemic were manifested in several domains: millions of deaths and deteriorating health for many people, a serious economic recession, a deepening of existing divides (economic, gender, digital, generational, etcetera), growing distrust of institutions,

and major mental health problems in the population as a whole due to ongoing individual isolation and lack of social interaction. Not only were institutions struggling to manage the crisis and the various dimensions of its effects, they were also having to deal with the politicisation of misinformation about the pandemic.

All these elements came together to create a breeding ground, especially in cities, for a range of expressions of social unrest which are still only vaguely understood despite preliminary efforts being made in academia to remedy this.⁶ In the scope of this study, I shall endeavour to provide some keys for interpreting this phenomenon, with particular attention to the links between the pandemic, protests, and social unrest in urban settings. According to a report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), ‘pandemics lead to social unrest by lowering growth and raising inequality’.⁷ Accordingly, the IMF argues that there is a clear link between pandemic, inequality, and serious social tensions. In this study, I shall attempt to contribute some empirical elements related with this issue, basically in response to two questions. First, how is inequality related with growing social unrest in situations of health crisis such as the one which was caused by COVID-19? In other words, have there been more protests in countries with greater (pre- and post-pandemic) inequalities? Second, how do these phenomena (impact of the pandemic, inequalities, and protests) materialise in cities?

To address these questions, I shall first analyse the main trends, in terms of social protests, which have occurred on a worldwide scale over the last decade, after which I shall focus my inquiry on what has happened within the Atlantic region during the COVID-19 era. I shall proceed to demonstrate how the countries registering the highest levels of social unrest have been the United States, France, and Mexico. I shall then examine, from a historical perspective, how pandemics have affected cities and, in the Atlantic region, which cities have seen the greatest numbers of protests in the COVID-19 era. Finally, in seeking to establish the links between pandemic, inequalities, and cities, I conclude that urban social protests do not take place in the short term in geographical settings with more inequality problems. However, as the International Monetary Fund forecasts, they are likely to proliferate in the medium term (14 to 24 months after the crisis) in low- or lower-middle-income countries.

METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In carrying out this study, I have opted to apply protest event analysis (PEA), one of the most commonly used research methods in the study of social movements over the last

few decades. While protest studies initially used mainly qualitative research methods, the use of quantitative techniques has increased in the last decade thanks to the greater possibilities offered by certain technological tools for collecting and systematising data. PEA, a variant of the research tool of content analysis, enables systematic evaluation of the number and characteristics of protests occurring in different geographical areas (from local to supranational domains), while also making it possible to establish comparative readings across territories, time periods, and themes.

The source of information concerning social tensions that is used in this study is the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) Project, a database that collects disaggregated data, maps, and analyses social conflicts around the world. Among scholars in the field, it is considered that 'ACLED [is] the most reliable and complete source of data on conflicts and disorder patterns worldwide'.⁸ In the Atlantic region, ACLED's territorial coverage extends to Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, and the United States. Its chief sources of information are: i) the media (sub-national, regional, national, and international); ii) reports (of international organisations, NGOs, and government institutions); iii) local partners; and iv) social networks (selected and verified).⁹

ACLED scrutinises five types of events which it considers to be indicators of situations of social unrest: i) battles; ii) violence against civilians; iii) explosions and remote violence; iv) riots; and v) protests.¹⁰ The following table shows the events that are predefined by ACLED and systematises them in keeping with their nature. These five kinds of events can be synthesised under two headings of social unrest or, in other words, whether they involve political violence or, on the contrary, are deemed to be social manifestations (table 1).

This study takes the second category as its unit of analysis, using the terms *protests*, *mobilisations*, and *demonstrations* as interchangeable references. The time frame covered is 2020 and January to June 2021. As this paper shows throughout, the pandemic has given rise to various kinds of manifestations within this period, which can be conceptualised as follows in table 2.

It should be noted that, along with these expressions of social unrest, the pandemic has also prompted multiple expressions (and actions) of support and social solidarity through, for example, applauding health workers (from balconies, by means of flash mobs) and experiences of joint activities which, from neighbourhoods and communities, have managed to offer help and support to more vulnerable groups.¹¹ It is beyond the scope of the present study to enter into the analysis of these instances of solidarity, but it is important to draw attention to their existence so as not to give the erroneous impression that the pandemic has mostly sparked protests and social unrest. Needless to say, the research method I have chosen for this study is not without its limits. It is important to be aware that the situations recorded by ACLED, while quite exhaustive, do not cover the totality of protests that have occurred in the COVID-19 era.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE AWARE THAT THE SITUATIONS RECORDED BY ACLED, WHILE QUITE EXHAUSTIVE, DO NOT COVER THE TOTALITY OF PROTESTS THAT HAVE OCCURRED IN THE COVID-19 ERA.

Table 1 > Taxonomy of social unrest

SOCIAL CONFLICT		
Nature of the event	Description	Event type recorded by ACLED
<i>Political violence</i>	Situations that entail the use of force by a group for political reasons or ends.	Battles, explosions and remote violence, violence against civilians, mob violence.
<i>Demonstrations</i>	Calls for ideas or policies by social movements or groups.	Peaceful protests or riots arising from political or social grievances.

Source: Author on the basis of ACLED material.

Table 2 > Types of protests in the COVID-19 era (2020–21)

Types of protests in the COVID-19 era (2020–21)		
<i>COVID-19 protests</i> ¹²	Health and social care.	Health and social care protests.
	Economy.	Demands for financial support from institutions.
	Anti-lockdown or anti-COVID-19 protests.	Protests by far right and denialist groups against measures like social distancing, compulsory use of masks, vaccination, etcetera.
<i>Intensification of pre-COVID-19 protests</i>	Old grievances.	Anti-government opposition, racial inequality and discrimination, poverty, employment, etcetera.

Source: Author.

Like any exercise in identifying and mapping protests, this is a selective sample. Hutter warns of several factors which, generally speaking, explain the existing limitations in the sources of information used when recording protests, amongst which I would emphasise two: i) the characteristics of the events (including the larger and more violent ones which have greater media coverage, those that prompt counter-protests, those with a police presence, and those that have the support of some or other organisation), and ii) the characteristics of the issues that give rise to the protests (when those that refer to more generalised concerns have more media coverage).¹³ This study cannot avoid the biases in ACLED's selection of information. It should also be noted that protests that might have occurred in the digital media and which, on account of this, are not recorded by ACLED, are beyond the scope of this study.

ON THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL UNREST

As Renn, Jovanovic, and Schröter point out, social unrest is comprised by complex situations that can be caused by social phenomena, accidents, and natural disasters.¹⁴ It usually happens when people are extremely unhappy about the situation they are in, feeling that it is unfair, or the result of unequal conditions, or fearing for their health, living conditions, and livelihoods. In these cases, collective anger or outrage can take the form of mobilisations, demonstrations, protests, riots, and even political violence. These are phenomena connected with immediate reality, since they can have major consequences in several domains: social (rise of conflicts), political (fall of a government), and legal (recognition of a right or adoption of certain legal measures). Similarly, social unrest is not detached from history either, as protests are frequently the culmination of historical incidents or situations which, having generated social tensions, are later manifested as demands by citizens.

Renn Jovanovic, and Schröter warn that the academic literature does little by way of analysing social unrest *per se*.¹⁵ The scientific texts are more often concerned with measuring social unrest by means of indicators that with delineating it from the theoretical standpoint. Hence, the approaches are more empirical than conceptual. From a theoretical standpoint, it is necessary to turn to two different fields of study in order to approach some of the key aspects of social unrest,¹⁶ namely reflections on: i) political participation; and ii) social movements. In fact, these two bodies of academic literature do not constitute watertight domains of research but, in fact, show certain kinds of interaction between them and even some degree of overlapping.¹⁷

Political participation refers to actions by means of which citizens seek to influence decision-making in different spheres of the political system. Since the seminal work

THE SCIENTIFIC TEXTS ARE MORE OFTEN CONCERNED WITH MEASURING SOCIAL UNREST BY MEANS OF INDICATORS THAT WITH DELINEATING IT FROM THE THEORETICAL STANDPOINT.

of Barnes and Kaase, this area of study has considerably evolved in keeping with new forms of political organisation, the kinds of actions involved, and the goals being pursued.¹⁸ Nevertheless, their theoretical contributions still prevail in academic interpretation of this phenomenon. Barnes and Kaase established a distinction between *conventional* and *non-conventional* forms of participation. The former mainly refers to the use of channels established by the voting system and electoral processes (in other words, they are conveyed through the socio-political conventions and agreements that structure democratic systems), while the latter term is a catchall for all the mass-based manifestations outside the bounds of legality and the institutional framework in force, for example, blocking streets or the various kinds of occupation¹⁹.

From the 1960s to the present day, the array of agents and channels of citizen expression has become more complex and diverse, which means that the distinction between conventional and non-conventional participation no longer captures the richness of the socio-political reality. Hence, some authors like Kaim suggest new categories like ‘alternative participation’, thus breaking with the dichotomy established by Barnes and Kaase and including all the forms of participation that did not come under either heading.²⁰ Indeed, the advent of social movements represented a break with the classical forms of political organisation which, for most of the 20th century, were dominated by trade unions, political parties, and neighbourhood associations. The later emergence of the feminist, ecologist, civil rights, and the LGBTIQ+ rights movements would also bring into being repertoires of action based on the shaping of more fluid, informal networks through which the political participation of these groups has been channelled.²¹

Moreover, with the new millennium and the consolidation of the process of globalisation, the alter-globalisation movement took shape. With this leap towards the global, the targets of citizen mobilisations and protests were broadened. If, traditionally, they had set their sights on national institutions (or, in some cases, sub-national), after 2000 opposition was also aimed at certain supranational organisations (G8, the Davos Forum, the IMF) and transnational companies like Nike and Amazon.²² At present, it should be noted that technological innovations have enabled new forms of protest (for example, technological activism, cyberattacks, and information leaks) and have also provided a privileged channel for social mobilisation.²³

Along with studies on political participation, the second relevant field of analysis of protests is that of social movements. Without a doubt, protests are the ‘most tangible expression of a social movement’.²⁴ From this area of study, it is indicated that, unlike other social and political activities, protests are, by nature, a complex phenomenon, conceptually ambiguous, and with no fixed definition.²⁵ For the German sociologist Karl-Dieter Opp, protests are the ‘joint (i.e., collective) action of individuals aimed at achieving their goal or goals by influencing decision of a target’.²⁶ Accordingly, they can be defined as political claim-making acts that are notable for a strong communicative vocation in the public sphere. With regard to understanding this social pheno-

menon, the sociologists Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow have made a vital contribution with concepts like ‘contentious politics’, which is understood as

‘episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when (a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claim and (b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interest of at least one of the claimants’.²⁷

Protests can take place through various types of actions, from peaceful demonstrations through to acts of violence. Hence, to return to the theoretical proposal of Barnes and Kaase, the forms in which they are manifested range from activities of a conventional nature (collecting signatures for petitions, demonstrations, marches, rallies) to non-conventional activities (blocking streets or buildings, strikes, occupations, acts of violence, and arson).²⁸ Furthermore, protests can be isolated or multiple. In the latter case, they are referred to as a *wave of protests* and, if after some time, they are renewed, it could be the onset of a *cycle of protests*, which tend to be typified as outbreaks of protests and a receding of waves of protests.²⁹ Faced with this situation, the state can respond in different ways: allowing the protests, clamping down, and granting concessions in response to the demands of the more moderate actors while repressing the more radical ones. It should be emphasised that a cessation of protests does not necessarily mean the end of mobilisations. It could simply mark the beginning of a shift towards conventional forms of political mobilisation, which is to say those that remain within the framework of the legal and political channels established by the existing institutional system. By contrast, it might also happen that peacefully expressed mobilisations become wholly or partially radicalised. As for demands, protests are not always based on the formulation of political demands (whether by means of conventional or confrontational mechanisms). At times, they can lead to self-management or self-provision of goods through a broad range of actions, including community-based strategies, alternative lifestyles, mutual aid, and social provision of services.³⁰

Since the end of the 1960s, expressions of social unrest have mainly occurred in urban settings. The events of May ’68, the Hong Kong protests of the 1980s, the anti-globalisation mobilisations of the late 1990s, and the protests of 2011 (among them Tahrir Square in Cairo, Puerta del Sol in Madrid, Gezi Park in Istanbul) are just a few examples of the role that cities presently play as spaces of political action. The relationship between cities and contentious politics has been studied in the social sciences since the first urban protests at the end of the 1960s, thus prompting the emergence of a new analytical field, namely urban social movements. Its main theorists have explored such concepts as production of space, urban conflict, and transnational organisation of urban movements.³¹

THE EVENTS OF MAY ’68, THE HONG KONG PROTESTS OF THE 1980S, THE ANTI-GLOBALISATION MOBILISATIONS OF THE LATE 1990S, AND THE PROTESTS OF 2011 ARE JUST A FEW EXAMPLES OF THE ROLE THAT CITIES PRESENTLY PLAY AS SPACES OF POLITICAL ACTION.

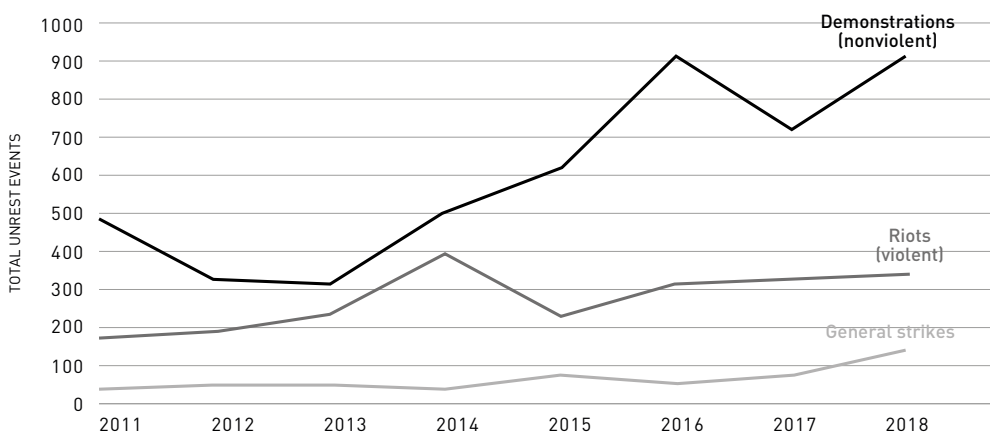
It should be noted that, historically speaking, the growth of urban mobilisations is related with the patterns of economic development that have prevailed on a worldwide scale since the 1980s, profoundly shaping urban planning and the political economy of cities. The shift from the modern industrial city to the post-industrial global city has turned urban space into a strategic node from which the global economy is structured. This, in turn, has imposed a certain urban model ('new urbanism', to use the term employed by Salet and Gualini³²) that is characterised by the development of large-scale urban renewal projects and promotion of political strategies aimed at making cities attractive environments for international investment. These dynamics have also involved problems like the privatisation and commodification of cities and, as a result, increasingly restricted access to housing, gentrification, and displacement of low-income earners. In these circumstances, urban protests should be interpreted in terms of the complex interlinking of these local-global processes.

KEY GLOBAL TRENDS OF SOCIAL UNREST

GLOBAL TRENDS FROM 2011 TO 2018

According to recent data, the last decade (2011–21) has been marked by rising levels of social conflict, basically as a consequence of the recession stemming from the global economic crisis of 2008, and the impact of the austerity policies imposed by governments.³³ As figure 1 shows, the main expressions of social unrest were manifested in 2011 as part of the wave of Arab Spring protests which, after 2012, diminished in intensity, either because they had attained their goals, or had been crushed by government forces, or had escalated into civil war. Nonetheless, the Arab Spring was not the only expression of social unrest. Demonstrations and protests were increasingly numerous until reaching a high peak in 2016 and then again in 2018–2019.

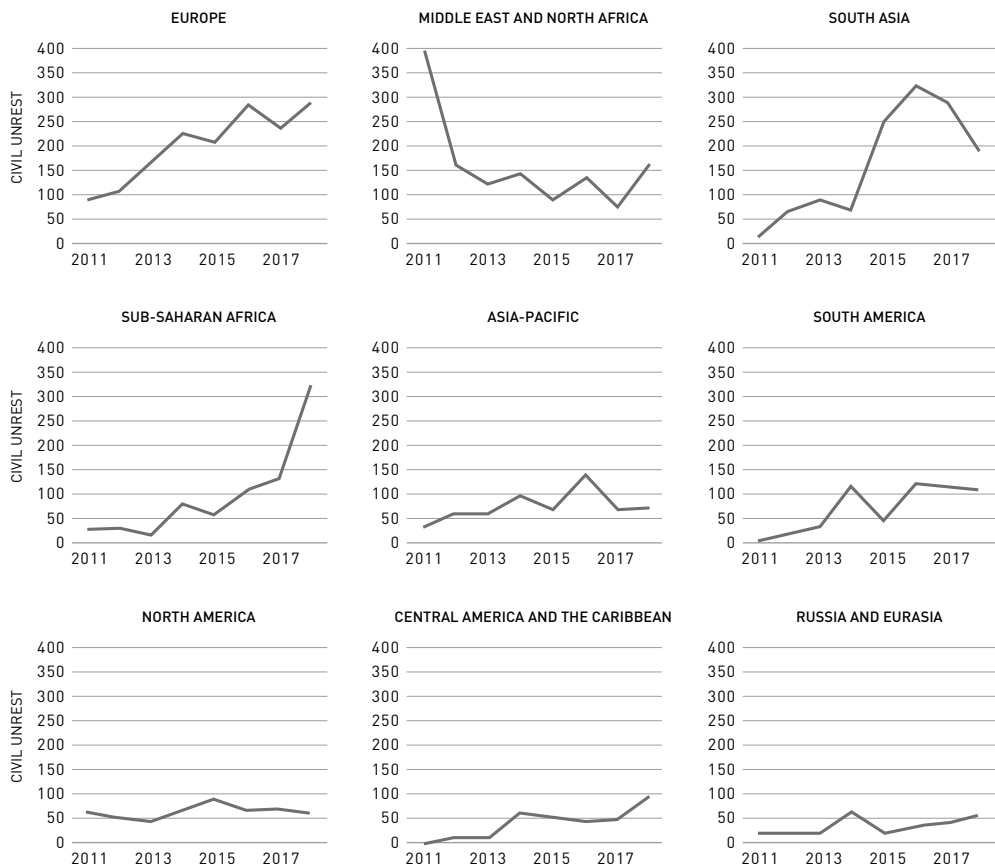
Figure 1 > Evolution of social unrest, 2011–18



Source: Institute for Economics and Peace.³⁴

Naturally, not all the regions of the world followed the same pattern. The highest levels of protest in the years from 2011 to 2018 were recorded in Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia (see figure 2). As for the kinds of protests, contrary to widely held beliefs, the majority were peaceful (see figure 1), as in Europe where 65% of the events recorded were non-violent. Here, the most notable protests occurred in Greece (because of structural adjustments imposed after the global financial crisis), the United Kingdom (in response to austerity policies and housing problems), France (*gilets jaunes* or ‘yellow jackets’), and Spain (the *indignados* movement and, after that, the conflict over Catalonia’s bid for independence).

Figure 2 > Social unrest by region from 2011 to 2018



Source: Institute for Economics and Peace. ³⁵

Sub-Saharan Africa, however, is the subregion with the world's highest levels of violent demonstrations (42.6%). In the period analysed, these protests grew exponentially after 2015. The countries recording the most serious unrest were Nigeria (mainly due to the imprisonment of Ibrahim Zakzaky, leader of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria), South Africa (largely as a result of rising university fees), Ethiopia (tensions between the federal government and that of Oromia State where the capital, Addis Ababa is located), and Guinea (broken promise of pay rise for teachers, and protests over fraud in local elections). In South Asia, the countries recording the highest levels of social mobilisation were India (general strikes) and Pakistan (anti-government protests). As shown in the next section, these two countries have headed the list in terms of social unrest since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The regions with the lowest incidence of social disturbances were North America, Central America and the Caribbean, the Asia-Pacific, and Russia-Eurasia. While the trends in the above-mentioned regions (Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia) have remained the same except for subtle variations since the onset of the pandemic, in these latter regions, the pattern diverges significantly (except in the Asia-Pacific region). In 2020-21, North America, Central America and the Caribbean, and Russia-Eurasia were among the countries with the greatest numbers of social protests and mobilisations, a situation which will be described in more detail below.

THE PROTESTS OF 2019, INTERRUPTED BY COVID-19

As figure 1 shows, 2018 ended with an upward trend of social unrest which continued to rise in 2019, a year in which the world witnessed a generalised increase in the number of protests with some especially important flashpoints.³⁶ Notable among these are

2018 ENDED WITH AN UPWARD TREND OF SOCIAL UNREST WHICH CONTINUED TO RISE IN 2019 DISPLAYING A GENERALISED INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PROTESTS WITH SOME ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FLASHPOINTS.

the 'yellow-jacket' protests in France, which had begun at the end of 2018, those in Hong Kong in protest against the proposed extradition bill and, in India, against the Citizenship Amendment Act. In Latin America, the mobilisations swept through several countries, including Chile, Colombia,

Mexico, and Bolivia. In Chile, the population mobilised against the increased price of public transport in protests that later extended to demands for a new constitution. In Colombia, the protests against President Iván Duque took aim at his economic, social, and environmental policies, as well as his handling of the peace agreement between the government and FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). In Mexico, there was a major wave of feminist protests.

Notable in the Middle East were protests in Iran, Iraq, and Algeria. In Iran, the social unrest arising from increased fuel prices spilled into months of demonstrations against the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. In Iraq and Algeria, citizen uprisings des-

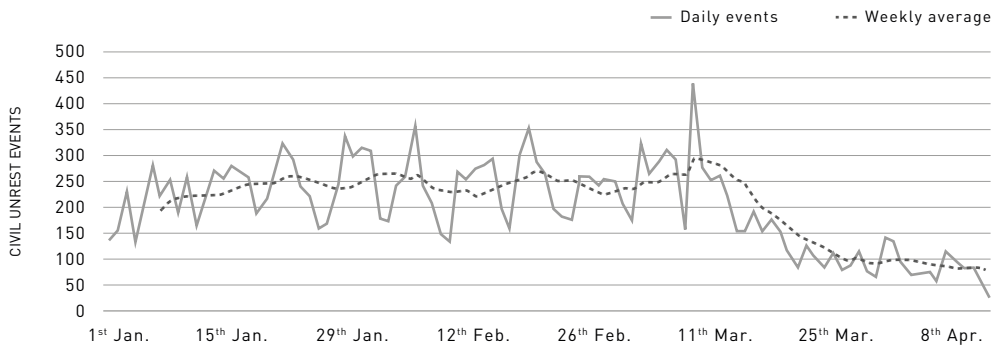
tabilised both countries to such an extent that, in the former case, President Barham Salih and his prime minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi, and in the latter, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika (after twenty years in power) were forced to step down. Especially notorious in Africa were the demonstrations in Sudan which, demanding a democratic transition, ended up with a coup d'état against President Omar al-Bashir. As shown in the following section, these dynamics ended with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent government restrictions on mobility and social activity in the public space.

SOCIAL UNREST IN THE COVID-19 ERA

GLOBAL TRENDS IN 2020 AND 2021

The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic on 11 March 2020. In the early months of 2020, the number of social demonstrations dropped by 30% although, immediately afterwards, the figure rose by 7% in comparison with 2019.³⁷

Figure 3 > Social unrest on the worldwide scale from 1 January to 11 April 2020



Source: ACLED.

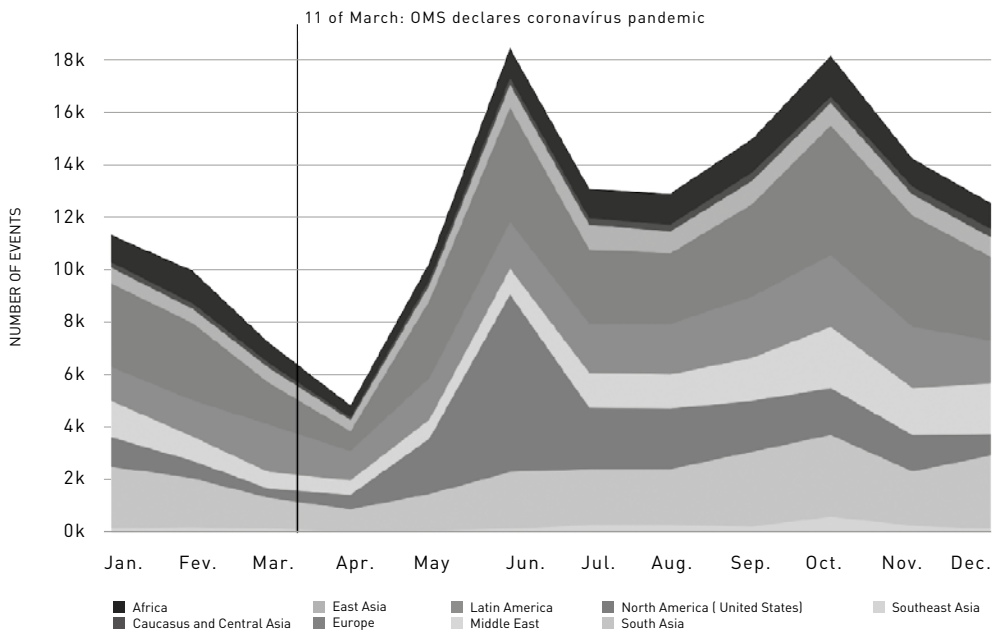
The pandemic has sparked a good number of protests while also intensifying others that already existed. The first kind of protests, expressed on the streets, rejected restrictions (Germany, United States), called for better public health management of the pandemic (Argentina, Brazil, China, Mexico), and demanded economic support (South Korea, Japan).

Nevertheless, it was not long before the pre-pandemic protests were revived (see table 2). After the interruption, their original grievances were exacerbated by the impact of the health crisis. In countries like Israel, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Tunisia, the pandemic had aggravated earlier problems related with government corruption and the general economic situation. Likewise, in Chile and Peru the pandemic has given rise to numerous workers' demonstrations. In Iran, the social unrest resulting from corruption, deficient public services, and economic hardship has been compounded by the pandemic.

In Argentina, social dissent over the abortion law was fuelled by widespread criticism of the government’s healthcare management and the negative impact of the crisis on the economy. Something similar occurred in Serbia, where there was significant unrest over alleged electoral fraud. Neither did the pandemic stand in the way of anti-government protests in Belarus. As for the violent or peaceful nature of these expressions of social dissent, approximately 93% were peaceful. Even so, some 16% were met with police repression, especially in Belarus.³⁸

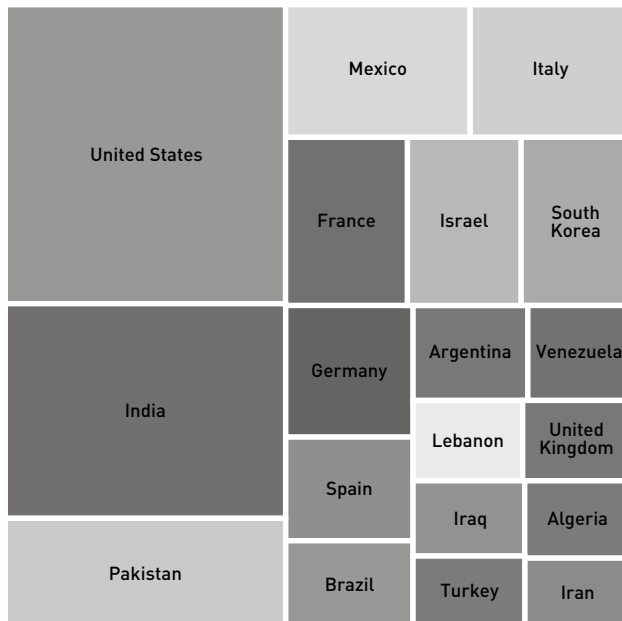
The exception in this context of global increase in protests was Asia, where the region as a whole registered a downward trend. However, and despite the general pattern in the region, two of its countries were among those showing the highest numbers of protests in 2020, namely India and Pakistan. However, globally speaking, the country with the higher number of demonstrations of political unrest was the United States with almost as many protests as these two countries combined.

Figure 4 > Protests in 2020 on a worldwide scale



Source: ACLED.³⁹

Figure 5 > Countries with the most protests in 2020

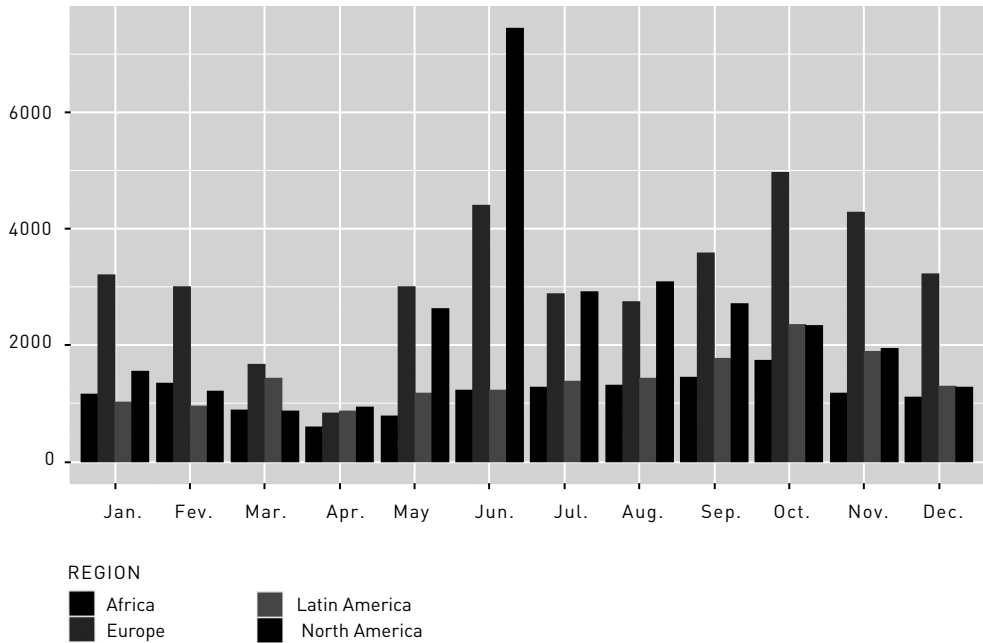


Source: ACLED. Figure by F. Teodoro.

TRENDS IN THE ATLANTIC REGION: AMERICA AND EUROPE LEAD THE WORLD IN SOCIAL PROTESTS

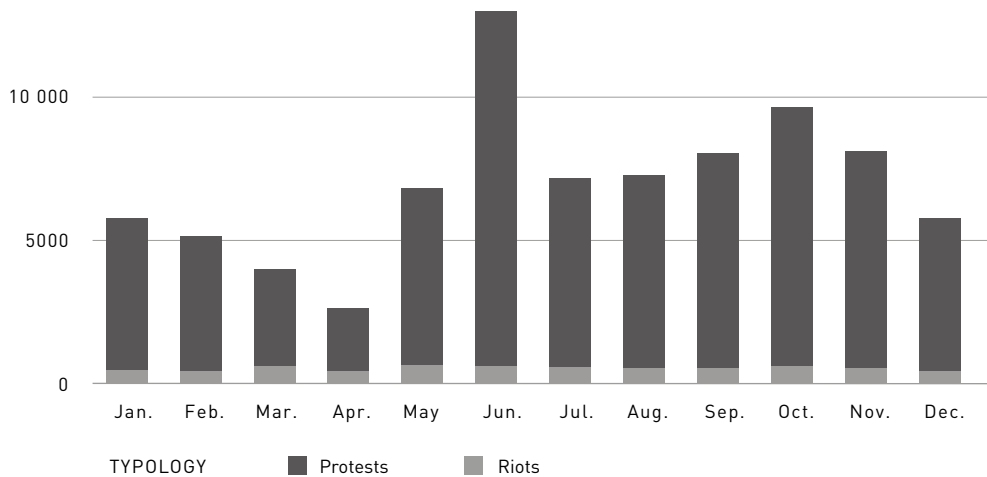
As figure 6 and figure 7 show, the Atlantic region concentrates a large part of the social unrest recorded in 2020, especially in the regions of North America and Europe. A closer look at the trends of social unrest in these geographical areas reveals two notorious features: first, the demonstrations were eminently peaceful; and, second, the United States clearly leads in terms of the number of protests. The murder of George Floyd, a Black American who was choked to death by a white police officer in May 2020, marked a turning point in terms of social unrest due to the wide mobilisation of the anti-racist movement Black Lives Matter (BLM).

Figure 6 > Trends of social unrest by region in 2020



Source: ACLED. Figure by F. Teodoro.

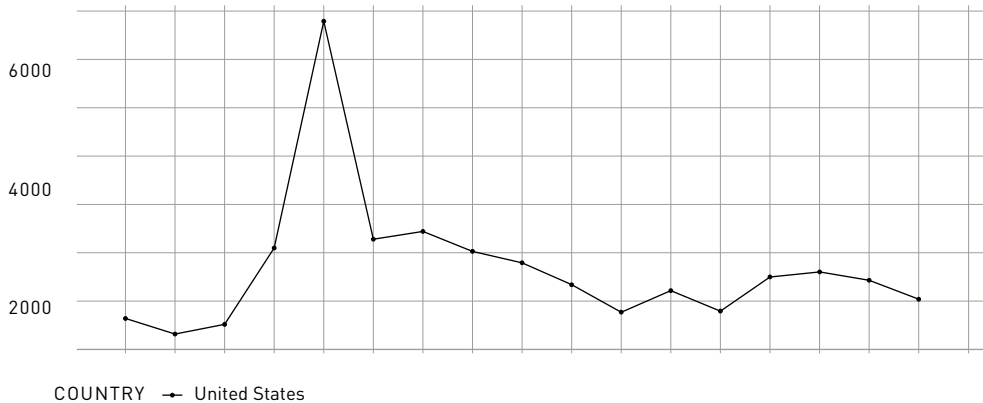
Figure 7 > Evolution of social unrest in the Atlantic region in 2020



Source: ACLED. Figure by F. Teodoro.

Figure 8 clearly shows an exponential rise in the number of protests between May and June 2020 due to Floyd’s murder and the subsequent revitalisation of BLM causing the highest levels of protest ever seen in the country.

Figure 8 > Evolution of protests in the United States from February 2020 to June 2021



Source: ACLED. Figure by F. Teodoro.

The magnitude of the BLM wave of protests is explained not only by the problems of structural racism in American society and the police violence unleashed against the Black American population but also by two additional (and interrelated factors) that help to explain the repercussion of the BLM protests around the country: first, the Black population comprises the social sector that has been most affected by COVID-19 contagion and deaths; and, second, the health crisis has had a greater economic impact on this population whose jobs and salaries are more precarious than those of white Americans. It was in this context that the murder of George Floyd by a white police officer sparked the collective indignation of anti-racist groups. These events were not unprecedented in American history. As studies in the field show, some of the most significant protests in the United States (for example, those led by the civil rights movement) were triggered by episodes of police or state violence.⁴⁰ One well known example is the 1967 Newark riots which began on 12 July when a Black cab driver was brutally beaten by two white police officers, thus setting off a wave of disturbances in Newark, New Jersey, Atlanta, Boston, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Rochester, and Minneapolis.

The revival of the BLM movement after May 2020 was answered by multiple counter-protests organised by American far right groups at a time when they had come to prominence during the administration of Donald Trump. These extremists also organised the pro-Trump Stop the Steal movement that appeared in the framework of the presidential elections and culminated with the storming of the Capitol in January 2021.

As a result of this situation of social polarisation with anti-racist and extreme right protests, the United States now heads the list of countries with the highest numbers of episodes of political unrest not only in the Atlantic region but also the entire world. Coming second to the United States, the Atlantic country recording the highest number

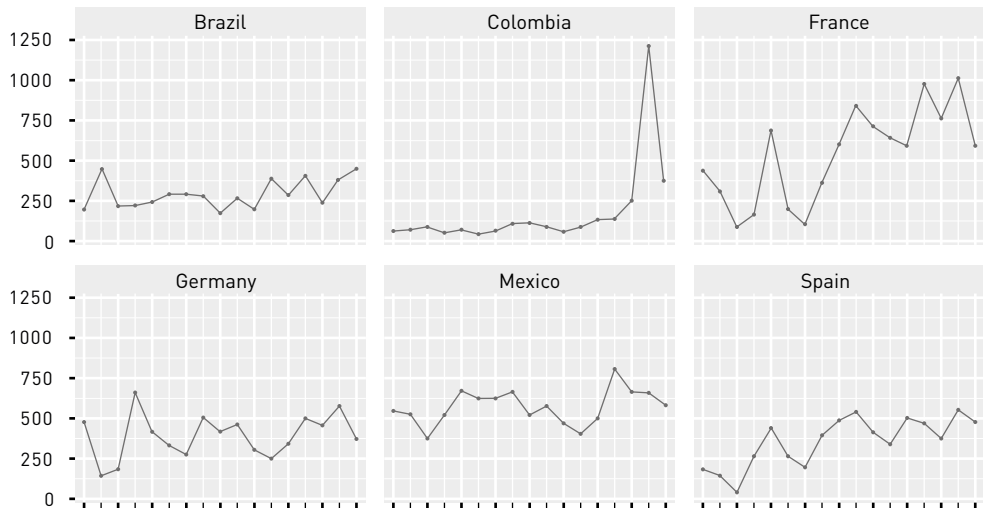
COMING SECOND TO THE UNITED STATES, THE ATLANTIC COUNTRY RECORDING THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF PROTESTS IS FRANCE, FOLLOWED BY MEXICO, AND THEN GERMANY, SPAIN, AND BRAZIL.

of protests is France, followed by Mexico, and then Germany, Spain, and Brazil (see figure 9). It should be borne in mind when comparing the intensity of social unrest in the United States and these other countries that the scales used in figures 8 and 9 to represent the numbers of

protests in the former and latter cases are significantly different. In the case of the United States, it has been necessary to use a graph capturing between 0 and 6,000 events, while for the other Atlantic countries showing the highest incidences of social unrest (France, Mexico, Germany, Spain, and Brazil), the scale used is 0 to 1,250 events. As a result, the intensity of the protests in the case of the United States escapes even the general trend of the region with the highest number of protests worldwide. Of course the demographic characteristics of the United States partly explain the reason for these differences.

With regard to the causes of the protests in France and Mexico, the reasons differ considerably. In France, protests triggered by the pandemic (see table 2) have predominated, especially in the form of rejection of the measures adopted by Emmanuel Macron's government (rejection of vaccination, the health passport, etcetera) in their attempt to manage the health crisis. In addition to these reasons, the murder of George Floyd in the United States prompted anti-racist protests in several French cities, as also occurred in many other cities across the world. In France, Floyd's murder revived the memory of Adama Traoré, a twenty-four-year-old man of Malian descent who also died in police custody, in 2016. Also noteworthy were the large-scale protests at the end of 2020 against a new security bill by means of which the government sought to ban images of police officers in the mass media and social networks in order to protect their identity. The bill even prompted a response from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, who considered that it undermined basic human rights. As for Mexico, protests by feminist groups are especially noteworthy. Plagued for decades by the problem of femicide, the country has seen the rise of a new generation of young feminists who have decided to break the silence and place the issue on the political agenda and in the mass media. They mainly use social networks, which has not prevented them from also taking to the streets in order to protest, a combination of tactics that has been called 'fourth-wave feminism'.⁴¹ There have also been mobilisations by student groups calling for improvements in education and a more equitable system, protests against police violence, and marches organised by Indigenous peoples demanding rights and greater political recognition.

Figure 9 > Evolution of protests from February 2020 to June 2021 in the Atlantic countries with most social unrest



Source: ACLED. Figure by F. Teodoro.

COVID-19 AND CITIES

COVID-19, AN URBAN PANDEMIC, IN THE ATLANTIC REGION AS WELL

UN data on the global incidence of COVID-19 reveal that it is essentially an urban phenomenon. Approximately 95% of infections and deaths have occurred in cities, affecting some 1,500.⁴² The link between pandemics and cities is not new.⁴³ Indeed, there is a historical relationship between cities and epidemics that explains a considerable part of urban development over the last two centuries. City spaces, as dense urban fabrics with high concentrations of people living and working together, have provided a perfect medium for the transmission of contagious diseases and, hence, the irruption of plagues and epidemics. Each serious public health episode has led to a revision of the urban model with the aim of assuring the necessary hygiene and sanitation of cities. The first attempts to provide safe urban spaces ranged from engineering works designed to give access to drinking water, managing waste, and creating a sewage system, to the construction of parks, promenades, and public squares. From the 1918 influenza pandemic to the swine flu pandemic of 2009 (both caused by the H1N1 virus), cities were laboratories where public health solutions were tested. Hence, it can be stated that the contemporary city, as we know it today, has been shaped by the impact of infectious diseases.⁴⁴

According to the forecasts, this link between pandemics and cities will only become more pronounced in the future. The current situation of global urbanisation is associated with changes in land use and the consequent destruction of natural ecosystems,

THE CURRENT SITUATION OF GLOBAL URBANISATION IS ASSOCIATED WITH CHANGES IN LAND USE AND THE CONSEQUENT DESTRUCTION OF NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS, WHICH INCREASES THE NUMBERS OF DISEASE-CARRYING ANIMALS.

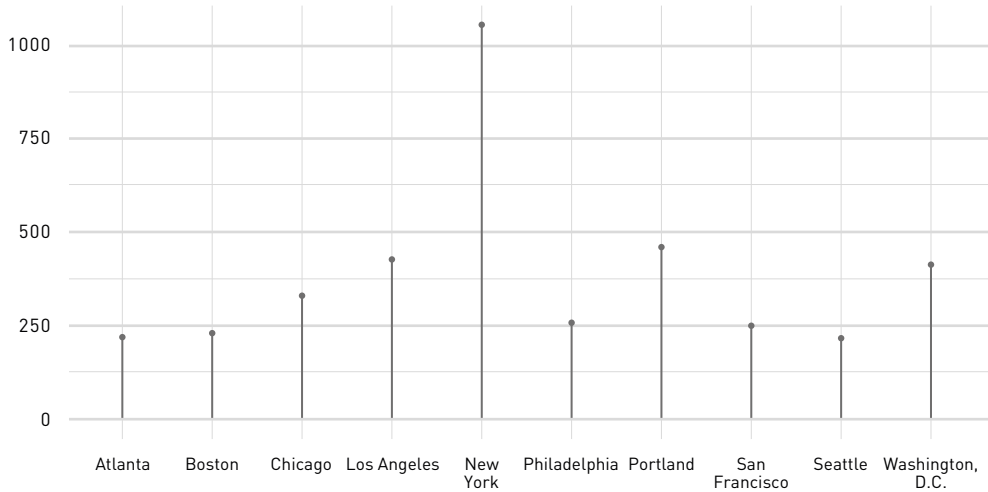
which increases the numbers of disease-carrying animals like rats, bats, and mosquitos. In this regard, cities surrounded by agricultural lands are more likely to be affected by infectious diseases because the transformation of wilderness areas into peri-urban agricultural land inevitably makes them more susceptible, as recent

studies have shown. For example, more than 60% of the new infectious diseases come from wild animals. This situation is compounded by a high degree of global connectivity, and hence, an easier spread of diseases on the planetary scale.

Given the link between cities and pandemics, it is relevant to raise the second research question of this study with the aim of establishing the role of urban settings in the pandemic-protests-inequalities equation. In seeking to respond to this question, I shall provide a summarised account of data pertaining to cities with the highest numbers of protests in the three Atlantic countries showing the highest rates of social conflict, namely the United States, France, and Mexico. It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore in detail the phenomena of social unrest in each of the cities (the demands, the groups that are mobilised, protest methods, and so on). I shall only offer a brief overview that will identify some of the main trends. It remains for future research to explore these issues in greater depth and consider them in the light of earlier research on urban protests.⁴⁵

In the United States, the cities most affected by expressions of social unrest in the COVID-19 era are those shown in figure 13, with New York in the lead (1,054 protests), followed by Portland (459), and Los Angeles (428). It is not surprising that the country's most populous city with 8.5 million inhabitants should top the list. However, why Portland, with just over half a million inhabitants should occupy second place, ahead of Los Angeles with almost four million inhabitants, is not so obvious. If these data are compared with those that will then be analysed for France, it even emerges that Portland presents a level of social conflict that is comparable with that of Paris with four times its population. The explanation lies in the social mobilisations in response to the murder of George Floyd in May 2020. Although Portland's Black population numbers just over 5% of the total, the city has a well-organised anti-racist movement which, added to a decades-long tradition of social mobilisation (Occupy movements, feminist struggles, anti-Trump groups, *inter alia*), accounts for the many expressions of social unrest in this city.

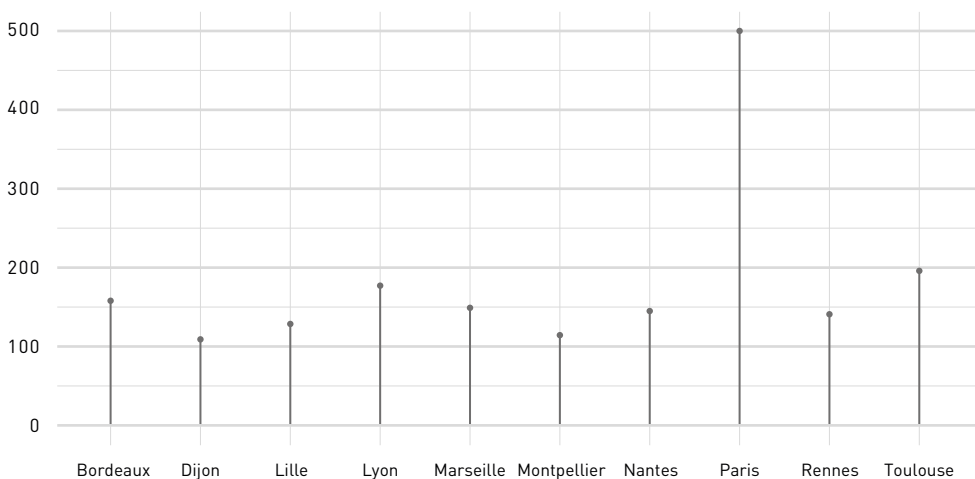
Figure 10 > Protests in US cities from February 2020 to June 2021



Source: ACLED. Figure by F. Teodoro.

In France, Paris (2.2 million inhabitants), with the highest number of protests (503) shows a significantly higher incidence of social unrest than other cities. Toulouse and Lyon showed much lower figures (195 and 178 protests respectively), but their high concentration of protests in relative terms is explained by the fact that they are two of France's largest cities after Marseilles.

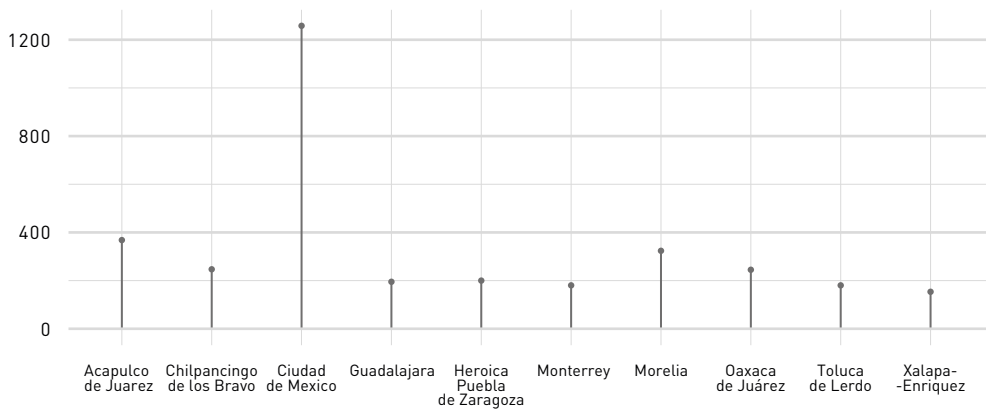
Figure 11 > Protests in French cities from February 2020 to June 2021



Source: ACLED. Figure by F. Teodoro.

In Mexico, Mexico City (9.2 million inhabitants) stands out with more than 1,257 protests. In absolute terms, this is the city that has presented the highest level of social conflict for all three countries in the period analysed. Far behind the capital are Acapulco de Juárez (369), Oaxaca de Juárez (250), and Chilpancingo de los Bravo (248). Paradoxically, it would seem, the two latter cities are among those with the smallest urban populations (less than 300,000 inhabitants). However, they are both located in states (Oaxaca and Guerrero) that are traditionally known for the high degree of political organisation of their populations. For decades now, Oaxaca has been the scene of many mobilisations (peasants, students, Indigenous groups, and neighbourhood associations), while the state of Guerrero has a highly active student movement which has been faced with police massacres, torture, and disappearances of its young members.

Figure 12 > Protests in Mexican cities from February 2020 to June 2021



Source: ACLED. Figure by F. Teodoro.

After this brief overview of the cities that have had the highest numbers of protests in the three Atlantic countries showing the greatest social conflict, I shall discuss the impact of the pandemic in the urban sphere with a view to better understanding how it has affected inequalities. Has it created new problems or, rather, aggravated already existing ones?

PANDEMIC AND (URBAN) INEQUALITIES

In urban settings, COVID-19 has exposed a series of structural vulnerabilities which the pandemic has only exacerbated. In particular, these weak points are related with poor access to public health systems, precarious housing and employment, and lack of drinking water and basic sanitation infrastructure in some parts of the world.⁴⁶ With these underlying problems, guaranteeing the right to health is a goal that is not always attained for some people. Contrary to the belief in the early days of the pandemic that

‘the virus will affect everyone equally’, its incidence has been much higher in certain population groups. In an article published in *Public Health*, doctors from several British universities have argued that people of low socioeconomic status are more vulnerable to COVID-19 for several reasons: i) they are more likely to live in overcrowded dwellings and in poor housing conditions (badly ventilated and with little access to outdoor space); ii) they tend to be employed in occupations with few opportunities for working at home, which means that it is difficult for them to reduce their mobility; iii) their work and income conditions are likely to be unstable, which can have negative effects on their mental health and thus on their immune systems; iv) they present at healthcare services with more advanced stages of illness, and will therefore have poorer health outcomes; v) they face certain problems like language barriers, discrimination, disrespectful attitudes, and so on, which makes them feel less comfortable about going to health centres; vi) they suffer more from hypertension and diabetes, which are both risk factors for COVID-19.⁴⁷ It therefore seems evident that there is a clear link between higher negative incidence of the pandemic and inequalities.

The problems listed above are frequently related with pre-existing spatial disparities, expressed in problems of residential segregation, and poor access to basic services and decent housing, which would explain why some neighbourhoods have higher infection rates than others.⁴⁸ Some urban zones are mainly populated by people of a certain socioeconomic profile and social groups that are traditionally discriminated against (migrants, racialised communities, ethnic groups), amongst whom the pandemic has seriously worsened their living and health conditions, with concomitant high mortality rates. Although data disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, and race are still incomplete or imprecise, the first studies to appear in the United States showed that that Black Americans were dying at a much higher rate (3.5 times more) than white Americans.⁴⁹ In April 2020, for example, 70% of the COVID-19 deaths in Chicago occurred among the Black population, which represents only 29% of the total population of the city⁵⁰.

In the same period, the Black population of Michigan (14%) accounted for 40% of COVID-19 deaths.⁵¹

The pandemic has therefore accentuated already existing inequalities and, according to the forecasts of international organisms,

these will only get worse in the years to come. While low-income countries with long-standing weak economies and structural social inequalities are in very challenging situations as a result of the pandemic, the World Bank predicts that middle-income countries will be especially affected by the emergence of a group dubbed the ‘new poor’ because of the effects of COVID-19. It is estimated that eight out of ten of the ‘new poor’ will come from these countries and that the number of people living in extreme poverty will rise to 150 million by the end of 2021. This group mostly lives in cities and urban areas.⁵²

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CONCLUSION: PANDEMIC, (URBAN) INEQUALITIES AND SOCIAL UNREST, A CAUSAL RELATIONSHIP?

In the above section, I have noted the link between pandemics and inequalities and sought to highlight the fact that the latter are especially expressed in cities. Is there, then, any correlation between inequalities and social unrest? Judging from the empirical data I have analysed here, this does not seem so clear. In fact, the countries with the highest numbers of protests in 2020 (United States, France, and Mexico) are not low-income countries (which, presumably, are more affected by problems of inequality) but middle- and high-income countries.⁵³ An earlier study on global protests between 2006 and 2013⁵⁴ came to similar conclusions after analysing almost 900 expressions of social unrest in multiple countries around the world (see table 3). High-income countries showed the highest concentration of protests, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean. However, violent protests occurred in low-income countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. As I have suggested above, this trend continues to the present day. This result means that any interpretation of the causal relationship between social unrest and inequality must be complex. In other words, countries with higher levels of inequality do not necessarily have more social protests. Nevertheless, there does seem to be a link between violent disturbances and low-income countries.

Table 3 > Number of protests by country and income from 2006 to 2013

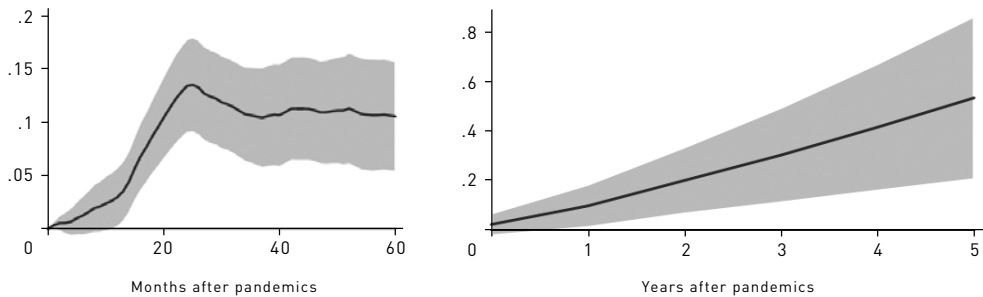
GROUP INCOME	TOTAL	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
High-Income	329	18	26	27	36	46	66	64	46
Upper-Middle-Income	250	18	23	22	26	41	46	45	29
Lower-Middle-Income	131	14	15	13	9	12	23	26	19
low-Income	63	2	8	10	8	9	8	11	7
World Total	773	52	72	72	79	108	143	146	101

Source: Isabel Ortiz *et al.*⁵⁵

Why, in the Atlantic region, do the United States, France, and Mexico, show the highest indices of social unrest when they are high- and middle-income countries? Several factors help explain this phenomenon. First, are those of a historical nature. The United States, Mexico, and France were leading revolutionary centres from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, so some aspects of their political culture would probably explain why their populations are more likely to engage in political mobilisation than those in other geographical settings. In Latin America, moreover, there is a long tradition of civil society mobilisation, which could also account for the fact that, while it is a continent with mainly middle-income countries, it tends to be the locus of more protests than countries in other parts of the planet that might be comparable in terms of income. Furthermore, generally speaking, high- and upper-middle-income countries tend to have less repressive governments, better educational opportunities, and greater capacity for civil society organisation. The study by Ortiz *et al.* comes to similar conclusions.

If the link between inequalities and protests in the COVID-19 is not immediate, as this study seeks to show, it is important to distinguish between the short- and long-term impacts of the pandemic. In the short term, it is clear that, by and large, there is no causal relation between greater inequality and more social protests. Yet, it is possible that, in the medium and long terms, middle- and low-income countries could see considerable increases in levels of mobilisation as a direct consequence of problems caused by the pandemic. According to United Nations data, cities in low-income countries will face the most difficult situations as they have the highest malnutrition rates, greater comorbidity, and deficient public health systems.⁵⁶ Given these problems, in addition to low public spending on health (in low-income countries this was \$41 per capita by comparison with \$2,937 in high-income countries,⁵⁷ it is easy to imagine a significant rise in urban social unrest. The IMF, too, expects that there will be increased social conflict, even venturing that, ‘social unrest increases about 14 months after pandemics on average. The direct effect peaks in about 24 months post-pandemic’.⁵⁸ According to this forecast, we can expect an upsurge in protests around the world from May 2021 to March 2022. We are, then, at a crucial point in history. The extent to which policy makers are aware of this is another matter. Nevertheless, they have the means to adopt the necessary policies and means to forestall social unrest which, in all likelihood, will increase over the coming months and could stand in the way of post-COVID-19 reconstruction.

Figures 13 and 14 > Impact of the pandemic on social unrest



Source: Tahsin Saadi Sedik and Rui Xu.⁵⁹

Reception date: 21 October 2021 | Approval date: 1 April 2022

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- 1 This paper was prepared within the framework of the Jean Monnet Atlantic Network 2.0. The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.
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RULE OF LAW AND EXPERT NGOS IN LATIN AMERICA¹

Mark Aspinwall²

Environmental consciousness in Latin America is on the rise. Colombia's first Leftist president, Gustavo Petro, was elected on 19 June 2022 in part based on his promise of a moratorium on hydrocarbon and mining projects. The concern in Colombia at the devastation wrought by over-development is not an isolated case. Chile's new President, Gabriel Boric, also committed himself to strong environmental action. One of his first acts as president was to sign the Escazú Accord, which provides strong guarantees of environmental rights.

While much of Europe wrestles with the continuing impacts of the pandemic and the renewed waves of refugees from the war in Ukraine, Latin America deals with another kind of influx – of investors eager to capitalize on high commodity prices, governments wishing to create new infrastructure projects, and other developers looking to cash in on opportunities. The consequences of this development have often been devastating – contaminated rivers, loss of lands, oil spills and polluted water sources, noise and air pollution, and the absence of rights to information, participation in decision-making, and recourse to justice. Affected communities often lack the finances, experience, connections, knowledge, information, and other resources to defend their rights.

Latin America's growing environmental emergency is deeply connected to Europe, to other parts of the Atlantic Basin, and indeed to the wider world. In this paper I review some of these connections, and how they impact the

ABSTRACT

This paper considers environmental rule of law in Latin America in the context of security problems across the Atlantic region. It considers efforts to improve environmental rule of law through external pressures and domestic institutional reforms, and argues that the role of expert environmental NGOs, such as litigators, educators, community organizers, and research organizations is underappreciated and under-studied. Principle 10 rights, especially public participation in environmental decision-making is an important area to which these expert NGOs contribute.

Keywords: environmental rule of law, Latin America, Atlantic, non-governmental organizations.

RESUMO

Este artigo debruça-se sobre o Estado de direito ambiental na América Latina, no contexto dos problemas de segurança da região atlântica. Considera os esforços para melhorar o Estado de direito ambiental através de pressões externas e reformas institucionais de nível interno, e defende que o papel das ONG de especialistas ambientais,



compostas por litigantes, educadores, organizadores comunitários e organizações de investigação é pouco valorizado e estudado. Os direitos previstos no Princípio 10, em especial a participação pública em tomadas de decisão em questões ambientais, são uma área importante para a qual estas ONG de especialistas contribuem.

Palavras-chave: Estado de direito ambiental, América Latina, Atlântico, organizações não governamentais.

efforts of Latin American countries to address one of its weakest policy areas, environmental rule of law, or EROL. EROL is defined as ‘adequate and implementable laws, access to justice and information, public participation equity and inclusion, accountability, transparency, liability for environmental damage, fair and just enforcement, and human rights’.³ Serious weaknesses in EROL combined with poor governance more generally, widespread violence, and climate-induced environmental change have propelled vast numbers of migrants to seek better lives in other countries, especially the United States.

The Escazú Accord entered into force in 2021, binding twelve Latin America and Caribbean countries to Principle 10 (P10) rights (information, participation, and justice). They are ‘central to the relationship between the environment and human rights and form the basis of environmental democracy and good governance’.⁴ P10 rights stem from Rio 1992 and are now included in most Latin American constitutions as human rights. The Aarhus Convention in Europe created similar obligations for member states and entered into force in 2001.

Aarhus served as a model for Escazú, but the latter goes further (despite not including all Latin American countries). It gives citizens the right to contribute to decisions over land and natural resource use, and access to justice when disputes arise. It also creates a citizen participation mechanism, a ‘no repetition’ clause, a definition of vulnerable groups and citizens, and protections for environmental defenders. In some countries it will encourage new legislation to strengthen the P10 and environmental impact assessments (EIA) legal frameworks, provide better accountability for environmental crimes, and foster stronger prosecutors and courts with specialized tribunals.

Escazú addresses the chronic weaknesses in many Latin American countries in rule of law, human rights, and environmental justice. It comes at a time when international attention

MANY INDIGENOUS AND RURAL FARMING COMMUNITIES IN LATIN AMERICA LIVE NEAR LARGE-SCALE ‘MEGA-PROJECTS’ AND SUFFER FROM THE EXTERNALITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THEM.

to EROL is rising rapidly. EROL is comprised of both human rights issues and more general regulatory compliance issues, such as licensing and permitting. Environmental human rights include a healthy environment, clean water, and access to certain resources or lands, as well as P10 rights. Indigenous

populations have special guarantees to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) rights, which are spelled out in ILO convention 169.⁵ Nevertheless, many signatory states in Latin America fail to implement these rights effectively even after ratifying relevant conventions, codifying them in domestic law, and even though they have large populations who are often in marginalized and precarious economic positions.

Various international organizations have recently reported on the state of EROL in Latin America and beyond.⁶ There is also some recent scholarship on EROL and indigenous rights⁷ as well as a growing body of work on legal processes in environmental governance, such as the EIA.⁸

The intense development pressures in Latin America are sobering, and conflict has surged as large-scale developments projects proliferate.⁹ In 2018, ECLAC warned of ‘the degradation of the environment and ecosystems and the plundering of natural resources associated with today’s production and consumption dynamics’.¹⁰ In its first global assessment of EROL (in 2019), the UN Environment Programme stated that despite the widespread growth in environmental laws and institutions, effective enforcement remains weak. It pointed to a lack of clear standards and mandates, insufficient funding and political will, not enough attention to the safety of environmental defenders, and few resources for civil society.¹¹ The stakes are high not just for natural resources and the environment, but for those who defend them: the year 2020 was the worst on record for murders of environmental defenders, with 227 deaths worldwide.¹²

Many indigenous and rural farming communities in Latin America live near large-scale ‘mega-projects’ and suffer from the externalities associated with them.¹³ Development pressures are many: mining, hydrocarbon and renewable energy, transportation and communication infrastructure, and tourism, for example. Mining produces more conflict than other sectors,¹⁴ although it is less relevant in some countries, such as Brazil, Argentina, and Costa Rica, where agriculture, energy, and tourism produce more conflict.¹⁵ More than half of the precautionary measures granted by the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights related to

the environment between 1997 and 2017 were for mining projects.¹⁶ Major cases include the Santurbán conflict in Colombia over mining in a protected wetland area; the Cajamarca case, also in Colombia,

involving a gold mine. Energy projects also feature highly on the conflict scale, including the Hidroaysén hydropower project in the Chilean Patagonia; and the Belo Monte dam project in Brazil. All involved serious and prolonged socio-environmental conflict with neighboring communities.

The state is nominally the arbiter between development and eco-cultural or conservationist interests, and it must ensure that the rule of law prevails, because both sets of interests have socio-economic validity and political support. Yet it is widely accepted that Latin American governments have failed in this task. Political leaders often fail to provide full and timely information to affected parties, and to draw them in to the consultation process. They neglect to evaluate environmental risk and damage, draw in affected communities, consider alternatives and mitigation measures, and keep the spotlight on afterwards to monitor adherence. Regulators and prosecutors are often

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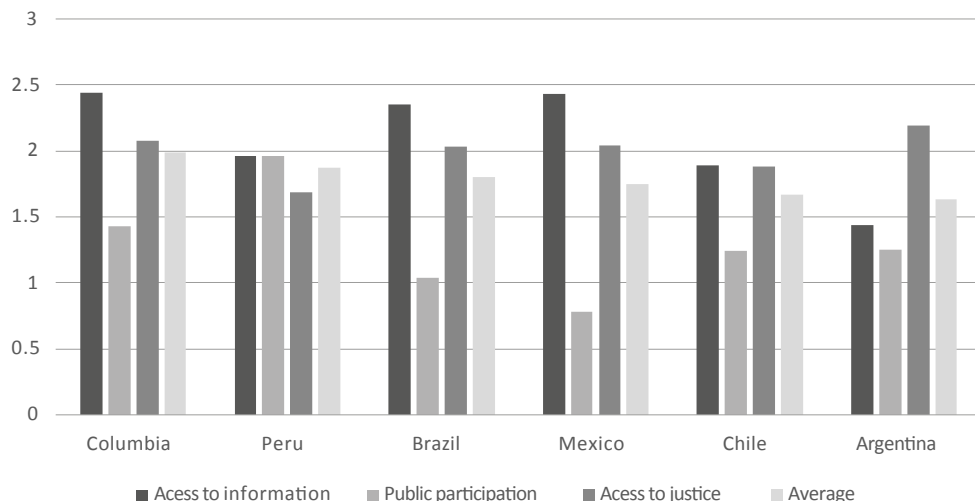
woefully underfunded and understaffed. Legal authority is sometimes insufficient to enforce laws. Courts and other institutions lack expertise on environmental matters.

Observers blame corruption or the lack of political will, but this masks a deeper structural power imbalance in which development interests benefit from the influence of economics, finance, and development ministries to the detriment of environmental ministries. In order to be effective, the state needs environmental institutions that are both developed internally – that is, with appropriate qualities of capacity and autonomy – and also engaged with civil society. Without these attributes, EROL suffers, exacerbating inequalities and injustices.¹⁷ Given this state of affairs, it is unsurprising that there has been an explosion of interest in EROL. Yet, while analysts have tended to focus on international pressures and on domestic institutional reforms when dissecting EROL, attention to the role of civil society actors is relatively scarce.

There is no reliable measure that allows accurate comparisons of EROL across countries.¹⁸ A recent study by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) connects environmental conflict to institutional capacity, as measured by the WJP rule of law index, GDP per capita, ranking on the Human Development Index, the Economist Intelligence Unit's democracy index, and the World Resource Institute's environmental democracy index.¹⁹ The figures show that – among Latin American countries – Chile had both strong institutional capacity and low conflict escalation and consequences, while Colombia, Peru, and Mexico were closely clustered in the middle of the rank, with Honduras as the worst performer on both institutional capacity and conflict. An updated version of the study, published by the IADB and the WJP, provided indicators of environmental governance for ten Latin American and Caribbean countries.²⁰ The indicators are both substantive (environmental outcomes) and procedural (the process of achieving outcomes). The results, derived from expert surveys, varied across indicator but generally showed that Costa Rica and Uruguay did well on environmental governance while El Salvador and Bolivia did poorly.

Another study gives a different impression. The Access Initiative and the World Resources Institute created an 'Environmental Democracy Index' with results for 70 or so countries on Pro performance, showing Panama and Colombia as highest ranked in Latin America and Belize and Paraguay as the lowest.²¹ However, there are wide discrepancies between their three indicators, with public participation the weakest in virtually all states (see figure 1). Interestingly, those countries scoring higher on the environmental governance index (Uruguay and Costa Rica) scored lower on this index. Perhaps because the indicators were different (governance is not the same as rule of law or procedural rights), or because the years of study differed, we have very divergent results in terms of country ranking, and therefore little certainty as to how well the countries are doing, never mind what causes variation in the indicators. Hence, it is hard to get a clear sense of the scale of the EROL problem, or a consistent measure of the relative successes and failures of each country.

Figure 1 > P10 rights in Latin America



NOTE: maximum score in each category = 3.

Source: Jesse Worker and Lalanath Da Silva²².

INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE TO IMPROVE EROL

External pressure to improve EROL has brought some change, with Escazú being the latest example. Latin American countries are subject to the rulings and opinions of the Inter-American system and are closely monitored by other international organizations and actors, including NGOs, think tanks, and Western countries. For example, the Inter-American Court issued an opinion that EIAs are required in territories of indigenous populations, and also should be undertaken in cases where the development activity will likely have a ‘significant adverse impact on the environment’.²³ In the Reyes vs. Chile case, the Court ruled that international law on human rights protects access to information.²⁴ In 2007, it ruled in *Saramaka People v Suriname* that safeguards apply to protect indigenous peoples in cases involving large development projects, and that they have rights to participate in planning, enjoy a reasonable benefit, and benefit from independent social and environmental impact assessments. The Court also stated that information and communication are essential, as are good faith consultations, fairness in terms of timing (i.e., early in the process), and culturally appropriate consultations (such as with recognized tribal leaderships) which aim at agreement.²⁵

The OECD has also issued judgements on environmental governance in countries that aspire to membership. In 2005, the OECD and ECLAC reported on Chilean environmental institutions and standards, including Pro rights, and made recommendations in advance of Chilean membership.²⁶ The UN created a special rapporteur for the environment and human rights,²⁷ and it also agreed a nonbinding declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples in 2007. The ombudsman's office of the World Bank's International Finance Committee has reported on investments that it supported in the region. Trade agreements with the United States have resulted in requirements to improve institutional or legal frameworks to ensure proper environmental governance. Furthermore, both the European Union and France have enacted so-called 'due diligence' regulations, which require firms to take into account human rights and environmental risks in their global supply chains, and provide remedies where there are damages.²⁸

DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONAL PRESSURES TO IMPROVE EROL

These and other outside pressures have resulted in changes to domestic agendas, to the stated positions of governments, to institutions and policies and the procedures they follow. However, pressures to improve environmental protections and socio-environmental justice have also emanated from within Latin American countries themselves. Institutional and legal reform was fostered by democratization pressures from the 1980s onward. Yet environmental institutions continue to be weak in a Weberian sense, lacking authority, capacity, and resources.²⁹ They are also weak in a functional sense – courts, tribunals, prosecutors, auditors, transparency agencies, environmental ministries and others are often outmatched by strong state economics ministries.³⁰

Nevertheless, there are some institutional bright spots. Peru and Brazil created ombudsmen with strong reputations for opening access to justice.³¹ Colombia has financed legal defense for poor groups, and some countries have mandated that indigenous

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languages be included in official documentation.³² A number of countries have established environmental conflict observatories, and also a network of Latin American environmental prosecutors' offices with both ombudsmen and attorneys

general. Peru created an independent environmental prosecutor's office in 2008 with about 150 specialized environmental prosecutors across the country.³³ It reduced the involvement of the economics and mining ministries in environmental oversight, although it suffers from insufficient specialists,³⁴ and has failed to rein in illegal activities (such as artisanal gold mining) in remote regions.³⁵

In Brazil, the Ministério Público is a formidable prosecutor and ombudsman, with civil and criminal jurisdiction, the power to investigate and prosecute cases, and negotiate settlements with environmental offenders.³⁶ It undertakes strategic litigation and case-

specific prosecutions. Another institutional success is the environmental tribunals created in Chile in 2012, with powers to resolve administrative disputes. Their expertise has improved enforcement and the quality of justice.³⁷ Other countries do not have specialized environmental courts, although generalist constitutional courts in Colombia and Costa Rica have done much to defend environmental human rights.

Costa Rica's courts have very broad standing and low costs for those alleging environmental harm.³⁸ The Colombian constitutional court is widely seen as progressive and engaged, issuing transformative rulings. It decides on the constitutionality of legislation, and on specific cases of alleged harm.³⁹ In a 1997 case, it ruled that the U'Wa indigenous people have the right of direct participation in decisions affecting their territory, and that the state must protect their cultural and collective diversity.⁴⁰ The case concerned an oil drilling dispute centered around indigenous lands. A decade later, the court ruled on prior consultation of indigenous people, distinguishing between impacts on indigenous society and impacts on society as a whole.⁴¹ Nevertheless, despite legal and institutional reforms, enforcement and compliance failures often plague environmental governance. Governments have conflicting priorities, economic interests overwhelm weak institutions, and criminal organizations threaten environmental defenders who interfere with their activities.

THE ROLE OF EXPERT NGOS

Strengthening state environmental institutions will not by itself overcome EROL failures, at least in the short term. Whatever the level of institutional capacity, there is an inherent conflict of interest between development and environmental objectives. Weberian attributes do not tell us much about the institutional logic of action – states want development, and that means environmental disruption. Moreover, even with the best will in the world, resources are limited, and corruption and crime are an ongoing problem. Fortunately, in many instances, the EROL gap is filled by professional, or expert, environmental NGOs.⁴² They are 'expert' in the sense that they are comprised of personnel with relevant training and experience in legal, scientific, communication, organization, and other relevant skills. Their purpose is to provide the resources necessary for communities to defend their rights, acquire legal advice and accompaniment, public relations and communication, and scientific research. They help transmit information on compliance problems, force governance issues into the open, and provide the pressure necessary to motivate state agencies⁴³. However, despite the central role they play, there is surprisingly little research available on civil society and rule of law, and what does exist tends to be focused on security and crime or international development at large.⁴⁴

Expert NGOs use a variety of methods to contribute EROL. They organize local communities, conduct independent research, communicate, build networks, and mobilize legal challenges. They have created coalitions to lobby for policy change or new political priorities (including conservation and action to address climate change), and they

have drawn in scientists and technocrats, who are able to offer viable policy alternatives to governments. Organizing, mobilizing, and networking permit alliances to capitalize on their diverse strengths – legal, communication, strategic, data analysis, science, education, contacts, lobbying, social media, diffusion, and others. Independent information-gathering permits NGOs to spot the mismatch between the requirements of environmental law and actual behavior by environmental agencies. Communication permits issues to be framed discursively. Through litigation, social actors have highlighted the discrepancy between legal requirements and official behavior, and thus challenged noncompliance, corruption, and impunity.⁴⁵ These NGOs are not spontaneous street activists or researchers or conservation organizations, nor are they site-specific. Rather they are permanent and national or semi-national in scope. Some of their legal activities are designed to promote the public interest broadly construed, whether through strategic litigation or education or awareness-raising activities or others. Other legal action defends rights in individual cases and among particular communities.

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Expert NGOs vary from country to country, and also within countries. As an example, (the Mexican NGO) CEMDA's main activities are litigation in defense of communities, although it also accompanies communities and trains them in legal strategies. Another Mexican group, PODER, undertakes research to counter the power of investors in extractive industries. Along with other NGOs, it published a detailed Human Rights Impact Assessment intended as an alternative EIA to evaluate a mining operation in the state of Puebla.⁴⁶ The Chilean group FIMA mainly engages in strategic litigation rather than litigating specific cases. It seeks to raise awareness and improve communication around human rights and environmental issues. It does extensive research and publishes its own journal. Other Chilean NGOs include Defensoria Ambiental, working on socio-environmental conflict and defense of communities, and Geute, which does conservation, consulting, and legal research in Chile's south⁴⁷. One of Peru's most important NGOs is SPDA, which has a litigation clinic that provides advice without itself doing litigation work. In 2020 it created an environmental justice branch to provide technical assistance.

In Brazil, environmental movements in the 2000s created organizational and legal advice networks in rural areas to try to prevent developers from evading regulatory responsibilities.⁴⁸ The Belo Monte dam case showed how strong state institutions can structure civil society action: legal mobilization was handled by state agencies (including the Ministério Público), rather than NGOs. NGOs such as the Dam-Affected People Movement ('Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens') confined their activities to media strategies, direct action, and advocacy.⁴⁹

It is important to understand the implications of this variation in NGOs activities. What is their role is in raising capacity among local communities and state institutions, how do they link to allied groups, what mechanisms do they employ, and what difference do they make? Participation can ensure the inclusion of affected communities, but can it be effective without expert NGOs? Also, we need to know how their strategies may be tailored to the local opportunity structure.⁵⁰ Some opportunity structures may encourage more activism or lobbying, others may encourage more legal representation or research, others more education and training.

One of the most important contributions that expert NGOs make to EROL occurs during the EIA. The EIA is a means of reconciling development objectives with the rights of affected persons.⁵¹ Numerous international organizations and scholars have compared EIAs. In 2015 the World Bank published information on the legal framework for environmental impact assessments in Latin America.⁵² It has descriptions of seventeen indicators, including the names of the environmental authorities responsible for carrying out the EIA, the types of EIA instruments, screening and scoping requirements, alternatives, citizen participation, monitoring, reporting, and others. ECLAC's 2018 report compared EIAs across Latin America, finding that they all require impact assessments, publicity and information, and public participation which takes into account public views.⁵³

However, there are some important differences: Chile and Mexico have time limits for participation. Chile, Colombia, and Peru have requirements that citizen input be designed and implemented in a manner appropriate to indigenous communities. Chile's 2012 EIA regulations require participation strategies to be adapted to the social, economic, cultural, and geographic contexts of areas and people in question. Chile has made proactive moves to include public input on climate action. However, most countries do not make citizen input binding on state agencies or developers. Scholarly work has found variation according to project selection and scoping criteria, participation requirements, transparency requirements, ministerial responsibilities.⁵⁴ Reports from both international organizations and scholarly research indicate numerous criteria for best practice in EIAs.⁵⁵ Moreover, NGOs have lobbied repeatedly for the legal processes to be strengthened.⁵⁶

BUILDING CAPACITY IN CIVIL SOCIETY

One problem with these studies is the assumption that the responsibility for helping affected communities falls principally on the state. The UNEP report states,

'[c]ivic engagement at times requires building the capacity of the public to engage thoughtfully and meaningfully with government and project proponents. Educating the public about their rights to access information and participate is a necessary first step, and providing tailored assistance when a community is unable to engage should be conside-

red part of government's responsibility. This can build a more robust citizenry that can support stronger government and rule of law'.⁵⁷

Despite this focus, little attention has been given to how to support these NGOs. Civic engagement is often presented in passive terms, namely that the state should provide information and opportunities for participation.⁵⁸ Similarly, the EDI report argues that 'States should provide means for capacity-building, including environmental education and awareness-raising, to promote public participation in decision-making related to the environment'.⁵⁹ There is no indication of how this would be undertaken or measured, nor what resources, personnel, training, and incentives would be needed in order to implement public participation requirements correctly.


In its 2018 report, ECLAC's position on participation was that Latin American states should clarify legal obligations and make more precise the scope of participation requirements. They should endeavor to begin consultations early, with adequate and easy to understand information, appropriate time limits, assistance for affected communities (financial and technical), and a generous interpretation of who may participate.⁶⁰ However, in a scenario where information is held by the developer and participation is controlled by the state, simply opening the door will not have the desired benefits if civil society does not have the capacity to engage on the same terms as development interests.

Engagement in these reports looks little different from consultations, or information sharing, and it is unclear how it would build civil society capacity, or what mechanisms and tools would be necessary. To achieve the objectives, state agencies would need to lead workshops, help interpret the impli-

IN LATIN AMERICA, VIRTUALLY ALL OF THESE CAPACITY-BUILDING PROJECTS HAVE COME FROM EXPERT NGOS, RATHER THAN THE STATE.

cations of a project, provide wider context and a series of feasible alternatives to the project design, commit to ongoing dialog, reveal the precedents of other cases, indicate what the regulations say and allow, and be available for periodic consultation. In Latin America, virtually all of these capacity-building projects have come from expert NGOs, rather than the state.

Instead of trying to guarantee perfect EROL by itself, states should focus on supporting expert NGOs. The idea would be to build legal and policy know-how, better communication skills, and financial and information resources among environmental, human rights, indigenous, and community groups, who are clearly the weaker partners in development disputes. Also, the state should engage proactively with both developers and opponents, be open to innovative solutions to conflict, provide complete information on proposed projects, including non-technical summaries, in a timely fashion and in relevant indigenous languages as well as Spanish or Portuguese, and communicate best practice.⁶¹ This may be a lot to ask, given resource and capacity deficiencies, but arguably it is a more sustainable strategy since it means that state agencies would not

have to engage and train local communities one after the other. Instead, states could help create capacity in important NGOs so that the NGOs in turn can deliver this training.⁶² Activist institutions would bring environmental governance down to the ground, working closely with social actors to conduct the activities required – evaluation, licensing, investigation, prosecution, adjudication, conflict resolution, and so forth. More attention is necessary to understand these dynamics. Atlantic partners in Europe and North America can do much to help, including through funding and awareness raising, legal pressures, research, and publicity. The security of all Atlantic basin partners depends on this crucial issue. 

Reception date: 2 September 2022 | Approval date: 10 October 2022

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ENDNOTES

¹ This paper was prepared within the framework of the Jean Monnet Atlantic Network 2.0. The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

² For their insightful comments and suggestions, the author would like to thank participants in a seminar in the División de Estudios Internacionales, as well as workshop participants in the European Consortium for Political Research joint sessions workshop on Human Rights and the Environment, April, 2022.

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BRAZILIAN AMAZONIAN POLITICS AND POLICY (2019–22) AND THE NEED FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE¹

Joana Castro Pereira

INTRODUCTION

The interconnected climate and biodiversity crises are two of the most pressing challenges facing the world today. As a major greenhouse gas (GHG) emitter and the planet's most biodiverse country, Brazil is a key player with regards to the stabilization of the Earth system. However, and despite the potential it shows for transitioning toward a green economy, the country became an environmental villain in recent years. The anti-environmentalist and anti-indigenist administration of President Jair Bolsonaro (2019–22) partly dismantled environmental governance. The Amazon and its more-than-human populations were severely hit by Bolsonaro's predatory agenda, which supported and legitimized the interests of the anti-conservationist forces within economic sectors such as agribusiness and mining, and fueled organized crime and violence in the region.

In the period between 2019 and 2022, Amazonian deforestation reached levels not seen since 2008²). As a result, Brazilian emissions increased. While global emissions declined by approximately 7% during the COVID-19 forced confinement in 2020,³ in Brazil, emissions grew by 10%.⁴ In 2021, the country's emissions grew by over 12% – the highest increase in almost two decades. The forest and land-use sector represented approximately half of the country's gross emissions; deforestation in the Amazon, which reached its highest level in fifteen years (13,038 km²),⁵ accounted for almost 80% of the sector's total

ABSTRACT

Despite its potential to transition toward a green economy, the country became an environmental villain in recent years. The anti-environmentalist and anti-indigenist administration of President Jair Bolsonaro (2019–22) partly dismantled environmental governance. The Amazon and its more-than-human populations were severely hit by Bolsonaro's predatory agenda, which supported and legitimized the interests of the anti-conservationist forces within economic sectors such as agribusiness and mining, and fueled organized crime and violence in the region. This paper provides an overview and analysis of Amazonian politics and policy during this period, and discusses the importance of, and possibilities for, a transformative approach to the governance of the region.

Keywords: environmentalist governance, Brazil, Amazon, Jair Bolsonaro.

RESUMO

Apesar do seu potencial para transitar para uma economia verde, o Brasil tornou-se nos últimos anos um vilão ambiental. O Governo antiambiental e anti-indígena do Presidente Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2022) desmante-



lou parcialmente a governança ambiental. A Amazônia e as suas populações mais que humanas foram severamente atingidas pela agenda predatória de Bolsonaro, que apoiou e legitimou os interesses de forças anti-conservacionistas no seio de setores econômicos como o agronegócio e a mineração, e alimentou o crime organizado e a violência na região. O artigo analisa as políticas amazônicas durante aquele período e discute a importância e as possibilidades de uma abordagem transformadora para a governança da região.

Palavras-chave: governança ambiental, Brasil, Amazônia, Jair Bolsonaro.

emissions. These grew by nearly 20%.⁶ In 2022, Amazonian deforestation remained high (11,568 km²).⁷

The Amazon is a critical element of the Earth system and has been losing resilience; growing evidence suggests that the forest may be approaching a tipping point whereby large parts of it will turn into a savanna; in fact, some areas of the region are already changing from rainforest into savanna.⁸ To put the Amazon on a long-term sustainability path, transformative change is needed. This paper provides an overview and analysis of Amazonian politics and policy over the period 2019 to 2022, and discusses the importance of, and possibilities for, a transformative approach to the governance of the region.

BRAZILIAN AMAZONIAN POLITICS AND POLICY UNDER THE BOLSONARO ADMINISTRATION (2019–22)

Jair Bolsonaro was elected in late 2018 with the support of those who were disappointed with Brazil's main political parties, particularly the Workers' Party (PT), the country's evangelicals and the business and financial sectors. His government was composed by a group of radical market-friendly ministries displaying a predatory vision of development, namely economy, agriculture, infrastructure and mines and energy; an anti-environmentalist minister of environment; a climate skeptical, conspiracy theory believer minister of foreign affairs, supporter, alongside the minister of education and Bolsonaro, of recently deceased Olavo de Carvalho, a self-proclaimed philosopher who distorted historical and scientific facts; and a group of military-led ministries, namely defense, science and technology and the presidency's institutional security office, supportive of resource-extraction projects and the building of infrastructure in the Amazon as a means to increase the state's control over the region.⁹ Alongside, his government denied anthropogenic climate change, rejected any ecological considerations in public policy and partly dismantled Brazilian environmental policy and institutions; it deliberately betrayed the basic principles, norms and goals of the environmental sector.¹⁰

In that sense, the Bolsonaro administration eliminated the Ministry of Environment's (MMA) Secretariat of Climate Change and Forestry; severely cut the budget of the MMA and science spending; handed over indigenous land demarcation to the ministry of agriculture; recognized farms established illegally within indigenous lands; terminated the most important deforestation control program in the Amazon (PPCDam); tried to withdraw financial resources from the Amazon Fund to compensate for land expropriation (as a consequence, Norway and Germany suspended payments to the fund); exonerated the director of the institute responsible for monitoring and tracking deforestation in the Amazon, and removed other scientists and technicians from office;

intimidated and restricted civil society participation in environmental policy councils; failed to impose environmental fines; put environmental management in the hands of the military; loosened regulations on timber exports; eased the registration of occupied public lands by transferring land titling and regularization to municipalities; etc.¹¹ The government took advantage of the COVID-19 health crisis to advance its environmentally destructive agenda.¹² As a result, illegal deforestation increased and invasions of indigenous lands and violence against environmental and human rights defenders escalated; land conflicts and illegal mining on indigenous and protected lands as well as the export of threatened species' timber boomed.¹³ In fact, illegal mining and logging and land grabbing are now being financed by organized crime in the region; these investments have expanded rapidly in recent years, as regional governance deteriorated.¹⁴

Despite harsh international criticism, the Bolsonaro administration stood firm and justified its Amazonian policy as being a means to promote economic growth and protect Brazilian sovereignty over the region against foreign interference. It re-

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vised the National Council of the Legal Amazon (NCLA), which had been inactive for three decades; the NCLA became the body responsible for fighting illegality in the region and the Amazon was militarized. This decision drained resources from the MMA into the ministry of defense; at the same time, military officers took the place of public career servants and environmental protection programs were eliminated.¹⁵ Moreover, the military stayed away from deforestation hotspots and there were cases in which they intentionally obstructed inspection operations.¹⁶

As a consequence of the Bolsonaro administration's disastrous response to the pandemic health crisis and the resignation of the minister of justice, who publicly accused the president of politically interfering in Brazil's federal police with the purpose of having access to police intelligence reports, calls for impeachment mushroomed, leaving Bolsonaro isolated. As a result, in 2020 he allied himself to the *Centrão* coalition in Congress, that is, a group of deputies who, in exchange for political favors, support the government in office, and among which are the powerful and most radical, anti-conservationist representatives of the agribusiness sector. In early 2021, a Bolsonaro supporter, Arthur Lira, became president of the Chamber of Deputies. Within this context, a bill severely weakening environmental licensing in the country (PL 3729/2004) and another one legalizing the occupation of public lands and amnestying land grabbing (PL 2633/2020) were approved; they are now stuck in the Senate.¹⁷

However, from the second half of 2020, criticism of the president's policy for the Amazon grew internally. This is explained by a number of factors, namely growing European opposition to ratification of the EU-Mercosur Trade Agreement, criticism by international investors, awareness of Amazonian forests' potential to provide credits for carbon

offsetting and Donald Trump's electoral defeat, which have empowered Brazilian pro-environmental forces and made several sectors of society display a greener position. For example, a coalition of organizations in the agribusiness sector, companies, non-governmental organizations and academics became vocal against Amazonian deforestation. Moreover, the change of presidential administration in the US prompted the resignation of climate skeptical Brazilian minister of foreign affairs in March 2021, who was accused by Congressmen of having isolated the country internationally. The new head of the ministry identified climate change as a pressing problem in his swearing speech, thus breaking with his predecessor. In May, amid growing opposition and having become the subject of a police investigation into alleged favoring of businessmen from the timber sector, the minister of environment resigned. His successor toned down the discourse, but in practice the MMA's orientation did not change, as the new minister was also close to predatory agribusiness. Within this context, as a means to improve the government's foreign image and profit from forest conservation mechanisms, Brazil adopted a more climate-friendly rhetoric internationally; domestically, it presented a vague green growth program and a renewed version of the low carbon agriculture plan, announced increased climate mitigation targets (including a carbon neutrality goal for 2050) and began working on a new but weak national climate policy as well as on a bill to create the Brazilian Market for Emissions Reductions.¹⁸

During its last year in office, and faced with divisions within agribusiness and the risk of losing the support of part of the sector, which feared an international boycott,¹⁹ the Bolsonaro administration maintained a more restrained discourse about environmental issues; nevertheless, attempts at further undercutting environmental governance continued, in some cases justified by the war in Ukraine.²⁰ Moreover, a powerful Russian government oil and gas company bought drilling rights over 16 blocks in the Western part of the Amazon, a vast area of intact forest. A planned highway (BR-319) would allow access to three of those blocks; associated side roads (e.g. AM-366) to the other blocks could also be built. These would open the area to landgrabbers, squatters, loggers, ranchers and other actors.²¹ In December 2022, two weeks before leaving office, the Bolsonaro administration approved logging on indigenous lands.²²

In the context of the October 2022 presidential election, environmental issues gained prominence in debates and the propaganda campaigns raised by the coalitions of Lula da Silva and Simone Tebet. They became particularly relevant from September onwards, when notable environmentalist and former minister of environment Marina Silva announced her support to Lula after his public endorsement of her ambitious proposals for the environmental sector in Brazil,²³ and became an active voice in the former president's campaign. In turn, Bolsonaro's campaign raised the fear that land invasions by landless rural workers, which had declined significantly during the president's administration,²⁴ would jump up again under a PT government,²⁵ and argued that indigenous land demar-

cation, at the core of Marina Silva's environmental agenda, would cause landowners to lose their lands and compromise Brazilian food security.²⁶

On October 30, Lula da Silva won the presidential election with 51% of the popular vote. He vowed to promote sustainable development in the Amazon and fight for zero deforestation, support low carbon agriculture, create an indigenous ministry and a national authority for climate change to coordinate public policies toward a comprehensive, cross-sectoral approach to the problem, and work toward building international partnerships that could help the country achieve its socioenvironmental goals; he also expressed his wish to host the 2025 Conference of the Parties (COP)

IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT CLIMATE CHANGE, AND THE AMAZON IN PARTICULAR, WILL BE A PRIORITY OF LULA'S DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICIES.

of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in the Amazon,²⁷ fully breaking with the Bolsonaro administration. Lula attended COP27 in November, a few days after his election, reaffirming his 'commitment to fight climate change with determination'; he appears to see climate change not only as an environmental problem, but also as a social one.²⁸ It seems likely that climate change, and the Amazon in particular, will be a priority of Lula's domestic and foreign policies. However, the new government will face significant challenges, which I will briefly address in this paper's conclusion, after discussing the paradigms, goals and values driving the destruction of the Amazon, and the dire need for transformative change across the region.

WHY A TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH TO AMAZONIAN GOVERNANCE IS NEEDED

Despite its planetary importance, the Amazon is seen predominantly as a source of commodities. Amazonian policy has been informed by a predatory development paradigm according to which modernization and progress mean land occupation and natural resource exploitation; a paradigm based on an instrumentalist, exploitative, utilitarian relationship with the forest. The non-anthropocentric ways of understanding and being of the indigenous peoples and other local communities are generally associated with underdevelopment and backwardness; smallholder family farmers' traditional farming systems, which can be part of a sustainable land use agenda, are seen as primitive, inefficient and unproductive. The insights and interests of people living in the region as well as nature's rights are at the margins of decision-making. The human enmeshment in and dependence on nature, and the unbreakable link between ecological and social concerns, are not considered; accordingly, fragmented policy approaches to environmental protection and development prevail. This, in turn, fuels social conflicts across the Amazon and hinders the possibility of building alliances that might bridge tensions between environmentalism and developmentalism. The prevailing command-and-control regulatory approach to the governance of the region fails to mitigate tensions and conflicts²⁹). Moreover, policymakers continue to assume pro-

gressive and linear processes of ecological degradation, thus overlooking the likelihood of the Amazon's tipping point being eventually crossed³⁰). In sum, fragmented, exclusionary and anthropocentric policies for the Amazon as well as the policymakers' disregard for the voices of scientists – who have insistently warned that signs of dieback are already visible in part of the region – are jeopardizing the forest's resilience. Hence, it is unsurprising that over half of the population in Amazonas State live below the poverty line, half the tree species in the Amazon are threatened with extinction and the forest's vertebrate populations have declined greatly over the last decades.³¹

A transformative approach to the governance of the Amazon is needed to enable transformative change across the region and to reverse socioecological destruction.³² Visseren-Hamakers and Kok define transformative change as 'a fundamental, society-wide reorganization across technological, economic and social factors and structures, including paradigms, goals and values',³³ and transformative governance as

'[t]he formal and informal (public and private) rules, rule-making systems and actor-networks at all levels of human society (from local to global) that enable transformative change [...] towards biodiversity conservation and sustainable development more broadly'.³⁴

It includes five governance approaches, namely integrative, inclusive, transdisciplinary, adaptive and anticipatory governance; these should be implemented in conjunction and address the underlying causes of nature's destruction.³⁵

An integrative approach to governance is 'operationalized in ways that ensure solutions also have sustainable impacts at other scales and locations, on other issues and in other sectors'; to be inclusive, governance should 'empower and emancipate those whose interests are currently not being met and who represent values that constitute transformative change toward sustainability [e.g., indigenous communities]'; adaptive governance 'enable[s] learning, experimentation, reflexivity, monitoring and feedback';³⁶ governance is transdisciplinary when it 'recognize[s] different knowledge systems, and support[s] the inclusion of sustainable and equitable values by focusing on types of knowledge that are currently underrepresented';³⁷ finally, an anticipatory approach to governance 'appl[ies] the precautionary principle when governing in the present for uncertain future developments, and especially the development or use of new technologies'.³⁸ According to Visseren-Hamakers and Kok,

'[a]ny actor can contribute to transformative governance, and governance mixes can be polycentric in character, encompassing initiatives by actors operating in different places, sectors or at different levels of governance. All actors can regularly evaluate whether the governance mix includes the necessary governance instruments to address the indirect drivers underlying a specific sustainability issue, and governance mixes will need to evolve

as sustainability transformations progress. Over time, governance will become increasingly transformative, and transformative governance will become easier, as societal structures increasingly become sustainable'.³⁹

To protect the Amazon and enhance living conditions in the region, Brazil's current development paradigm will have to be transformed. '[T]he prevailing understanding of the Amazon has been dominated by the study of how the forest could better serve us. We need to start finding creative forms through which we can also serve the forest, in reciprocal ways.'⁴⁰ In this process, fighting regional poverty and inequality as well as empowering vulnerable populations is critical. 'This could conceive a mix of innovative and traditional meanings to the forest.'⁴¹ To achieve these goals, Brazil will primarily require, not only a new vision of humankind's relationship with nature, but also a cross-sectoral and cross-issue, or integrative, approach to Amazonian policy, which can make development harmonious with nature, protecting biodiversity, ensuring the flow of ecosystem goods, providing socioeconomic opportunities for local communities, enhancing the resilience of ecosystems and regional adaptability to climate change, and maintaining and increasing forest carbon stocks.⁴² This task could be facilitated by the creation, in Brazil, of a national authority for climate change, as previously mentioned. Second, an inclusive model of governance which allows for the transformation of power dynamics in the region through ensuring full and effective participation in decision-making by marginalized populations as well as incorporating the transformative sustainability values of indigenous peoples into policies will be equally important.⁴³ In this regard, the establishment of an indigenous ministry in Brazil might be key. Third, due to the complexity of socioecological systems, and to ensure that the Amazon tipping point is not crossed, adaptive governance ought to be part of a transformative governance agenda for the region. Fourth, a transdisciplinary approach to governance which integrates indigenous understandings into Western cognitive systems might help the country find new directions in perceiving and relating to the forest; the creation of adaptive solutions to socioecological problems integrating conventional, indigenous and traditional knowledge systems can strengthen Brazil's capacity to meet its socioenvironmental goals.⁴⁴ Finally, a precautionary stance in uncertain situations is crucial when intervening in socioecological systems to prevent potential harm; anticipatory governance is thus necessary.


The election of Lula opened a window of opportunity for developing a transformative approach to the governance of the Amazon. Yet, by the end of 2022, the future remains uncertain.

CONCLUSION

As I have discussed elsewhere⁴⁵, despite his ambitious discourse, Lula will face major challenges, which include the hard task of rebuilding the environmental institutions

that have been severely damaged by Bolsonaro, including the MMA itself; a powerful organized crime network in the Amazon; Bolsonaro-aligned regional governors; anti-environmentalist lawmakers in the newly-elected Congress, which is more conservative than the previous one;⁴⁶ a difficult economic situation; conservative agribusiness, which still perceives environmental protection as an obstacle to development; and a divided country. On the other hand, Marina Silva will again head the MMA, which is a promising sign⁴⁷. Moreover, because deforestation control seems to have become a growing concern among part of the country's elites in recent years, Brazilian pro-environmental forces may

‘capitalise on this moment to expose the limitations of entrenched power relations and predatory development discourses [...], and create alternative, powerful narratives of change that can reach the wide public and encourage the questioning of prevailing social-structuring paradigms. [...] [B]uilding and strengthening coalitions of like-minded actors representing transformative sustainability values [is critical for developing the necessary processes of co-creation with nature]’.⁴⁸

The international community should join efforts to promote long-term transformative change toward sustainable development in the Amazon, and ensure that the region does not reach a tipping point. After all, the forest is one of the most important spaces for safeguarding the long-term survival of humanity and the sustainability of planetary life. At the same time, the Amazon and its local experiences provide valuable insights for both questioning and rethinking our place in, and relationship to, the planet at a critical time when the global crisis of the Anthropocene is risking humanity's security and survival. 

Reception date: 2 October 2022 | Approval date: 16 December 2022

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- 1 This paper was prepared within the framework of the Jean Monnet Atlantic Network 2.0. The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.
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45 PEREIRA, Joana Castro; TERRENAS, João – 'Towards a transformative governance of the Amazon', pp. 70–71.

- 46 It has been estimated that the anti-environmentalist caucus will occupy more than 40% of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies; at the same time, the number of pro-environmental deputies will drop. *Bancada antiambiental terá 41% das cadeiras na Câmara, aponta análise*. In *Folha de S. Paulo*, 23 October 2022. Available in: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ambiente/2022/10/bancada-antiambiental-tera-41-das-cadeiras-nacamara-aponta-analise.shtml>.
- 47 For a reading of her ambitious action as minister of environment between 2003 and 2008, see, for instance, PEREIRA, Joana Castro; VIOLA, Eduardo – *Climate Change and Biodiversity Governance in the Amazon...*
- 48 *Ibid.*

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BOOK REVIEW



PROMOTING CURIOSITY INTRODUCING PORTUGAL TO CRITICAL THEORY¹

Bruno Rocha

In 2019, International Relations (IR) scholars celebrated the centenary of the establishment of the first Chair in International Politics at the University of Aberystwyth. Since this relative autonomisation in the face of Political Science, IR have been the stage for a variety of debates, turning points and the emergence of new schools of thought that challenge their ontological, epistemological and methodological groundwork. However, involvement in these discussions has been geographically uneven. There are epistemic spaces, such as the Canadian and Brazilian academies, which are engaged in the production of this theoretical pluralism, and other spaces that remain withdrawn from the debate, such as the Portuguese academia, whose contribution to this production is scarce, a generalised doxic adherence being in place instead to the so-called mainstream approaches of IR. In this sense, the work *Emancipar o Mundo: Teoria Crítica e Relações Internacionais* [Emancipating the World: Critical Theory and International Relations] is a necessary – and clearly overdue – step towards the greater involvement of the Portuguese academia in the construction of pluralism in IR.

In the Introduction, José Manuel Pureza and Marcos Farias Ferreira explain that the

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Emancipar o Mundo: Teoria Crítica e Relações Internacionais

Coimbra, Almedina,
2021, 258 pages
ISBN: 9789724095851



study purports ‘to provide a voice to an understanding of the world which is dissatisfied with the power relations that inhabit it and with the theory that legitimises them’ (p. 22). They therefore propose a common ground for critical approaches that can be used as a critical referent: the works of the Frankfurt School, the Cox/Linklater axis, the distribution-recognition nexus, the idea of the immanent possibility of social change and resistance, and the purpose of revealing structures of domination, exclu-

sion, privilege and discrimination in the world order.

In chapter 1, André Saramago retrieves the notions of ‘orientation’ and ‘cosmopolitanism’, suggesting that the growing global interdependence imposes the need to develop more cosmopolitan understandings that encompass the ‘totality of global human conditions’ (pp. 25–26). Saramago proposes to discuss the limits of international Critical Theory through the contribution of one of its founders, to advance a way of articulating the condemnation of historically constituted forms of domination and the projection of a more democratic collective consciousness based on the principle of human dignity. Saramago suggests, then, a sociological-historical approach, in the wake of Norbert Elias’ ‘procedural sociology’, which, going beyond the philosophical-utopian orientation of the Frankfurt School, advances an international Critical Theory based on the empirical reality of historical changes and makes social struggles in the present world order intelligible.

In chapter 2, João Nunes examines a crucial dimension of international security: global health. Understanding power as domination and domination as a critical lens, Nunes looks into the ‘systematic reproduction of invisibility’ in the dominant biomedical-neoliberal narratives in terms of national and global health governance (p. 52). The critique of global health, for Nunes, by revealing dynamics of exclusion and oppression, may offer greater visibility to groups (and regions) whose daily, bodily and localised experien-

ces of disease and health remain neglected. Indeed, an ‘international political economy of everyday life’ is what, for Nunes, makes it possible to research the tangible impacts of global power dynamics and structures – such as capitalism – on actual social relations, and to assess the imminent possibilities of emancipatory transformation.

Chapter 3, penned by Sarah da Mota, compares the imaginaries of (in)security that have spanned the international security system since the end of the Cold War, and analyses its effects on the use of military force. Exploring the Cox/Linklater axis in order to develop the concepts of ‘individualisation of security’ and ‘dehumanisation of security’, Mota shows how, both in the period of NATO’s interventions in the Balkans, for the first concept, and in the post-11/09 period, to the second, these patterns, instead of materialising the emancipatory potential of the two periods, started from a particularist and exclusivist biopolitics, and replicated the military hegemony of the main security actors. Thus, by making the conditions for military action more flexible, these patterns eventually encouraged wars on behalf of the individual (pp. 78–79). Security practices that, when they dismiss the human element, neglect the security interests of the vulnerable (p. 83).

In chapter 4, João Terrenas proposes to retrieve the ‘emancipatory potential’ of Critical Security Studies through methodological practices that require more reflective and collective commitments on the part of those who do research, such as

autoethnography and collaborative ethnography (p. 93). For Terrenas, a critique based on collaborative practices is offered to ‘real people in real places’ (p. 95), inasmuch as it draws on the daily experience of (in)security of vulnerable groups to challenge hegemonic narratives and power relations. The ‘ethnographic turning’ brings close together – emotionally and analytically – those who do research and those who are exposed to experiences of insecurity, on the one hand, and to alternative ways of ‘being and being in the world’, on the other (p. 95). Those who research from a critical point of view, according to Terrenas, have the ethical responsibility of contributing to the mitigation of the insecurity of those who are studied and written about, either by making marginalized groups providers (not merely receivers) of their own security, or by making them active participants in the production and communication of knowledge that informs their security practices.

In chapter 5, João Rodrigues examines, starting from an analysis of the history of international political economy, the emergence of consensus and disagreement in the field of economic policy since the 1970s. Rodrigues highlights, first, the political, anti-imperialist and anticolonial project of the new international economic order (NIEO), whose failure, as a counter-hegemonic consensus and structure to the ‘embedded liberalism’ of the post-World War II, ended in the stabilisation of the Washington Consensus (1989). The latter, according to Rodrigues, is established as a post-Cold War consensus, supported by

a hegemonic structure that places the United States, the organisations it has controlled (e.g., IMF) and its main economic partners in London and Brussels at the centre of international economy (p. 125). It is indeed this transatlantic sharing of the burden of maintaining the structure that, in the European context of the 1990s, leads Rodrigues to the recognition of a decline of the initial consensus: the Brussels-Frankfurt Consensus, promoted by Jacques Delors’ European Commission, supported by a German regional hegemony, evident in the ECB troika, European Commission and IMF. Finally, Rodrigues analyses synthetically the sprouting of a Beijing Consensus, a counter-hegemonic movement led by the People’s Republic of China after the crisis started in 2007–08, arguing, however, that it is still premature to declare its emergence or to uphold the crisis of the North American hegemonic structure (p. 141).

In chapter 6, starting from the demystification of the idea that the Anthropocene is a choice of the majority of the world population, João Camargo advances a critique of the inability to build narratives capable of rousing a collective effort in favour of climate justice and against climate change (p. 148). In this sense, Camargo proposes the construction of a metanarrative, a ‘Great History’, which contests, on the one hand, the dominant narratives of technological positivism and the powerlessness of the human species in the face of the advance of climate change, and, on the other, the alternatives of the ‘climate Behemoth’. According to

Camargo, climate change and global climate justice can form this alternative metanarrative – eco-socialist in nature, guided by principles such as democratic production planning, the fair distribution of resources and multilateralism – with objective empirical foundations, from Rio (1992) to the IPCC Report (2007) (pp. 150, 151, 167).

In chapter 7, Bruno Góis lays the groundwork for a Marxist-inspired ‘international policy for the 99%’ (p. 171). Retrieving the basic premises of Marxism and starting from the space opened by Marxist political economy, Góis suggests that historical materialism may be the touchstone of such proposal, if understood as a critical ontology that recognizes a broader set of ontological units, from classes to genders, without, however, denying the relative autonomy of the State (p. 176). Nevertheless, and as the analysis of anti-austerity movements illustrates, the proposed critical ontology – which carries a clear reference to Cox’s critical realism and conceptual triad – does not leave aside a critique of the assumption of the monolithic nature of the State (p. 177).

In chapter 8, Sofia José Santos develops a critique of the Internet and the web from the viewpoint of the Critical Studies of the Internet (p. 187). Santos challenges the democratic character and horizontality of the Internet, describing it, instead, as a space of power and counterpower in international relations, in which the offline and online worlds interpenetrate. Observing the expansion of the big data, Santos illustrates how offline power relations (e.g.,

control over algorithm generation) are, on the one hand, constitutive of the distribution of online power that defines the ‘place of enunciation’ of each actor, and, on the other hand, materialise and are replicated through online practices that deepen the opacity of the network (p. 192). Moreover, and starting from the analysis of narratives and counternarratives of (in)security about migrants and refugees conveyed by the European media, Santos shows how the Internet can simultaneously fulfil its emancipatory potential if it promotes the visibility of more democratic and inclusive security conceptions and if it facilitates the conversion of micronarratives of (in)security of subaltern subjectivities into macro-narratives (p. 200); or operate as a mechanism of domination through algorithms that tend to highlight security conceptions that reproduce racial, gender or epistemic hierarchies, sealing off the place of enunciation to subaltern subjectivities (pp. 202–03).

In chapter 9, Sílvia Roque and Rita Santos examine the points of dialogue between Critical Theory and feminist approaches, either by exploring the critical dimension of the latter, or by questioning whether the former should be feminist (and postcolonial) (p. 231). According to Roque and Santos, the sharing of assumptions (e.g., criticism of positivism) notwithstanding, the former tends to undervalue the process of ‘theoretical masculinisation’ which silences gender/gender hierarchies in international politics and IR (p. 215). Thus, Roque and Santos conceive the ‘feminisation of critical theory’, the refor-

mulation of the latter as something that can be rendered more attentive to the structures of gender/gender inequality and to the sexual/genderised relationships that permeate daily life, in so far as patriarchy is inseparable from other hegemonic structures of domination, such as neoliberalism or colonialism, with which it maintains relations of mutual reinforcement (pp. 221, 227).

Finally, and in the same vein as the previous chapter, chapter 10, written by Marta Fernández, develops the dialogue between Critical Theory and postcolonial and decolonial approaches. By proposing the decolonisation of European Critical Theory through the idea of ‘coloniality of power and knowledge’ (pp. 237–38, 250), Fernández demonstrates the violent and extra-European origins of Modernity and the ontological interdependence of the European world *vis-à-vis* non-European worlds. Fernández proposes the recognition, on the part of European Critical Theory, of subalternised bodies and temporalities, and of the experience of colonial genocide, which is interrelated with the experience of the Holocaust, without jeopardising the uniqueness of both (pp. 241–42). By provincialising western experience and agency, Fernández argues that it is possible to visualize the subaltern expression of subtle and daily acts of resistance that have little to do with the counter-hegemonic discourses and practices anticipated by the Eurocentric and racially ommissive model of the Frankfurt School (p. 250). Only openness to discourses and practices oppressed by colonial power will

enable, for Fernández, the dialogue with ‘other temporalities and multiple worlds’ (p. 253) that underlies the new critical aspirations of emancipatory transformation.

In sum, it is not in excess to recognise the pertinence of this collective work for the study of IR in Portugal. However, it is clearly an overdue introduction to critical approaches and its various feminist, post-colonial, decolonial and neo-Marxist variations. These represent no novelty in IR, but their echoes have been limited as far as Portugal is concerned: in this regard, it is worth mentioning the contribution of Studies for Peace – which perhaps would deserve their own chapter in the scope of this work. Similarly, since the dialogical and plural elements of the critique are exposed, it would have been relevant, at the beginning of each chapter, a self-analysis by its author. To begin with, such an analysis would reclaim the personal dimension inscribed in each chapter and attest to the extent of the structuring promoted by the passage through educational institutions such as the University of Aberystwyth or the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, whose ethos predispose those who engage in research to the elaboration of analyses of international relations from critical approaches. Thus, answering the question ‘where was it written?’ would only enrich the book’s already well-achieved purpose: the multi-angular identification by a group composed of people with different experiences and trajectories – who, in some cases, intersect – of the intrinsic interconnectivity of the various structures of dom-

ination that frame international relations and IR; and, in the wake of this identification, the recognition of the immanent potentiality of emancipatory transformation, materialised by the multiple resistances to the totalising force of these power relations. In the end, perhaps the most

relevant contribution of the work will be, in the wake of the ‘translation work’ proposed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos,² that of advancing the ‘reciprocal intelligibility’ between the different critical approaches that share the polysemic project of emancipation. **Ri**

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■ ■ ■ ENDNOTES

¹ A previous version of this review was published in Portuguese in the journal *Relações Internacionais*, no. 73, March 2022.

² SANTOS, Boaventura Sousa - ‘Para uma sociologia das ausências e uma sociologia das emergências’. In *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*. No. 63, 2002, pp. 237–80.

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UNBALANCES AND EUROPE'S AIMS¹

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CARLOS GASPAR
O Fim da Europa

Lisbon,
Instituto da Defesa Nacional,
2022, 186 pages
ISBN: 978-972-9393-49-5

Carlos Gaspar is widely known in academia and beyond, and a prolific author, remarkably committed to an editorial discipline of publishing at least one book every year. Published since 2016: *O Pós-Guerra Fria* [The Post-Cold War] (2016), *A Balança da Europa* [The Balance of Europe] (2017), *Raymond Aron e Guerra Fria* [Raymond Aron and the Cold War] (2018), *O Regresso da Anarquia* [The Return of Anarchy] (2019), *O Mundo de Amanhã* [The World of Tomorrow] (2020), e *Teoria das Relações Internacionais* [Theory of International Relations] (2021).

His last work, *O Fim da Europa* [The End of Europe] (2022), is a book penned by someone who thinks and reflects on International Relations in a critical way because his analyses invariably stem from the articulation of three different outlooks: the perspective of the historical analyst, for whom the repetition of historical events is not inevitable but cyclical resurgence is a possibility; the perspective of the theoretical analyst, who resorts to the theories of International Relations to support his arguments; and the perspective of the empirical-contemporary analyst, who contextualizes events chronologically and causally. This quality renders discernible the complex issues dealt with by Carlos Gaspar in his books, setting forth his arguments with eloquence and clarity.



This book is essential for experts and for all those who are interested in contemporary European history and today's Europe. In the troubled times we are experiencing, deepening one's knowledge of the European past is crucial to understand how, in the war in Ukraine, not only the individual future of that country is being played but also the future of the European order. From the outset, like with any fine book, both the cover and the title challenge the reader even before the reading has begun. The cover – a sketch by Almada Negreiros, with an excerpt of Fernando Pessoa's 1928

poem that reads ‘Europe lies, reclining upon her elbows [...] The staring face is Portugal’ – suggests a thoughtful, dreamy and relaxed Europe moving towards its always uncertain future.

For its part, the title of the book, *The End of Europe*, suggests the decay and decline of Europe, a recurring theme during the last century, and ‘mandatory for European intellectuals since the Great War’ (p. 121): Spengler, Valéry, Coudenhove-Kalergi and Toynbee, followed by Burnham and Schumpeter, recognize this decline and – almost all of them – as something inexorable. Like Aron, however, Carlos Gaspar rejects this catastrophic reading. He believes that Europe is capable of re-erecting and reinventing itself after major conflicts and transformations. In those terms, and acknowledging that this Europe is no longer the epicentre of the international system, *The End of Europe* embodies a search for Europe’s new purpose.

To this purpose, Carlos Gaspar charts Europe’s trajectory in the past 100 years – the Europe of Versailles, the Europe of Yalta and the Europe of Berlin – according to its moments of fall and ascension, and the hopeful moments of its rebirth and return.

Thus, the Europe of Versailles corresponds, in part, to the

‘foundation of the League of Nations – the first permanent international organization with a vocation to represent all national States, the first system of collective security, the first multilateral form of the liberal order of Western democracies’.

However, the absence of the chief international power in the new organization doomed it to failure, and ‘the failure of the LoN is the failure of the European order’ (p. 29), since the United States does not see itself as a ‘European power’ and

‘without the United States, Great Britain and France are unable either to build the LoN as a representative institution of the international state system, to consolidate its legitimacy as the guarantor of democratic peace or to impose the Paris treaties and European peace’ (p. 27).

Yalta’s Europe, which emerges from World War II, represents ‘the first time a European war is decided by the peripheral powers: the United States is a Western power on the other side of the Atlantic, the Soviet Union is a Eurasian power’ (p. 46), whose bipolar configuration is crucially determined by the nuclear revolution. However, this Europe too is unstable, because ‘the Europe of Yalta ceases to exist with the institutionalisation of Europe’s division’ (p. 63). The prevailing Europe becomes ‘the priority in the international strategy of the United States’ (p. 66) during the Cold War, as ‘the stability of the alliances is the rule at the strategic centre of bipolar competition, and no State is allowed to cross the demarcation line that divides Europe’ (p. 70).

The Europe of Berlin emerged in 1990, with the German reunification, the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union and is defined by the ‘European democratic revolution’ (p. 81). But

unlike the process of rebuilding Europe in 1945, in 1991, reconstruction is marked by the continuity 'of the multilateral institutions built by the transatlantic security community in the Cold War' (p. 95) and by the institutional enlargement of the Atlantic Alliance and the European Union (EU). However, the Europe of Berlin too, despite not emerging from a hegemonic war, is a deeply unstable Europe which cannot avert successive crises. At the end of the second decade of post-Cold War, Europe is paralyzed by multipolar instability, which 'is more dangerous than unipolar instability': to the 'concurrence of the strategic retreat of the United States following the Iraqi adventure, the offensive turn of the major revisionist powers, [and] the multiplication of peripheral conflicts' (p. 123) is added 'the growing insecurity of Europe' due to the 'rise of populist movements' and the 'fragmentation of the party systems prevalent in continental Europe' (p. 124), and the epidemic crisis, which 'has a brutal impact on a depressed Europe' (p. 125) which has just emerged from its worst economic and financial crisis since the beginning of the European project.

In this context, Carlos Gaspar's thesis is not exhausted by the notion of a competition between the great powers, resumed for at least more than a decade. The thesis he proposes is also that, in the face of the end of the American 'unipolar moment', a bipolarization is already underway between the transatlantic community and the Asian democratic community, between the democracies of the transatlantic Quad and the Asian Quad, 'the United States and its allies – the main conservative powers (p. 127)',

on the one hand, and, on the other hand, China and Russia, whose ambitions of the Great Eurasia project define 'Chinese and Russian autocracies as the main revisionist powers' (p. 127).

In this 'new dynamic of the international system' (p. 127), 'Washington's defensive turn, marked by the decision not to intervene in the Syrian War, it is the signal for Moscow's offensive turn, marked by the decision to annex Crimea' – which 'confirms Russia's resurgence as a major revisionist power' (p. 131) whose strategic priority 'is to divide NATO and the European Union and to exclude the United States from the European security order' (p. 133). The new dynamic also corresponds to the offensive turn by Beijing, whose 'offensive strategy [...] in Europe, consolidated by Xi Jinping, has three main objectives: to separate Europe from the United States, to divide the European Union and to integrate European States into the alternative system that China is building on a global scale', in the framework of which Europe becomes 'the terminus and political destination of the new "Silk Roads", which confirm China's determination to reorder 'Greater Eurasia' through an 'interconnectivity' strategy' (p. 135).

In this sense, 'the triangular balance confirms the decline of Germany, France and Britain in the international hierarchy dominated by the United States, China and Russia, which recognize Europe as a crucial theatre in their fight for power' (p. 127). For Carlos Gaspar, this 'decline in Europe's international position' is further exposed by the 'divergent strategies' with which these 'three major European

powers, middle powers in the new configuration of the international hierarchy' respond 'to successive crises' (p. 137). These differences are defined by Britain's radical strategy when it leaves the EU and 'returns to its original position as the only one of the three European powers that favours NATO and its "special relationship" with the United States' (p. 138) thus regaining its international status as Global Britain; by France's Europeanist strategy, whose dilemma 'is to survive the symmetrical risks of European isolation and German hegemony' while also aware of its 'increasing dependence' and of the fact that its vision of 'European sovereignty' can only be accomplished if and when it is part of the German strategy' (p. 141). To bridge this Franco-German asymmetry, the old Gaullist dream of a pan-European security system resurfaces, which includes Russia but excludes the United States. Germany, for its part, is deluded by the possibility of an equidistance between the great powers and the idea that 'the decoupling of European security from American security' would be 'a way of subtracting Europe from the security dilemmas of the United States and of isolating the European security system from the competitive dynamics of the international system' (p. 142). At the same time it acknowledges, since the annexation of Crimea, «the containment of Russian strategic pressure from the Baltic to the Black Sea' as a strategic priority (p. 143). Thus, concludes Carlos Gaspar,

'thirty years after the end of the Cold War, the perpetual division between

Great Britain's Atlanticism, the exceptionalism of France and the centrism of Germany entails a collective inability to define a European strategy to address changes in the international conjuncture, at a time when the systemic rivalry between the West and a Russia-aligned China conditions strategic alignments on a global and regional scale' (p. 147).

And consequently, 'European security dilemmas, [...] still go unresolved in the post-Cold War', 'through Britain's withdrawal, France's flights of fancy and Germany's inaction, which prevents the three powers from carrying out a revolution in the European balance' (pp. 147–48).

The Russian invasion of Ukraine 'the largest international earthquake of the post-Cold War' (p. 154) – has transformed relations between the three major international powers. First,

'[the war] confirms the relative decline of the main international power, whose efforts are focused on trying to limit the conflict and prevent escalation, which excludes the direct involvement of NATO military forces and European allies in the war, without, however, leaving Ukraine unarmed and isolated vis-à-vis Russia' (p. 154).

Second, the Ukraine War 'ends the brief intermission during which Russia's reintegration into Europe was a real possibility' (p. 160) as well as the 'opportunity to reconstitute European unity with Russia' (p. 161). However, the War 'leaves Russia more isolated and more dependent on

China', confirming the asymmetry in the Russian-Chinese relationship which favours the Asian power.

Third, the Russian War in Ukraine has defined the new demarcation line on the European continent, between Europe and Russia, and placed Ukraine and Moldova, after three decades of uncertainty, on the European side. As Carlos Gaspar states, 'The invasion renders the separation between Russia and Ukraine definitive, and the future demarcation line between the two former Soviet republics defines not only the border between the two states, but also the border between Europe and Russia' (p. 160). With the request for formal accession to the EU, 'Ukraine ceases to be Russia's border with Europe and becomes Europe's border with Russia' (p. 160).

What is Europe's place in this context of bipolarisation of alliances and the return of War in Europe? If the Europe of Versailles, of Yalta, of Berlin did not last, what is and what should be the purpose of Europe in the face of its own "September 11th" (p. 150)?

The purpose of this Europe, for Carlos Gaspar, is threefold and crucial.

First, 'the bipolarization between the democratic field and the autocratic field that dominates the fight for international power makes it essential to consolidate the alliance with the United States' (p. 148).

Second, to recognise the need to strengthen the transatlantic community and the 'multilateral frameworks in the scope of which Berlin, Paris and London can come to an agreement, among themselves and with their democratic allies, regarding strategies for containing authoritarian

powers'. To this end, 'the three European powers must converge on a Europeanisation strategy for NATO that can guarantee their collective capacity to contain Russia's strategic pressure' (p. 148). In this sense, 'Germany's revolution in foreign, security and defence policies marks the end of pacifist illusions and represents a decisive turning point for the European and transatlantic balances'. This realignment, which makes Germany 'the leading European power in all relevant dimensions except in the nuclear strategic field' (p. 158), might strengthen

'the Europeanisation of NATO, which requires a consensus by Germany, Britain and France to reduce the strategic dependence on the United States and ensure their collective capacity to halt Russia's aggression at Europe's borders' (p. 157).

Finally, Europe must strive to prevent the consolidation of the alliance between Russia and China. As phrased by Carlos Gaspar,

'the Asian turn of Putin's Russia has a strategic, political and moral significance that alters the European balance [...]. The European war and Sino-Russian convergence render imperative the strategic unity between the United States, Great Britain, Germany and France and the convergence between the transatlantic QUAD and the Indo-Pacific QUAD' (p. 156).

In conclusion, the end of our Europe remains a complex and burdensome

purpose, and the tranquility and peacefulness with which the Lady Europe of Almada Negreiros and Fernando Pessoa ‘lay reclining upon her elbows’ are once again disrupted by the turmoil and the unpredictability of the international system. ^{RI}

ning upon her elbows’ are once again disrupted by the turmoil and the unpredictability of the international system. ^{RI}

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■ ■ ■ END NOTE

¹ A previous version of this review was published in Portuguese in the journal *Relações Internacionais*, no. 76, December 2022.

TENSIONS, AMBIGUITIES AND MISCONCEPTIONS OF A PRAGMATIC RELATIONSHIP¹

David Castaño

More than a decade after arguing his doctoral thesis 'A circumstantial alliance: Portugal and the United States in the 1950s', Daniel Marcos publishes, with the seal of the *Imprensa de História Contemporânea*, a revised and updated version of his study dedicated to Portuguese-American relations between 1949 and 1961.

Based on a rigorous work of research of primary sources in national archives (National Defence archive, Air Force archive, Historic-Diplomatic archive, Military History archive, Oliveira Salazar archive) and international archives (President Eisenhower archive, President Truman archive, State Department archive, Foreign Office archive), along with various printed sources (official publications of diplomatic documentation), the press and a significant body of secondary sources that frame Luso-American bilateral relations in the context of the Cold War and articulate the foreign policy of the two countries with their respective domestic policy dynamics, the book now published draws an in-depth and rigorous, comprehensive and enlightening picture of this decade which remained a scarcely studied period in the history of Luso-American relations.

Compressed between the turbulent 1940s and the menacing 1960s, the 1950s have

not attracted much attention from researchers who are dedicated to the study of this bilateral relationship from the perspective of the history of Portuguese international relations. The apparent stability and continuity of these years has probably driven away those who have chosen, and rightly so, to analyse the breaking and changing points, or the Portuguese participation in international multilateral organisations that impacted the Portuguese-American bilateral dynamics.² However, under the decep-

DANIEL MARCOS

**Entre o Império
e a NATO: Portugal
e os Estados
Unidos da América
(1949-1961)**

Lisbon,
*Imprensa de História
Contemporânea*, 2022,
309 pages
ISBN: 978-989-8956-24-8



tive appearance of a flat and shallow sea, it was in this decade that important conflicts and tensions began to touch the surface, fully emerging at by the beginning of the following decade.

This book presents to us these conflicts and tensions in a twofold dimension. On the one hand, in the bilateral dimension, marked by the coexistence of shared views and strategies regarding the need to contain the Soviet threat in Europe and the North-Atlantic, an understanding and approximation that, however, did not extend to other geographies, namely the Indian subcontinent or Africa, laying bare the differences between the former colony, which sought to assert itself as the great democratic power on a global scale, and the small European country, where an authoritarian regime was in force and sought to secure the legacy of a vast colonial empire, legally and theoretically transformed into a multicontinental nation, in a final attempt to adapt to the decolonising dynamics. On the other hand, and this is one of the greatest insights of the book, the points of contention within the US administration itself regarding which was the best strategy to adopt in the face of the colonial policy of *Estado Novo*, encompassing the Portuguese issue in the broader US strategy regarding the binomial Europe/Africa, are well manifest. That is, in the difficult and lengthy process of choosing between maintaining good US relations with its traditional European allies – many of them colonial powers who were reticent in abandoning that status –, and the efforts to promote a new phase in the United States' relationship with the

African continent in the face of the growing commitment and involvement of the USSR. This new stage should be driven, nurtured and implemented according to an increasingly influential trend that was asserting itself at the US State Department, through clear support for the application of the principle of self-determination, criticism of colonialism and rapprochement with independent movements even if this stance might ultimately call into question the interests of European powers and relations between North America and Western Europe.

Since the book has as its starting point the integration of Portugal, as a founding member, in the Atlantic Pact, the author argues that Portuguese-American relations would not evolve in the following years 'to a level deeper than that which derived from the link between Portugal and the United States within NATO' and that this was due to 'the difficulty in harmonizing the Portuguese-American positions in Europe and in the Third World, which ensued from the particular national interests of each State' (p. 32). If it is true that this elusive convergence prevented a deepening of the bilateral relationship, we can also surmise from its reading that, instead of an strengthening, what was almost invariably on the horizon during the 1950s was a degradation of the bilateral relationship, which would only be halted due to the action of three major factors: the strategic importance of the Azorean bases, the aforementioned conflicting viewpoints within the American administrative machine on the policy to be adopted for the African continent and President Eisenhower's bene-

volent stance regarding the colonial policy of the Portuguese dictatorship.

Only this combination of dynamics prevented a setback in the relationship between the two countries, which underwent several *stress tests* during the period under analysis. The tension surrounding the extension to Macao of the economic embargo imposed by the US on the People's Republic of China in early 1951, which called into question the main reason for being of that territory as a trading post; the American silence in the face of the invasion of the enclaves of Dadrá and Nagar Aveli by Indian Union-backed forces in 1954; the repercussions of the Suez crisis in 1956; and the absence of strong US support in the face of a growing wave of criticism targeted at Portuguese colonialism within the United Nations throughout the second half of the 1950s, undermined and challenged the foundations of a relationship based on a major unifying element: the Azores.

It was mainly due to the Azores trump card, and the precarious and well-defined concessions offered by Portugal for the maintenance of US military forces in peacetime within the national territory, with a view to prevent the establishment of new Gibralters (p. 58), that the Portuguese authorities managed to pull out from the United States a declaration of support for the colonial policy of the Lisbon Government (p. 132, pp. 182–83). It was also thanks to this asset that Salazar could afford to give instructions for the invitation to President Craveiro Lopes for an official visit to the U.S. at the end of 1954 to be declined (pp. 165–66).

Also important was President Eisenhower's position in the face of the growing affirmation of the Africanist sector within the American diplomatic machine. It was only through the individual decision of the President that the US favourable vote was halted regarding resolution 1514 which, reaffirming the fundamental principles of human rights, condemned all forms of colonialism, underlined the right to self-determination and rejected the use of arguments aimed at deferring independence processes (p. 281). President Eisenhower's visit to Portugal in May of 1960 sealed this pragmatic relationship marked by tensions, ambiguities and misinterpretations. Among the latter, the prognosis of the American consul in Luanda who, in January of 1961, deemed it unthinkable that a contestation might be raised calling into question the presence of Portugal in Africa (p. 284).

Although it did not immediately take the form of a book, the scarcity of studies devoted to this subject in this specific period, and the quality of the research carried out, fully justify that several of the aspects addressed by Daniel Marcos in his doctoral thesis have since been incorporated into the most relevant and recent bibliography dedicated to the history of Luso-American relations³ or the history of Estado Novo's foreign policy.⁴ Which should not disqualify an attentive reading of the work now published. On the contrary, this edition should serve as a stimulus and starting point for further research on Luso-American bilateral relations, transatlantic relations and the evolution of the triangular dynamics between North America and Africa. **RI**

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■ ■ ■ ENDNOTES

¹ A previous version of this review was published in Portuguese in the journal *Relações Internacionais*, no. 75, September 2022.

² RODRIGUES, Luís Nuno – *Salazar e Kennedy: A Crise de Uma Aliança. As Relações Luso-Americanas entre 1961 e 1963*. Lisbon: Editorial Notícias, 2002; RODRIGUES, Luís Nuno – *No Coração do Atlântico. Os Estados*

Unidos e os Açores (1939-1948). Lisbon: Prefácio, 2005; RÔLO, Maria Fernanda – *Portugal e a Reconstrução Económica do Pós-Guerra. O Plano Marshall e a Economia Portuguesa dos Anos 50*. Lisbon: Instituto Diplomático, 2007; TELÓ, António José – *Portugal e a NATO: O Reencontro da Tradição Atlântica*. Lisbon: Cosmos, 1996.

³ SÁ, Tiago Moreira de – *História das Relações Portugal-EUA (1776-2015)*. Lisbon: Dom Quixote, 2016.

⁴ PEREIRA, Bernardo Futscher – *Crepúsculo do Colonialismo. A Diplomacia do Estado Novo (1949-1961)*. Lisbon: Dom Quixote, 2017.

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DENATURALISING THE NATURAL A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY PEACE OPERATIONS¹

Thaíse Kemer

The promotion of international peace in the 21st century is deeply connected to the implementation of UN peacekeeping operations. Indeed, even if these operations are not expressly provided for in its Constitutive Charter, the presence of the ‘blue helmets’ in conflict scenarios has been consolidated as a central instrument available to the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security. In this context, over the more than 75 years of existence of the United Nations, there has been a process of progressive naturalisation of the use of these operations as a way to meet the objectives of this organization. Thus, discussions on international peacekeeping at the Security Council very often concern decisions on how to conduct peace-keeping

operations, which includes, among others, procedural discussions on the mandate and duration of such operations. As such, the peace promotion agenda, which requires a multidimensional understanding of the causes of contemporary conflicts, is often addressed with a reductionist approach that prioritises the debate on the implementation of peace operations.

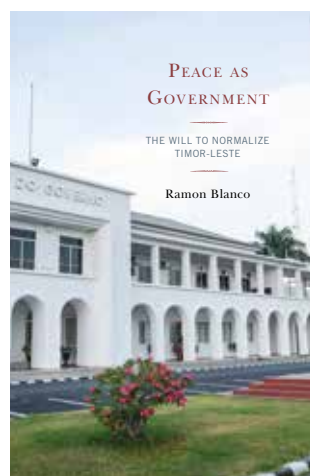
By bringing a critical approach to this context, Ramon Blanco’s work, *Peace as Government: The Will to Normalize Timor-Leste*, provides

an opportunity to ‘denaturalise the natural’, in the author’s words, in order to analyse peace operations as part of broader power dynamics that organise international society according to liberal precepts. Through an in-depth analysis of the action of the United Nations in the context of East Timor, the author offers a critical look regarding both the *rationale* of peace that guides the performance of international society in this matter and the instruments it employs for the operationalisation of this *rationale*.

RAMON BLANCO

Peace as Government: The Will to Normalize Timor-Leste

Lanham, Rowman
& Littlefield, 2020,
278 pages



In this context, East Timor constitutes a paradigmatic case for the promotion of a critical analysis of contemporary peace operations. In fact, according to Blanco, East Timor not only hosted a wide range of United Nations peacekeeping operations,² it also was regarded later on as a success story regarding the involvement of the United Nations in post-conflict contexts. Thus, the selected case possesses high relevance for a broader understanding UN's logic of action through peace operations, since it allows a critical analysis of the limits of this understanding of success.

To analyse the selected case, the author mobilises theoretical instruments provided by both the English School and Michael Foucault. While the English School enables the understanding of international society as an environment for sharing liberal values, the Foucaultian approach offers concepts that make it possible to analyse the mechanisms of consolidation of these values at a global level. Thus, although, according to Blanco, this theoretical combination can be considered eccentric, since the two approaches create important epistemic differences, this analytical framework unveils the gears that make the international system work. With this theoretical support, the work makes it possible, in the author's words, 'to broaden the spectrum of the visible' on the deep-seated dynamics that govern the contemporary international order, to the extent that they identify peace operations as one of the devices that make it work.

In order to address the subject, the author uses a qualitative methodological approach

which included both extensive archive research and fieldwork based on direct observation and in-depth interviews with actors involved in the process. In this context, the main argument put forward by the author is that peace operations exercise, in the international context, the function of ensuring the maintenance of the liberal order. According to Ramon Blanco, this international order is based on liberal values and principles, and the States that show limited adherence to these liberal precepts are perceived as misfits, abnormal or even 'failed States' – failed in the sense that they did not manage to act internationally in the same way as liberal states, considered normal. Thus, international society finds in the liberal rationale a guide that enables both i) to differentiate normal states – which follow liberal precepts – from abnormal states – which are to some degree out of alignment with these precepts; ii) justify the deployment, in the context of countries considered abnormal, of mechanisms for the correction of these misalignments, as is the case of peace operations.

According to Ramon Blanco's analysis, states considered abnormal are perceived by the international society as a threat to the functioning of the global order. As a result, the correction of this situation is now envisaged as an urgent requirement for the preservation of the international order. To understand this context, the author makes use of two key concepts from the Foucaultian toolbox, namely the concepts of 'normalisation' and 'device': while normalisation seeks to bring abnormal states to a situation of normality,

devices are precisely the instruments that enable the shaping of the States' conducts according to the desirable (liberal) forms. Thus, according to Blanco, the perception that certain States, deemed abnormal, constitute threats to the international order, is used as a justification for the implementation of processes of 'standardisation', in which these States are subjected to 'devices' that seek to shape their conduct according to liberal values.


Drawing on the case of East Timor, Blanco resorts to ample evidence to support his argument that peace operations can be understood as devices that allow the normalisation of the conduct of abnormal states. In fact, peace operations encompass a list of mechanisms capable of directing the behaviour of states and populations according to the liberal values that guide international society. Thus, the proposed theoretical framework allows for a critical reflection on the design and implementation of peace operations in the contemporary world, since not only it offers an analytical lens that explains not only the (abnormal) profile of the States that welcome peace operations, but also elucidates the purpose behind the conception of these operations – the preservation of liberal values. According to the author, the process of standardisation of States involves both the guidance of States' conducts at the international level and the interaction between states and their respective populations. This process is linked, therefore, with the notion of biopolitics, which, according to Blanco, refers to the administration and control of the processes necessary for the survival of the population of a given State.

In this sense, Blanco stresses that contemporary peace operations can be, to a large extent, associated with a state-building logic. In fact, according to the author, the process of state-building seeks not only to promote the consolidation of state institutions, but also to regulate relations between States and societies. Considering that this is precisely the case of the UN engagement in East Timor, the analysis developed by the author offers plenty of evidence regarding how the normalisation process of the Timorese State works, considering the operationalisation of monitoring, control and supervision mechanisms implemented by the United Nations both regarding the Timorese State and the population of that State. In this context, by proposing a critical analysis, the author paves the way for a broader understanding of this engagement, as it makes it possible to enrich the debate about the power dynamics underlying this process.

The presentation of the argument unfolds over five main chapters. In the first chapter, the author analyses the evolution of the peace-building process on the international stage, with a view to problematising the liberal peace logic that leads peace operations in the contemporary world. Chapter 2 deepens the debate on the specific circumstances of the East Timor case and the process that led to it being considered as urgent by the international society. Chapter 3, in turn, discusses the engagement of the United Nations in East Timor, in order to discuss the shortcomings of this process, with particular emphasis on the failures of this organisation to dialogue with the needs and reality of

Timorese society. Finally, whereas chapter 4 expands on the outlining of the surveillance mechanisms that composed the standardisation process in East Timor, chapter 5 furthers the debate on how the United Nations has operationalised a state of governance in the country, which involved both the conduct of the Timorese State and its population.

As such, this work offers a fundamental contribution to the analysis of contemporary peace processes, inasmuch as it promotes a critical reflection not only on its operationalisation mechanisms, but on the rationale underlying these mechanisms.

In the same sense, research sheds light on the fact that, by proving incapable of dialoguing with the reality of Timorese society, the approach to peace undertaken by the United Nations betrayed fragile foundations for the promotion of sustainable peace in that country. By starting from a paradigmatic case to enable an in-depth reflection on the dynamics that govern contemporary international society, Blanco's book is an essential contribution to an expansion of the debate on the meanings and paths adopted by international society for the promotion of peace in the contemporary world. 

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¹ A previous version of this review was published in Portuguese in the journal *Relações Internacionais*, no. 72, December 2021.

² Ramon Blanco mentions that the country has received five missions from the United Nations - UNAMET (1999), UNTAET (1999-2002), UNMISSET (2002-05), UNOTIL (2005-06) and UNMIT (2006-12) - in addition to two multilateral missions: INTERFET (1999-2000) and ISF (2006-13).



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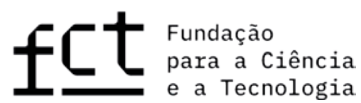
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- The review must be objective and the recommendations will be supported by solid arguments so that the authors may improve their text. Recent publications on the subject must be recommended, when these are not quoted;
- The reviewer must inform the editors if the manuscript does not fit its area of expertise, or if can not respect the deadline;
- Respect established deadlines.



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Financiado por fundos nacionais através
da FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P.,
no âmbito do projeto UIDP/04627/2020

