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Contents

Philip AFAHA

Nigeria: Counting the Cost of the ECOMOG Operations..... 3

Georgiana BIGEA

**France: The French Republican Model of Integration.
A Potential Driver for Extremism.....17**

Raoul-Thomas CÂMPIAN

**China: Reasons Behind Its Political and Military Expression
in the South China Sea.....46**

Maurício VIEIRA

**Sierra Leone: Promoting peace or prolonging violence?
The duality of the UN Peacekeeping72**

Nigeria: Counting the Cost of the ECOMOG Operations

Philip AFAHA

Abstract. *Nigeria has been in the forefront of deploying military resources for peace instead of war. This new approach to conflict, which gained currency immediately after the World War II and has come to shape international relations in the beginning of the 21st century, is constantly bedevilled by far-reaching socio-economic implications due to the often haphazard and disarticulated approach of such engagements. Although Nigeria stands tall as a vanguard of peacekeeping around the world, the collateral impacts of these overtures on her domestic affairs has been daunting. From 1960 when she first sent her troops to quell the crisis in the Congo, the country has participated in more than 30 peace missions around the globe, some of which she actually initiated. Nigeria's spearheading of ECOMOG operations was not without some far-reaching impacts on the home front. Her experiences in spearheading the ECOMOG missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone came with not only tales of war but other extra-military impacts suffered by the country during and after those operations. This paper attempts to interrogate such domestic fall-outs and argues for a sufficient articulation of such exercises to mitigate long- term impacts.*

Keywords: *Nigeria, ECOMOG, Peacekeeping, ECOWAS, Military Policy.*

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Introduction

Peacekeeping is fast becoming a viable alternative in military circles, especially in a world which has increasingly become less prone to interstate aggression. The world is becoming more attracted to peaceful diplomacy than provocation and blatant show of strength which was the norm up to the middle of the 20th century. Peacekeeping is a coordinated military intervention for the restoration of peace in war zones or a

deliberate beef-up of military resources to prevent a breakdown of order. It is generally referred to as peacekeeping missions or Peace support operations. Peacekeeping missions are in the form of military policing action undertaken by military personnel and the police, under the authority of a political body, an organization, group of states or in rare cases, a single nation, to support the implementation of an agreed peace. Peace Support Operations are conceived as all the multidimensional activities undertaken by international actors to address the major civil conflicts that occurred in West Africa during the 1990s and early 2000s (Adeniji, 2000). This has remained Nigeria's strategic option which has won her accolades in diplomatic circles.

While it cannot be denied that Nigeria commands one of the most powerful and visible army in Africa, her posture in the continent has remained non-aggressive but predominantly geared towards preventing conflict and maintenance of peace through her peacekeeping efforts. Apart from the few years of civil war and her active involvement against the apartheid regime in South Africa in the years during which she was tagged "a frontline state" especially during the Murtala Mohammed era, Nigeria's armed forces have been involved more than any other in preserving order across the length and breadth of Africa, and her capacity to promote peace and restore order in the continent remains epochal. Instead of using her military might to browbeat other weaker and poorer nations to doing her bidding as in most diplomatic practice, her focus has been to preserve stability and peace in the continent as exemplified in her acclaimed exploits with ECOMOG in Liberia and Sierra-Leone.

Nigeria has no history of wars with her neighbours except the brief tensions with the Chad Republic and Cameroun over boundary misunderstandings which were comprehensively resolved. In fact, The Nigerian Army doctrine is anchored on the need for the Armed Forces to be strategically defensive in posture in line with Nigeria's foreign policy of good neighbourliness and non-aggression. Thus, the Nigeria military doctrine has been based on primarily "Active Defence, Flexible Offensive", which builds upon "Responsive Offensive Doctrine". The adoption of the Maneuverist Approach to warfare by the Nigerian Army is the fallout of this doctrine. Like China, Nigeria has adopted non-provocation and non-aggression posture towards its neighbours and states in Africa based on the principle of good neighbourliness and peaceful co-existence. The third is politico-strategic and a derivative of the former. Nigeria has no sub-imperial or hegemonic ambition towards its immediate neighbours and the West African Sub-region. The self-sacrificing Nigeria's peacekeeping supports in the West African Sub-region and Africa bear no fruits of even national interest articulations. Such efforts have been largely altruistic. In post-peace support efforts in Congo, Chad, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Sudan, states which did not share the burden of peace support efforts are cultivating and reaping off their resources (Afaha, 2015). The desire to understand the primary motive for Nigeria's intervention and subsequent resolution of conflicts

especially in the West African region has been the concern of scholars for decades. This explains the enormous ideas that have been put forward by scholars to explain this phenomenon over the years.

The foreign policy of any nation constitutes an integral part of her overall strategy for survival in a competitive global system. The importance of this dimension of a nation's grand strategy is aptly captured by Kurt London, when he asserted that foreign policy may be called the father of all things in International Relations (London, 1965). This perception is corroborated by William Wallace, who identified Foreign Policy as that critical "area of politics which bridges the all-important boundary between the nation-state and its international environment" (Wallace, 1971). Accordingly, the over-riding objective of any country's foreign policy is to promote and protect that "country's national interests in its interaction with the outside world and relationship with specific countries in the international system" (Olusanya & Akindele, 1986).

A critical approach to attaining this goal is the formation and maintenance of a functional military to safeguard both internal and external interests. Indeed, Section 217 (2) of the Nigerian Constitution provides that the federation shall equip and maintain the armed forces as may be considered adequate and effective for the purpose(s) of

- a. Defending Nigeria from external aggression.
- b. Maintaining its territorial integrity and securing its borders from violation on land, sea or air.
- c. Suppressing insurrection and acting in aid of civil authorities to restore order when called upon to do so by the president.

Between the attainment of independence in 1960 and the advent of the civil wars which plagued West Africa in the early 1990s, there had emerged some broad and consistent consensus that Nigeria's national interest consist of the following;

1. The defence of the country's Sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity,
2. The restoration of human dignity to black men and women all over the world, and in Africa,
3. The creation of the relevant political and economic conditions in Africa and the rest of the world which will not only facilitate the preservation of the territorial integrity and security of all African countries but also foster national self-reliance in African countries,
4. The promotion and improvement of the economic well-being of Nigerian citizen, and
5. The promotion of world peace and justice (Adeniji, 2000).

While there was a national consensus in support of these broad objectives, each of the governments at the national level since the political independence of the country in 1960, gave its own interpretation of these objectives, according to its own level of emphasis to each of them.

A country's foreign policy represents the totality of objectives, orientation and actions which influences it in the quest to cope with its external environment. These foreign policy components are of course reflective of the sum total of those principles which have grown out of its history, political process and leadership, economic and military capabilities. Put differently, foreign policy study projects a state's objectives, orientation, action in response to the external environment and its capabilities. These components are interrelated since the goals of foreign policy are a function of the political process by which it is focused partly by its capabilities, and partly by the political processes through which it was selected (Rosennau, 1969). From inception, Nigeria's foreign policy has been anchored to a large extent, on these principles and objectives. This continuity is noticeable in the restatement of foreign policy objectives in the 1989 and 1999 constitutions as follows:

1. Promotion and protection of national interest,
2. Promotion of the total liberation of Africa and support of African Unity,
3. Promotion of international cooperation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of racial discrimination in all its manifestations,
4. Respect for international law and treaty obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication, and
5. Promotion of a just world economic order.

Nigeria's role in the liberation of southern Africa from white oppressive minority rule, racism and apartheid, was so decisive that the states conferred the unique title of "front-line state". Nigeria was definitely in the forefront of the fight against racial discrimination and colonization between 1960 and 1979. Those years definitely constituted the golden age of Nigerian's foreign policy triumphs. The years preceding the Nigerian Civil war, from the dawn of independence on October 1, 1960, were years of Innocence. Nigeria was the beautiful bride of the international community wooed by both the East and West, feted by the commonwealth, toasted by the non-aligned nations and respected by the defunct Organization of African Unity. The success of Nigeria in the civil war coupled with the unprecedented reconciliatory approach of the victorious Nigeria government, with its "no victory, no vanquished" policy, sent the country's image soaring to great heights. The early seventies were also years of increasing economic prosperity, mainly through the increasing production of petroleum resources, i.e. oil and gas. With the country's increased moral stature and greater economic power, the country was posed to play a leadership role in the continent (Garba, 1987).

Angola provided the country with the first opportunity to play the role of big brother in the fight against white minority rule. It will be recalled that Nigeria successfully

challenged the pretensions of non-regional big powers (UK and the USA) when General Murtala Muhammed delivered the famous and historic “Africa has come of Age” address to the extra-ordinary summit of the OAU at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 11th January 1976. There, he declared “Africa has come of age. It is no longer in the orbit of any continental power. It should no longer take orders from any country, however powerful”. The speech was followed by Nigeria’s recognition of the MPLA as the Government of Angola, followed by a massive pouring of material and military support for the MPLA. It could be said that the MPLA was established in Government by Cuba and Nigeria. This was the tone of the country’s foreign policy when in August 1979, General Obasanjo’s government nationalized the assets of British Petroleum, when the latter was caught exporting oil to South Africa in breach of UN and OAU sanctions.

Table 1: (i) Peacekeeping, Peace Support Operations and Enforcement Action in West Africa since 1990

<i>Intervening Agency</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Pattern of Intervention</i>	<i>Period</i>
ECOWAS through ECOMOG, ECOMICI, ECOMIL	Liberia,	Peacekeeping/Enforcement	1990 – 1998
	Sierra Leone	Peacekeeping/Enforcement	1997
	Guinea-Bissau	Peacekeeping	1998
	Cote d'Ivoire	Peacekeeping	2003
	Liberia	Peacekeeping	2003
United Nations	Liberia	Peacekeeping (Observation)	Sept. 93 Sept '97
	Sierra Leone	Peacekeeping/PSO	July '99 – Dec. 05
	Cote d'Ivoire	Peacekeeping/PSO	Sep. 03 – Ongoing
British Army	Sierra Leone	Enforcement;	June 2000
		support for SSR	
Mercenaries	Sierra Leone	Specific Assignment	1996

Source: Adeniji, 2000, p. 23

However, inspite of the accolade which the country garnered from her progressive foreign policy which was in tune with the hopes and aspirations of Africans and Blacks in the Diaspora, the enormous funds expended in this direction can better be imagined and a huge cut of the domestic and equally pressing needs of the country. One area in which Nigeria has maintained a laudable consistency is in the area of contribution to international peacekeeping. She had contributed forces to virtually every UNO, AU and ECOWAS peacekeeping endeavours since 1960. In fact, Nigeria had the largest number of casualties among international peace-keepers in 2012, according to the United Nations (UN), which honoured its peace-keepers in the 2013 event at its headquarters in New York. Also, Nigeria is the fifth largest contributor of peacekeepers to the UN with 4,736 serving worldwide.

Table 2: Nigeria's Participation in Global Peace Support Operations Since Independence

No.	Country / Area	Code	Year / Period	Organization	Nature of Forces	Size	Type of PSO
1	Congo	ONUC	1960-1964	UN	Army, Police	One Battalion	Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement
2	Indo -Pakistan	UNIPOM	1963-65	UN	Army	Few Observers	Observation
3	New- Guinea	UNSF	1962-63	UN	Army, Police	Few Observers	Observation
4	Lebanon	UNIFIL	1978-84	UN	Army	One Battalion and staff	peacekeeping
5	Iran - Iraq	UNIMOG	1988-91	UN	Army, Navy, Air Force	Few Observers	Observation
6	Iraq - Kuwait	UNICOM	1991- date	UN	Army, Navy, Air Force	Few Observers	Observation
7	Angola	UNAVEM I	1991	UN	Army, Navy, Air Force, Police	Few Observers	Observation
8	Angola	UNAVEM II	1991-92	UN	Army	Few Observers	Observation
9	Angola	UNAVEM II	1992-95	UN	Army	A Detachment	Observation, Election monitoring
10	Namiba	UNTAG	1989-90	UN	Police	Few Observers	Observation, Election monitoring
11	West Sahara	MINURSO	1992-93	UN	Police	Few Observers	Observation, Referendum
12	Cambodia	UNITAC	1992-93	UN	Police	Few Observers	Observation
13	Somalia	UNOSOM	1992-94	UN	Army, Navy, Air Force	One Battalion	Peacekeeping
14	Yugoslavia	UNPROFOR	1992-95	UN	Army, Navy, Air Force, Police	One Battalion	Peacekeeping
15	Mozambique	UNOMOZ	1992	UN	Police	Few Observers	Observation
16	Rwanda	UNAMIR	1994-date	UN	Army, Navy, Air Force, Police	One Battalion	Peacekeeping
17	Rouzou strip	UNASOG	1994	UN	Army	Few Observers	Observation
18	Israel	UNITSO	1995	UN	Army	Few Observers	Observation
19	Tajikistan		1994-95	UN	Army	Few Observers	Observation
20	Macedona		1995	UN	Army	Few Observers	Observation
21	Slovenia		1996-1998	UN	Army	Few Observers	Observation
22	Kosovo		1999	UN	Army	Few Observers	Observation
23	Ethiopia /Eritrea		2000-date	UN	Army	Few Observers	Observation
24	Dem. Rep of Congo	MONUC	2003- date	UN	Army	Few Observers	Observation
25	Chad		1981-82	OAU	Army, Airforce	One Brigade	Peacekeeping
26	Rwanda		1994	OAU	Army	Observer	Observation
27	Sudan		2004-date	AU	Army, Airforce	One Battalion	Peacekeeping
28	Liberia	ECOMOG	1990-date	ECOWAS	Army, Navy, Airforce	One Division	Peace Building / Election Supervision
29	Sierra Leone	ECOMOG	1998-date	ECOWAS	Army, Navy, Airforce	Several Battalions	Election Supervision / Peace Building
30	Cote D'Ivoire	ECOMOG	2003- date	ECOWAS	Army	Few observers	Observation
31	Tanzania		1964	Bilateral	Army	One battalion	Quelling Mutny
32	Chad	HARMONY	1979	Bilateral	Army	One battalion	Peacekeeping
33	The Gambia		1993	Bilateral	Army, Police	Training Team	Training
34	Sierra Leone		1994-date	Bilateral	Army	Training Team	Training

Source: Nwolise, O. (2004).

The ECOMOG experience

The events which gave rise to the deployment of peacekeepers under the acronym ECOMOG were series of crisis, mostly insurrections, which engulfed some countries in the West African region with dire implications for the stability of the entire sub-region. The causes of such fisticuffs were dissimilar. According to Adeniji (2000), the crisis in Liberia was initiated by a relatively unknown rebel force, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) under Charles Taylor, which took up arms against the government of late President Samuel Doe in December 1989 and with external assistance from several neighbouring African countries inclusive of Cote d'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso, was able to make the country ungovernable. In the course of the war, other armed factions, often formed along ethnic lines, emerged to compound the conflict. After seven years of war and at least a dozen peace agreements, Charles Taylor emerged President of Liberia, following elections in 1997. When Liberia was to be engrossed in another round of civil war, the cause was the failure of the Taylor government to embark on genuine reconciliation and peace building.

In Sierra Leone, another rebel force, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), under Foday Sankoh, challenged successive central governments in the country from 1991. Although this did not result in the proliferation of armed factions, there also emerged other actors, including civil militias and mercenaries known as Executive Outcomes, who fought on the side of the Government of Sierra Leone (Adeniji, 2000). Nigeria's active participation in the conflict in the West African sub-region which began with the first deployment of her troops under the banner of ECOMOG is a subject of intense debate and controversies largely because of the novelty of the operation and the attendant miss-steps and perception rating of Nigeria under the former military ruler, General Babangida goaded the ECOWAS operation to save the embattled Liberian President, Samuel Doe from impending doom, other less charitable Commentators attribute it to the pursuit of personal economic and business interest in Liberia cleverly disguised in altruistic garb (Alade, 2000). The enterprise was fundamentally controversial not on account of its mission, which was to save lives, but mainly on perception and internal wrangling leading to the formation of ECOMOG between the Anglo and Franco-speaking members of ECOWAS.

Babangida dismissed critics by insisting that Nigeria could not look the way when the security situation in the region was a threat to international security. This was consistent with the claim and actions of Nigerians and their leaders that the country was destined to provide leadership for Africa and the entire Black race. He justified his actions on the argument that Nigeria is the only country that every other country was looking up to, to provide the desired leadership.

In pursuing the foreign policy objectives of any nation, the paramount of the leader's perception of the domestic and international situations to which the nation must re-

spend remains strong. The leader is responsible for perceiving and interpreting the reality that confronts his country and responding as may be deemed appropriate. The policies and actions of nations do not respond to the objectives' facts of the situations but to their 'image' of the situation. It is what we think the world is like, not what it is really like that determines our behaviour (Zartman, 1995).

Since the formation and intervention of ECOMOG in 1990, the concept of 'regional peacekeeping operations' has become very attractive in the international circles especially where it is seen as a viable strategy for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Organization of African Unity (OAU)'s Council of Ministers approved the ECOWAS Peace Plan towards the end of February 1991 and its Secretary General appointed Professor Canaan Banana as an Eminent Person for Liberia. The 1993 Cotonou Accord accommodated an expanded ECOMOG force under the auspices of the OAU to be composed of African troops outside the West African region. Tanzania and Uganda sent troops. Assistance from the rest of the world was not forthcoming as the Liberian crisis was reckoned to be an African problem that required an African solution. In the meantime, ECOMOG was having numerous challenges on the field, its neutrality was being questioned and more importantly, it was beginning to have credibility problems. With respect to Sierra Leone, the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity urged ECOWAS to send in the troops for the restoration of constitutional government. With the failure of diplomatic efforts and the escalation, ECOMOG's mandate was upgraded from sanction enforcement to actual military intervention resulting in the ousting of the AFRC/RUF government.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) took cognizance of the ECOWAS peace plan on 22nd January 1991 and on 7th May 1992, the Council commended ECOWAS and the Yamoussoukro Accord of 30th October 1991. On 7th November 1992, the expanded Standing Mediation Committee of ECOWAS invited the United Nations Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative to cooperate with ECOAWS in the implementation of the Peace Plan.

The United Nations Security Council established United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) ON September 22, 1993. Its tasks were to monitor the cease-fire, verify that ECOMOG is fulfilling its mandate to secure the country and carry out disarmament. It also had the mandate to help co-operate humanitarian relief, report on violations of human rights and to report any major violations of international humanitarian law to the United Nations Secretary General. The 1993 Cotonou accord made provision for the UN observer Mission in Liberia to help supervise and monitor the agreement in conjunction with ECOMOG. The United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) represents a particularly interesting new development in the United Nations' "traditional" military observer role. A major component of the UNOMIL mandate was to oversee the activities of the regional Peacekeepers rather than the Liberian parties

themselves. The Cotonou agreement stipulated that the United Nations should deploy military observers to monitor the cease-fire verification and demobilization activities of the new ECOMOG. In the Agreement defining the relationship between the two, it was stipulated that UNOMIL and ECOMOG will have separate command structures and neither shall direct the other in its actions. While some degree of peace enforcement powers were conferred on the regional organization, the United Nations force will be including search, seizure and storage of weapons, demobilization of forces and the guarding of encampments. In the establishment of UNOMIL, there was an attempt by the International community to bring some level of accountability to the ECOMOG forces compelled the United Nations Security Council to specifically address the issue.

The Security Council established the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOSIL) in June 1998 to consider the human rights situation in Sierra Leone. In October 1999, the Security Council established the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). UNAMSIL was to cooperate with the Government and other parties in the implementation of the Lome Peace Agreement and to assist in the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration on 7th February 2000, the Security Council revised the mandate of UNAMSIL the Mission was authorized to take the necessary action to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel, and within its capabilities and area of deployment, to afford protection to civilians under imminent threat of physical violence taking into account the responsible of the government of Sierra Leone. At the time of its intervention in Liberia, there was no direct precedent that ECOWAS could follow the constitution and operation of a regional peacekeeping force. The only models available to the ECOWAS leaders were the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations. The convention of the United Nations in peacekeeping operations is to obtain the consent of the parties involved in the conflict, the Armed Forces of Liberia and the independent Patriotic Front of Liberia that was in control of almost 90% of the territory. This immediately placed the operation on a different footing from the United Nations model. ECOWAS leaders and their jurists went the whole length to provide a juridical platform for the presence of the sub-regional force in Liberia. All the reasons commonly canvassed to justify intervention in classical international law were resorted to as the basis for the intervention of ECOMOG. It was argued that the security of neighbouring States was in serious danger and that the welfare of the entire community was affected. Indeed, there were clashes on the Liberia/Sierra Leone borders, and that the stability of Sierra Leone, which was already shaken, was further jeopardized especially by series of armed expeditions from Liberia. There were also armed clashes along the Liberia/ Cote d'Ivoire border. It cannot be denied that the outflow of refugees from Liberia impacted the welfare of the entire sub-region. For instance, before the intervention of ECOWAS, about 500,000 refugees had moved into Guinea, Ghana, and Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Togo, Nigeria, Gambia and Mali. The All Liberian Conference of 27th August made of various interest groups and com-

munity organizations declared, “today there is no Government in Liberia....”. Relying and acting on the inherent sovereign right of the Liberian people to make laws for their governance, the conference endorsed the ECOWAS Peace Plan and appointed an interim government. The shortfall was that the conference occurred after ECOMOG Forces had landed in Liberia. The fact remains at the time of the Conference was convened, Liberia was in a state of anarchy. The adoption of an ECOWAS Peace Plan, however, served as validation for the entry of ECOMOG Forces into Liberia. There was evidence before the ECOWAS leaders that the attack on Liberia was launched from outside. There was also abundant evidence to show that among the rebels were non-Liberians including soldiers of fortune. The fact that the armed movement came from across the border brought the crisis within the purview of the 1981 ECOWAS Protocol on Mutual Defense. Under the Protocol, the Community was entitled to: (i) declare that the armed threat or aggression against the Community; and (ii) call on its member States to give assistance for the defence of the aggressed member State. There was an on-going war in Liberia and law and order had completely broken down in the country. On 30th May 1990, the United Nations Secretary-General ordered the evacuation of all UN personnel from Liberia. In August 1990, the United States of America intervened in Liberia but only to the extent of evacuating her nationals, and other nationals of Europe and Asia. By that time, “all semblance of civil authority had ceased to”. The ECOWAS leaders had the option of intervening just for the sake of their nationals trapped in the Liberia WA, but they chose to take a more selfless approach more so that it had become the International Community that all semblance of authority had ceased to exist.

Proponents of ECOMOG intervention also argued that there was a civil war going on, and that posed a threat to Liberia. The Civil War was prosecuted in a manner which constituted a flagrant disregard for the obligations of Liberia under the Geneva Conventions and Protocols. All principles of war were violated and the civilian population became the major target for the warring parties. Tens of thousands of innocent civilians were massacred; thousands of foreign nations trapped in the country and hundreds of thousands became refugees. While the International Community choose to initially ignore the Liberian conflict, its neighbours in the sub-region, particularly Nigeria, could not maintain a posture of indifference to the situation in Liberia. Thus, the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS were used by the country to act in a novel but every bold manner to save lives and properties.

ECOWAS leaders, however, embraced the logic that regional organizations had to share this responsibility with the Security Council. That is, their responsibility was to ensure that peace and stability are maintained within the region and in the African Continent as a whole. The inhuman treatment resulting from the tragic situation in Liberia was not only a threat to the well-being of the Community but also posed a threat to international peace and security. The intervention of ECOWAS in Liberia was indeed a response to a dire humanitarian problem.

Financial Cost for Nigeria

The real cost of ECOMOG operations is a military secret. According to a report, Nigerian troops at one time accounted for almost two third of ECOMOG force in Liberia. Apart from picking the bills of the operation before the intervention of the UN and the OAU, Nigeria had to offer assistance to other West African countries to enable them deploy their troops (Afaha, 2015). According to a study, the support that has come to the peacekeeping operations from non-African countries, especially countries in the European Union and the United States has been largely logistical but also financial in nature. In Liberia, ECOMOG had considerable support from EU countries and the United States. In Sierra Leone, the UK, apart from committing troops in 2000, also provided logistical and financial support to ECOMOG. In Cote d'Ivoire, Britain has supported the peace efforts through assistance to Ghana, while the French contributions were conveyed through Niger, Senegal and Togo. The United States made its contribution through strategic transportation and in funding 2/3 of the food requirement for the Cote d'Ivoire operation. The financial cost for ECOMOG operation in Cote d'Ivoire, (about 15 million Euros) was obtained through a set of financial assistance agreements that included contributions from France, United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain. However, Nigeria remains the largest contributor to peacekeeping operations in West Africa. The ECOWAS Security Council left the logistics problems almost entirely to Nigeria as all other countries were obviously incapacitated by SAP induced economic stress of the 1990s. All in all, Nigeria is said to have spent in excess of 12bn USD on peace operation since the first ECOMOG operation in Liberia in 1990. In 2001, Olusegun Obasanjo said Nigeria had spent \$13bn on peacekeeping operations over 12 years. Hundreds of Nigerian soldiers were thought to have been killed in operations in Liberia and more than 800 soldiers have been killed and at least 1000 wounded in Sierra Leone, which exposed the country to her "biggest financial burden". Indeed, when the UN offered to expand the ECOMOG troops to include soldiers from other African countries, Nigeria had to appeal for a refund of some of its costs in Liberia by the UN.

Family Disconnect

There was the problem of family disconnect as those that were deployed to ECOMOG operations in Liberia to Sierra Leone did not return home for over two years. The difficulty of communication made many Nigerian soldiers complain of losing touch with their families. Thousands of Liberian men and women have driven away from their homes as the rebellion progressed and those left at home saw the ECOMOG soldiers as messiahs who had come to save them only to be exploited sexually. The Director General of the Directorate of Technical Cooperation in Africa, ministry of foreign affairs, Dr. Sule Yakubu Bassi disclosed this at an interactive session with the House of

Representatives Committee on Diaspora admitted that Nigerian soldiers were caught in relationships that produced many children. According to him, there are 250,000 Nigerian children of ECOMOG soldiers. The children were born by Nigerian soldiers who went to Liberia during the war. There is also the cases of women and children coming to look for husbands and fathers at the Nigerian Embassy. This has posed a big challenge to the Nigerian Embassy officials. While enumerating some of the challenges faced by Nigerian Embassies and Missions, Bassi disclosed that the Nigerian Embassy in Liberia was constantly flooded by children and their mothers in search of their fathers. This was aside sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, which have been identified as the second largest killer of Nigerian soldiers especially during peacekeeping operations outside Nigeria. According to UNAIDS Report on Nigeria, 11 % of Nigerian ECOMOC soldiers were HIV infected (Afaha, 2015). Colonel Adewale Adeniyi Taiwo, commanding officer of 245 Battalion, who disclosed this during the workshop for officers and senior non-commissioned officers of 82 Division, said members of the Nigerian Armed Forces, especially the soldiers, had been reckless when it came to sexual behaviour during foreign assignments, noting that this accounted for the reason many suffered from related diseases and infections. Taiwo, who spoke as a guest lecturer on the topic *Nigeria in Peace Support Operations: An Appraisal*, during the 82 Division officers and senior non-commissioned officers' study period hosted by the 13 Brigade, Nigerian Army, at the Eburutu Barracks in Calabar, stressed that Nigerian soldiers should curtail this habit, hinting that "during the ECOMOG operation in Sierra Leone, HIV/AIDS became the second largest killer of deployed Nigerian troops next to gunshot wounds". He attributed this to the long period of stay of Nigerian units in various missions abroad, saying this usually led to reckless sexual behaviour on the part of the troops. He added that "the longer units are deployed on a mission, the more prone they are to HIV/AIDS and other infections".

Corruption

Revelation on corruption by Nigerian military top brass came to light during the popular National Truth and Reconciliation Commission of 2000/2001, during which very senior military officers who have held various strategic and sensitive commanding positions accused each other of corruption during ECOMOG operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Some of the startling revelations was that Nigerian soldiers who served under the then West African Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), in Liberia and Sierra Leone were actually supposed to be paid 45 US dollars a day instead of the 5 US dollars they received, making a total sum of 1350 US dollars per month and not 150 US dollars as they were paid. This short payment affected over twenty thousand soldiers over a period of ten years from August 1990-april 2000. It was during the commission's sitting that Nigerians were made to understand that even the combat helmets supplied to the

soldiers were actually motorcycle crash helmets lacking in the quality to serve as a protection against rifle fires and bomb fragments. According to Human Rights Watch report of 1999, the soldiers were supposed to be paid a special monthly allowance of \$150 per month allowance in addition to their wages while they were on active duty in ECOMOG, but were often denied their wages to up to three months in most cases.

Mutiny / Protests

The treatment of the Nigerian contingents was not without protestations by the returning peacekeepers. For instance, a contingent of soldiers who returned from a peacekeeping assignment in Liberia made their feelings known to the Nigerian public in a peaceful way in Akure, Ondo State. They complained of illegal diversion of their operational allowances running into Thousands of US dollars by some of their officers. The military authorities responded by instituting a court martial which found the culprit officers guilty of stealing money belonging to junior soldiers, and the protesting soldiers guilty of voicing out against the stealing of their rightful earnings. In a ridiculous verdict, the Brigadier General Ishaya Bauka headed court martial only cautioned the thieving officers with the loss of rank, while the soldiers, the actual victims of the theft were sentenced to life imprisonment (before international outcry forced the Army to commute it to seven years imprisonment). By the time ECOMOG operations came to an end in the early part of 2000, hundreds of soldiers bearing all sorts of physical deformities and injuries which included losing an eye, limb or leg and sundry bullet wounds were still lying in several military hospitals all over the country, with some of them having been in bed for over eight years. It was until the advent of democratic governance by 1999, that lucky ones amongst them were batched for further treatment (mostly surgery) abroad.

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France: The French Republican Model of Integration. A Potential Driver for Extremism

Georgiana BIGEA

Abstract. *Perhaps only in the time of the crusades the Western rhetoric has been more concerned with the people of Muslim origin. With the Middle East turned into a warring zone by various factions, and the Western world scared of the menace Islamic extremists present, the subject discussed in our paper is very timely. Thousands of people have fled to fight alongside extremist organizations such as ISIS, European far-right parties are on the rise and refugees are washing off the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. But no Western country is under greater distress than France with its nation troubled by terrorist attacks and by the latest outburst of protests. Analyzing the legal framework within which the French Model of integrating immigrants works, we attempted to assess its effectiveness and lack thereof, in order to try and explain why France is only preceded by Russia when it comes to the number of Westerners joining the rows of ISIL. Our findings include clear evidence about the low quality of life that people of immigrant descent have, the lack of possibilities to overcome their condition, the lack of sustainability that the model exhibits and the escalating effect that the current State of Emergency has on it all. And since all of these constitute drivers for extremism, we consider France to be in urgent need of policy developments that would slow down and even stop the radicalizing trends that we believe are in motion.*

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Introduction

France is a country that is home to over six million Muslims which account for almost 10% of the population. Unlike the *multi-culturalist* approach that countries like the

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United States have on immigration, France has a specific *Republican Model* that aims to *dissolve* the immigrant population within the French nation. The Model relies on three important pillars, the first being the Principle of secularity, which entails that all cultural and religious practices or beliefs are allowed and respected as long as they are practiced in private. The French State does not take into account, nor even ask to know the ethnic, cultural or religious characteristics or preferences of its citizens. The second principle is that individual rights prime over the collective rights. That is to say that no separate group of people, such as minorities or ethnic communities are favored, discriminated against or even recognized by the French Republic. The State only sees French citizens and non-citizens, and that is the end of its interests. Thirdly, the model promotes the separation of the public sphere from the private sphere, and emphasizes on the social inclusion role of the schools. Through this Model, the Republic aims to accomplish a high homogeneity of the population, which is not to be segregated between various groups.

The problem regarding France's Integration Model has been studied by Bertossi (2011), Blau (2006), Borowiec (2004), Gatto, Dambrun, Kerbrat and Oliveira (2009), Hem-Reun (nd.), Maillard, (2010), Ramadan, (1998), Alba and Foner (2015), Rudiger and Spencer (2003), Wesby (2015), Vladescu (2006), Viorst (1996), Algan, Bisin, Manning, and Verdier (2013), among others. However, our paper brings two unique elements, the first being that we take into account the escalating effects of the prolonging of the State of Emergency from November, 2015 until July, 2016 and the second, that we rely on empirical data obtained from policy reports, official French statistics and the actual body of laws rather than solely on academic sources. In addition, our paper emphasizes on the probable connection that exists between the failures of the Republican Model of Integration, the rise of Le Front National and the thickening of the rows of jihadist fighters by French nationals.

The author relies on the assimilation theory (Algan *et al.*, 2013) and the following methods have been used:

1. analysis of the legal framework regarding immigration in France;
2. analysis of international European Union reports regarding immigrant integration in France and other member states;
3. analysis of statistics regarding the socio-economic status of people of immigrant (Maghrebian) origin;
4. analysis of terrorism drivers as described by the Global Terrorism Index.

We also rely on the support of the academic community in defining some of the key-terms such as *national model*, *citizenship* and *integration* as recommended by scholars such as Christophe Bertossi, T.H. Marshall and Didier Lapeyronnie, but rather than stopping at a purely theoretical discussion, we link together documented facts, establishing causalities and possible implications of their continued existence.

The hypothesis of this paper is that The French Republican Model of Integration is inherently discriminatory. The authors claims that the French Republican Model of integration is inherently discriminatory and that its shortcomings result in, and constitute a driver for extremism through the rise of Le Front National and the radicalization of French fighters joining ISIS. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the efficiency of the Republican Model of Integration in integrating people of immigrant descent, along with lining out a possible connection between the internal deficiencies the Model and the increase in the number of French youngsters joining jihadist organizations.

With this aim, in the first section, we will start by mapping a brief historical introduction onto France's immigration waves and policies over the past century. Then, we will analyze the actually body of law that represents the framework within which the French immigration policy presently works, introducing the existing debate and criticism around it. In the second chapter, we will focus on the socio-economic implications of the Model as it is now. From its financial sustainability, to its discriminatory effects, the connection with the violent outbursts and finally, placing France within the European context by comparing its achievements in the matters of equality, unemployment and anti-discriminatory policies with the European Union average.

The third section will focus on the actual effects that the French policy has on the immigrant population and on the persons of immigrant descent. Throughout the paper, we will attempt to use the terminology as clearly as possible, but because the French legislation does not allow for researchers to inquire about a respondent's ethnicity, some sources use the term *non-EU-born*, *people of immigrant descent*, *immigrants*, *Muslims*, *people of North African origin* etc., attempting to accurately showcase the situation, while also involuntarily referring to their status. Thus, *non-EU-born* and *immigrants* would refer to newcomers who have yet to receive French citizenship and *people of immigrant descent* would encompass those who have been in France for one or more generations already. Finally, the fourth section will briefly present those who most clearly have something to gain from the shortcomings of the French Model, thus we will refer to the rise of Le Front National and to Jihadist organizations recruiting European fighters.

In the end, we will connect all the presented facts in a comprehensive chapter which will link all the elements, ramifications and implications of the presented facts, along with a series of concluding remarks and recommendations.

I. The French Republican Model of Integration

1. Historical Background

The modern law of citizenship in France began with the Republic, in 1790-1791 when the French citizenship was defined in the Constitution. Until 1795, two ways of obtaining French nationality were stated: the first was through "honorary citizenship" and the second was through automatic neutralization. In 1803, the definition of nationality was

included in the French Civil Code, based on *jus sanguinis*, as opposed to what Napoleon favored: *jus soli* as during the period 1803-1889 *jus soli* was the basis of French nationality. Starting from 1889 until 1940, France had a relatively flexible policy in order to ensure the naturalization of the immigrant workforce, and to counterbalance the aging of a population whose birth rate was too weak to match the mortality rate, which was extremely high. In addition, the Republic also required strong workers to repair the destruction produced during the First World War (Maillard, 2010).

The years 1940-1943 were characterized by a racist policy of citizenship, instituted by the Vichy regime through a proposed new Code of French Nationality which was ultimately cancelled but which proposed to prevent “the undesirable” from becoming French nationals and to denaturalize those “Jews” who already had French nationality. However, it was not easy to revoke the policy of the Vichy regime even after the Second World War; i.e. ethnic-based separation of naturalization quota was not abolished until the New Nationality Code and the liberal naturalization policy between 1953 and 1973.

The second ethnic crisis of the French Republic was entangled with the independence of Algeria. France implemented laws during 1974 and 1984 to ensure the legal rights of North African nationals in France, to support the integration of the second generation and to handle the issues brought up by the nationality matter (Maillard, 2010). In 1945, the French government issued a decree enlisting the basic principles of the immigration policy, aimed at encouraging and aiding the migration from Europe to France. Given that the Algerians fought in the two world wars alongside France, they were given the right to pass freely between France and their home country. Also, they benefited from “automatic assimilation”, meaning that those who had received residence in France automatically became citizens of the French Republic.

By the mid-1950s, France was again in need of workforce, thus in 1954 when France sent troops on the ground in the Algerian Civil War, they also offered political asylum to those Algerians who fought alongside the French troops once Algeria had been declared independent. As a consequence, the largest immigration wave in the French history lasted from around 1956 to 1973, when the country enacted “zero immigration” laws because of its suffering economy, similar to the other European countries’ policies. Nevertheless, its Muslim immigrant population continued to grow due to their high birth rates, to the family reunion exception and to illegal immigrants.

The French Immigration Act promulgated in 1998, stated that “children of foreign nationals would be given French citizenship when they reach adulthood” which has been the subject of extensive debate. The fact that children of foreigners, who were born in France and often spoke only French, were forced to wait until “adulthood” (18 years of age) to *become* French was the subject of heated debates. As France was one of the first nations to develop such a strong sentimental attachment to everything they deemed

“French”, the traditional sense of French nationality plays an important role in the pressure that is placed on immigrants by the French policy.

On one side, the immigrants have to prove their “Frenchness” in order to become naturalized, but on the other hand even when they do, they are never fully recognized as such. As researchers have found, especially older and more traditional French people still feel that the presence of immigrants threatens the existence of the native people. They often perceive immigration as being the root cause of many of the problems France is facing, including a staggering economy and an increase in violent crimes.

France and the Muslim world had always had close cultural and political relations throughout history, especially during the Ottoman Empire. Even though those relations intensified during the colonization of Algeria and parts of Africa in the 1830s, France was not prepared to manage the presence of four million Muslim immigrants on its territory (Maillard, 2010). Thus, because the presence of the Muslim population in the metropolitan area of the 1960s was small, practically no Muslim place of worship had been constructed since the church and the state separated in 1905.

The public’s memory was deeply marked by the colonization and decolonization of Algeria by a mixture of feelings, as the Algerian use of terrorism and the French use of torture had made the Algerian independence war into a gruesome memory. “And then France cultivated for a long time the amnesia over the war in Algeria; she embraced, plowed, subjugated, exploited, fought in Algeria and then abandoned it permanently” (Maillard, 2010, p. 7).

Meanwhile, as the French government was aware of the difficult conditions in which the Algerian workers had to live in France, it initiated projects to build them homes. Yet, the number of supporters of the Algerian independence cause continued to grow. The assimilation policy was soon replaced by a policy of “control” upon the Algerian immigration in 1957-1958. When Maurice Bouges Maunory said in 1958, “population of Algerian origin would have unwavering membership in the national [French] community” the feeling of “otherness” became clear. He was referring to the people who were supposed to “melt” into the French population. The Muslim community became a foreign body within the nation, composed of a different nature.

In the 1970s, when the French economy started to collapse, many immigrants were left unemployed and were depending on the State for their survival. At that time, the French government built large housing projects, named HLM – in order to accommodate them. Over time, the living conditions in these “projects” deteriorated as there wasn’t enough funding to maintain them. As those workers made use of the family reunification law, the number of people raised but often the living space remained the same. This led to overpopulation which added to unemployment, leading to the outskirts of the major cities being crowded with unemployed, discontent minorities.

The French government prioritized the single Algerian workers and basically ignored the problem of family housing, even if the tensions in Algeria in the 1950s increased migrations of Algerian families to France, from 3.000 people in 1953 to 20.000 in 1960 (Maillard, 2010). Thus, these families could not receive low-income housing (HLM) from the state, as the demand was high and they did not meet the criteria to be granted one. So the banks issued special loans to build low-rent housing that these families could afford. Meanwhile, the French government intended to use the improvement of conditions for Algerian immigrants in France as a bargaining chip in negotiations with F.L.N. and to secure the status of Europeans living in Algeria. In addition, the Algerian immigrants had become indispensable to the French economy in certain sectors such as public work, steel and textiles. On the basis of free movement of migrants between France and Algeria, the Europeans had their civil rights, religion, language and property respected in Algeria while the Algerians enjoyed the same rights as the French natives, apart from the political rights. The principle of free movement was then extended to all African countries through “special agreements” (Maillard, 2010).

While all these positive measures were taken during the “Glorious Thirty Years”, the early 1970s brought the French economy into recession. This affected negatively the social benefits of immigrants and provoked a debate regarding the French immigration policy. The workforce immigration stopped and the migration flows declined. Although France initiated a policy to assist the immigrants’ return, the goal was not reached. During the first decade of the 20th century, the main loophole for immigration was the “family reunion”, which allowed the workers’ family to migrate to France to reunite with him.

Nevertheless, with the economic crisis in the mid-1970s, the legal immigration was stopped. There were strong political reactions and the repulsion between the natives and the immigrants came out in the open.

Many of those people living in the “banlieues” feel that the State should be responsible for ensuring them a decent standard of living. While the European and Asian immigrants are the best integrated, Arab-Muslim and especially Maghrebians are the worst, i.e. they have the highest unemployment rates. This leads to the creation of a vicious circle, in which Maghrebian immigrants resort to crimes because they are unemployed and are unemployed because employers are convinced that they will commit crimes. In addition, there is also the matter of young Muslim whom “the state pushes ... toward Koranic schools—thus separating them and their families from public schools and the mainstream. The result could be insularity and ultimately, perhaps, radicalism” (Ramadan, 1998).

2. Legal Framework

A national model of integration and citizenship, as gathered by Bertossi (2011) is commonly defined as a *public philosophy, a policy paradigm, an institutional and discursive*

opportunity structure or a national cultural idiom. Within the perspective of how social reality is structured by preexisting ideas, France is perceived as an assimilationist country (unlike a multiculturalist country such as Britain and the Netherlands) whose national identity is founded on a universalistic public philosophy. But as France is a republican country, the republican principle encompasses all: separation between the public and the private spheres (through a color blind approach to ethnicity and race) and between the state and the church (through the secularism philosophy). All of this is underpinned under the concept of citizenship and immigrant inclusion through nationality (Bertossi, 2011).

The French Republican Model of Integration is based on the following principles:

- a. Separation of the public sphere from the private sphere;
- b. Individual rights prime over the collective rights;
- c. Secularism: the cultural differences are respected as long as that they are practiced in private. This model is focused on intentionally disregarding the ethnic, cultural or religious traits of its citizens. It was elaborated by Schnapper Dominique (among others) and it is inspired by the theory claiming the integrative function of the society for its members (Hem-Reun, nd.).

Its basis lies within the republican principles:

- a. a national body seen as homogenous;
- b. participation to public life essentially founded on vote and representation, and
- c. social inclusion through the school, army, workplace, family etc.; along with
- d. the centralized State (uniform organization of the public power).

However, its profound origin within the “French” identity may be at peril with the diversification of the individual sense of belonging. People today hold multiple identities (within their families, religions, sexual orientations, workplaces etc.), which eventually leads to disaffiliation especially for those who are not integrated in vital spheres such as a work field. Even putting the individual inequalities aside, after the 2008 economic crisis there has been an increase in inequalities between different regions of France. Thus, even if the GINI inequality coefficient of France is 0.3% (where 0 is perfect equality), 88% of the population thinks that inequalities are picking at the French society (General Commissariat of Strategy and Prosperity, 2013).

This “Social model” was created during the post Second World War years, based on the notion that all French citizens should “live with dignity”, along with the economic and social reform program, adopted by the National Council of the Resistance *Les Jours Heureux*. The 1946 Constitution stipulates that “The Nation shall provide the individual and the family with the conditions necessary to their development”, in addition to “collective national insurance funded by contributions based on employment”, “means-tested assistance benefits, funded by taxes and duties, and managed by the State and

regional authorities”, “free and universal public services [education and health] funded and organized by the State”. While from 1984 on, the French government gave stable residence cards to all citizens who had lived in France for at least 10 years, since 2003 this precondition was replaced by the necessity of “integration”. That is to say, immigrants have to “prove” their “Frenchness”. This regulation also applies to renewals of residency. Another modification is the conditions regarding the family reunions. While before, children rejoining their families were given ten years long residency, after 2003 they only receive it for one year, to be revised afterwards on the “precondition of integration” (Sinemensuel, 2013).

At this point, the law regulating the multiannual stay for foreigners after 1 year in France stipulates that the acquiring of the Contract of Integration (CAI) is mandatory (law nr. 2006-911/24.07.2006) and also that the respecting of the Contract will be taken into account when prolonging the residence permit. Then, the law 2011-672/16.07.2011 specifies what the CAI will contain. According to art. L.311-9 from CESEDA, the CAI “is destined for newly arrived foreigners” and it comprises three elements:

- a. the civic formation – presentation of the French Republic values and the explaining of the role of the institutions;
- b. linguistic formation, proven by “title of diploma recognized by the State” and
- c. a summary of professional competences. The only foreigners who do not need a CAI are: people who have completed at least 3 years in a French secondary school abroad; children born in France; foreign workers deployed in France; foreigners who have a work contract for at least 1 year.

Adult immigrants with no knowledge of the French language or culture are required to attend a free language course of maximum two months (180 hours) and/or a half day civic orientation course before coming to the country.

However, the CAI has been criticized for being too ambiguous, as the administration is not obliged to renew the CAI on the sole reason that it has been respected, which means that it cannot refuse its renewal based solely on its breaching. Also, 70% of surveyed foreigners stated that at the end of the linguistic formation, the attained level is not sufficient (Senat, 2016).

Until April 2003, only those benefiting from reunification with their families in France, families of refugees and foreign members of French families were eligible for a CAI. The law has been adjusted to all the CAI to be granted to all refugees, immigrants who have the right to work and others. Initially, the law had been specifically aimed at attracting new talent in France, but also to limit the family reunion policy. The waiting period was extended from one to two years and the partner’s acquisition of French citizenship would be more difficult. In addition, before being granted residence, the law requires three years minimum of cohabitation and adherence to the CAI. Subsequently, children

born in France only become citizens at the age of 18 years old, and only if they can prove constant residence in France, namely that they had been living in France continuously for at least five consecutive years since the age of 11 (Blau, 2006).

Summary

Over the past centuries, France oscillated between liberal immigration policies when they needed the workforce (1889-1940, 1945, 1953-1973), restrictive policies in times of economic recession (1957-1958, “zero immigration” in 1973) and even a racist policy (1940-1943). Since the end of the Second World War, its policy has been known as the *Republican Model of Integration*, a social model based on secularism and the homogeneity of the national body. Starting from 2003, the naturalization of immigrants is done based on a Contract of Integration, where candidates are required to prove their “Frenchness”: professional competences, knowledge of the language and of the Republican values.

II. Socio-economic implications of the French Model

1. The Model's sustainability

While regular people suffer because of the Model of Integration's shortcomings, the system itself is under a great pressure, especially from the point of view of the financial sustainability. Studies show that underemployment and poor growth reduce the social contribution in revenue. The four branches of the basic compulsory social security system are expected to be €9.3 billion in deficit by 2017, according to the assumptions on which the 2013 French Social Security Financing Act is based.

The Model's founding principle of labor market participation, is in decay – France's unemployment rate of +7% since the 1980s is not decreasing; duality between permanent contracts and fixed-term contracts (increased proportion since 2000, reaching 82% in 2013) and the weighting of temporary jobs has increased from 6% in 1982 to 15,1% in 2012 and the rate of transition to sustainable employment is at 10,6% in 2010, as opposed to the EU average of 25,9% (General Commissariat of Strategy and Prosperity, 2013).

The problem with this state of affairs is that because social rights in France are being linked to the employment status, and with the fragmentation of working patterns, there is an issue of the appropriateness of the terms by which employment maintains a central role in the model. However, even with this apparently ‘reckless spending’ that the State is thought to be doing, a million people in employment still live below the poverty line (half of the average income) – with the benefits and the spouse's income included – and the number has increased by 83.000 between 2003 and 2010. This adds to the existing criticism that the Model is focused more on curative, rather than preventive measures (General Commissariat of Strategy and Prosperity, 2013).

2. Discriminatory implications

In 2015, MIPLEX France was ranked the 77th country out of 100 in regards to its level of “anti-discrimination”. A first aspect that proves that there is a trend of discrimination against the people of immigrant descent is the proposal to amend the constitution to allow declaring a State of Emergency without needing the Parliament’s approval. President Hollande proposed a bill of stripping double-citizens of the French citizenship if convicted of terrorism-related crimes. French Justice Ministry Christiane Taubira resigned in response to the proposal, deeming it of “absolute pathetic inefficiency” and warning that it would divide the French nation into two categories with the “pure” French being superior to those of mixed backgrounds (Chrisafis, 2016). Similarly, the French President also proposed and then had to withdraw his proposal of a Constitution amendment allowing the State of Emergency to be more easily instated, without the permission of parliament (Willsher, 2016). Also, the proposal encompassed a law allowing the punitive forfeiture of the French citizenship from dual-citizenship residents.

The proposal encompassed two provisions: the first was constitutionalizing the state of emergency which was only regulated by ordinary legislation. In this way, the triggering conditions of the state of emergency could not be easily modified. The initial text of the draft Constitutional Law referred to a law, regulating administrative measures that authorities can take during the state of emergency. The second article of the original text allowed for the forfeiture of nationality of the French nationals with double citizenship. This was stated to intend only to punish the perpetrators of the most serious crimes. Following the constitutional revision, ordinary legislation was intended to determine the terms of application of these provisions, including the list of crimes that could lead, if convicted, to the forfeiture of nationality (Vie-publique, 2016).

President Francois Hollande had declared a state of emergency on November 14, 2015 following a terrorist attack in Paris that led to the death or injure of 130 people. The legal framework is the emergency law created in 1955, at the time of France’s war in Algeria. On November 20, 2015, the Parliament approved the extension of the State of Emergency for another three months until February 26, 2016. Then it was prolonged twice more, first until May, 26 and then until July 26, 2016. The law authorizes the prefect of every French department to order warrantless searches at any time and place “when there are serious reasons to believe that the place is frequented by a person whose behavior constitutes a threat to public order and security” and to be given access to copy digital data saved on electronic devices at the place of the search. But in an expansion of the 1955 law, the State of Emergency empowers the interior minister to place under house arrest “against whom there are serious reasons to believe his or her behavior constitutes a threat to public order and security”. The authorities can place them under house arrest for a maximum of 12 hours a day, but also restrict their movement outside their house and require them to check in at a police station up to three times a day.

The consecutive prolonging of the State of Emergency leads to what Amnesty International has deemed as “abuses”. Firstly, on the side of the police, who was already accused of racial profiling. In fact, in 2012 when President Hollande was elected he vowed to “fight racial profiling by police” and promised a new mechanism to protect the equal rights of French citizens. He did not appear to follow through, but in June, 2015 a French appeals court condemned the French executive of police racial profiling during identity checks. The complaint had been initially dismissed in a 2013 trial, but the final ruling was in favor of the plaintiff. Additionally, a study done by sociologists in 2009 proved that a Black or Arab person had a 6, 2% and a 7, 7% greater chance respectively of being stopped by the police than a white person (Gatto *et al.*, 2009).

According to a government official report, between November 14, 2015 and February 25, 2016 in the context of the State of Emergency, the police had completed 3427 raids, which led to the uncovering of 588 weapons and to the discovery of 528 crimes. From a total of just 3023 searches, 593 resulted in legal action, out of which 222 for crimes against the gun legislation, 206 for crimes related to drugs and 165 for other crimes. The same document asked for the renewal of 103 of the house arrests, and the additional arrest of two people. Out of the 103, 33 had been rejected for insufficient reasons, and 72 had been renewed as on February 26, 2016. As two of those had been suspended by a judge and one of them was withdrawn, there were 69 house arrests in place on May 4, 2016 when the document was presented which showed significant decline from the 198 people who were in that situation on February 26, 2016.

At the beginning of the State of Emergency, when the Human Rights Watch interviewed 18 people who claimed that they have been the target of abusive searches or placed under house arrests, the results were concerning to say the least. On one side, those who were subjected to the police treatment said that they had appeared into their homes, restaurants or mosques, destroying their belongings, terrifying their children and restricted people’s movement which led to important income losses and physical as well as mental trauma. Even if they are found innocent, these operations leave them with considerable loss, tarnished reputations and regarded as second-class citizens.

According to the Humans Rights Watch (HRW), in one of the house raids, the police broke four of a disabled man’s teeth until they realized he was not in fact the man they were searching for. In another case, a single mother’s children were placed into foster care, following a police investigation. Many of those interviewed are said to be shunned by their neighbors as a consequence of the police raids. Although the French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve declared that ‘emergency powers’, allowing the police to search homes and restrain people into house arrest without requiring judicial approval “do not signify abandonment of the rule of law” and although on November 25, 2015 he issued a directive to local authorities warning against abuses, the situation remains of real concern (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

At the time of the article, February 3, 2016 the French human rights ombudsperson had already received around 40 complaints about the emergency measures, relating to unjustified searches, insufficient evidence and raids on the wrong addresses. Being interviewed by the HRW, he said that while the measures are not targeting specific groups, “in reality these measures are aimed at a specific movement and at very observant Muslims”. The Collective Against Islamophobia in France, an organization that was assisting HRW in finding the people targeted by the raids, said that they had documented 180 cases of abusive house arrests and raids, by February, 2016.

As it has also been noticed by scholars, that the vast majority of French terrorist suspects are arrested and detained under “association with wrongdoers”, which provides a wide net to be cast, allowing an extensive pre-trial detention and under which anything could be included, from speech, to merely knowing the other persons. Moreover, the very definition of terrorism is wide enough so that judicial actors could easily abuse the punitive forfeiture of citizenship, leaving people country-less and highly vulnerable.

Another interesting fact is that the majority of those targeted by the measures of the State of Emergency were Muslims and people of North African descent. All the measures that HRW had managed to document targeted Muslim people and establishments. On January 12, 2016 the Council of Europe commissioner for human rights, Nils Muižnieks had also raised concerns about the possibility of ethnic profiling. However, on January 19, five UN special rapporteurs, including those on the protection and promotion of human rights while countering terrorism urged the government not to extend the State of Emergency beyond February 26 (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, nd.). Also, the UN General Assembly has warned that security measures that endanger human rights and rule of law are drivers of terrorism in themselves: “In a context of growing Islamophobia, the French government should urgently reach out to Muslims and give them assurances that they are not under suspicion because of their religion or ethnicity” (United Nations, nd.).

3. Connection with violent behavior

France has known a period of violent outbursts and riots especially in its capital, Paris and across its suburbs starting from the 2005 riots, to the more recent terrorist attacks and protests. A prominent factor behind them is the discrepancy between the low-income suburban residents and the rest of the French society. In Paris especially, there is a notable segregation between the upper- and middle- class inhabitants living in the west, while most of the low-income population resides in the northeast part of the capital. Thus, the structure physically alienates low-income Parisians, most of who live in housing projects, built as stated above in the postwar period to accommodate the incoming working-class. Although they were originally intended to be open spaces that encouraged open interaction facilitating the commute to and from the nearby

factories, now the buildings turned into ghetto structures, cradling frustrations and perpetual marginalization.

In the beginning, the residents were both working-class French and immigrant people. There were plenty of jobs, education was free and there was a feeling of hope for the upcoming generations. But when a government-sponsored home-buying program gave the opportunity for many native French nationals to move away, their immigrant correspondents could not afford to do the same. The factories have closed since then, leaving their children without opportunities of work, education or respectable conditions that were available for their French co-nationals.

A lack of opportunities in the early 1980s, which led to a rise in delinquency among the young population, triggered a strong police presence which increased the general sentiment of suspicion between immigrants and native French. After the 1983 riots, the then-President Francois Mitterrand declared a renovation of the low-income areas: renovating the walls, repairing the elevators, establishing programs for the youth in the area and so on. But when Jacques Chirac became president, the program was quickly cancelled. Instead, his then-interior minister, Nicolas Sarkozy increased the police presence around the housing projects (Wesby, 2015). In the years afterwards, from this combination of increased police confrontations, rise of unemployment and awful economic conditions following the 2008 financial crisis, demonstrations and violence resulted. With no educational or occupational opportunities, residents turn to drugs and crime to release frustrations and make ends meet. Others have turned to religion.

But France is a highly secular country. In some places, it is illegal to display one's faith, a habit that contradicts Islamic customs. France's 1905 separation of church and state became the basis for a 2004 ban on religious symbols in schools, the 2010 ban on publicly wearing the *niqab* and the establishment of a 2013 program enforcing the prohibition of religion in school. These measures although intended to unite the French nationals by emphasizing on its commonalities, have stigmatized even further the Muslim population. And even with these violent outbursts, it would be possible to bridge the differences. However, the government's response accounts for much of its escalation. In the 2005 riots for example, when two French youths died electrocuted as they fled the police in a Parisian suburb sparking three weeks of riots in 274 towns within the Paris region and beyond, the French government response was hasty.

The then-Interior Minister N. Sarkozy declared a "zero tolerance" policy against urban violence, and a year later when civil unrest lit up again in the same areas, he returned to his "law and order" commands. But ever since, the government's discourse was amplified by a range of opinions trying to link the riots with illegal immigration, Muslim separatism and polygamous practices. While in fact, at the time, most of those rioting had been second generation immigrant youths. The underlying issue behind these vio-

lent outbursts is clearly more complex and it is highly linked to the social and economic exclusion, the prominent racial discrimination and to the capacity of the French State to respond to the challenges it faces while maintaining its official commitment to integrating all individuals regardless of their skin color or faith.

Shortly after the State of Emergency was ended in January 2006, a new set of protests began this time made up largely of white young people. The manifestations were in response to a law, the First Employment Contract that they believed compromised job security and the rights of French workers. The unrest escalated and comprised violent rioting, strikes and occupations of French universities. As a result, the government revoked its employment law (Sahlins, 2006). But in the previous year, there had been no parliamentary commission called to understand the riots, no major policies had been proposed to answer the signaled social problems and unlike in 2006, no major action had been taken to address the grievances of the young people of immigrant decent. This serves only to further inflate the issue, because through its inaction, the government shows its distance from the problems of these people. And perhaps at a societal subconscious level, although the claim is that the Republic does not see color, the truth is that it does not see these people at all.

4. France in the European context

According to the 2015 Migrant Integration Policy Index, within the EU, nearly 20 million residents (4%) are non-EU, and the number of newcomers was relatively steady between 2008 and 2013.

Since the 2008 crisis, non-EU citizens' employment rates aged 20-64 dropped 6 points on average in the EU, to 56,5% in 2014, and their risk of poverty or social exclusion +4% to 49%, twice the level for EU citizens.

Policy Developments

Since 2012 newcomers are expected to benefit from equal housing rights, improved targeting in the education support for their children, the right to family reunion (extended) for LGBT married couples and clearer requirements for attaining French citizenship and a greater commitment to promote equality through public service (Migrant Integration Policy Index, 2015).

According to the 2015 Migrant Integration Policy Index, France "restricts and delays labor market integration" to a greater extent than most European countries, an estimated 5.3 million jobs being unavailable for non-EU immigrants. Most public sector jobs and additional 50 professions in the private sector are "closed" to them. However, since 2000 the government offers preparatory courses for civil service competitions, open to those living in 'priority' neighborhoods as defined by urban policy" (Rudiger & Spencer, 2003). But few of these immigrants access education or training in France.

The country also “restricts and delays” family reunions, thus the non-EU citizens are less probable to reunite with their family in France than in most European countries. France is situated 40 points below the international average on access, as most countries grant equal access to private sector jobs.

Although according to the French law all people who are legal residents with 3 or more years of domestic or foreign professional experience have the legal right to the Validation of Acquired Experiences (VAE), the procedure takes a minimum of one year, is demanding and sometimes difficult. In contrast, the procedure to recognize non-EU qualifications “can be long, costly and even impossible in some sectors” (Migrant Integration Policy Index, 2015). While the law allows non-EU citizens to access training and higher education, most of them are not included in the study grants that French citizens can use, with the exception of international protection beneficiaries and “certain international students”. But once they manage to find a job, non-EU immigrants generally enjoy the same rights as workers in the same job of French ethnicity. All legal residents are now also guaranteed equal access to housing after a 2007 restriction was removed by Decree 73 of 15 March 2010 and Decree 36 of 13 February 2013.

On the other hand, France is the only MIPEX country that denies the equal rights of workers’ representation since 2004, when non-EU citizens lost the right to be elected to ‘Prud’homme’ Councils and Chambers of Commerce and Professions.

Family reunion

In the MIPEX report, France ranked 30th out of 38, meaning that families have better legal opportunities in most other countries to live together; although the opening to same-sex married couples in 2013 was an improvement but the family reunion remains a delayed process, with the term being extended from 12 in 2006, to 18 months and a restrictive one, providing no entitlement for adult children, parents or grandparents. The Report also states that “no other developed country follows FR in imposing so many job, language and integration requirements for family reunion”. Chances that families will be granted the right to reunite even if they meet all the burdensome criteria are still low, due to the discretion in the procedures of France, as in most countries. Thus, permits can be denied or withdrawn on vague grounds or suspicions of fraud (e.g. suspicion of marriage of convenience). According to estimates from 2011-2012, nearly ½ of working-age non-EU citizens in France are neither in employment, nor in education or training (Migrant Integration Policy Index, 2015).

The results of the MIPEX 2015 Report clearly show that at least within the European context, France has still a long way to go in regards to achieving its Model’s purpose of assimilation. But keeping the Model in mind, one may argue that integration is an unsuitable term as it evokes a “one-way assimilation” whereas when the new popula-

tion, especially when we speak of such an abundant presence, in the case of the French Muslims, wishes to integrate into the “host-culture” it inevitably leaves its own marks and traces, modifying the characteristics it had previously had. Therefore, we argue that a more appropriate term and policy goal for that matter should be “inclusion” and “participation”.

It is true that social inclusion is a clearly stated policy goal for governments within the EU, directed at eliminating the separation and exclusion of disadvantaged groups, attempting to enable a feeling of “belonging” available to everyone. However, if the integration is estimated and measured in relation to an existing social order with its values and culture, than the focus will always stay on the adaptation of the migrants, rather than on the actions that may be required to facilitate the *inclusion* and *participation* of the newcomers.

Integration must be conceived as a two-way process, and its failure can be the result of a resistance on part of the receiving society. While the immigrants have to take an active role in the integration process, this is impossible if the existing structures are overly rigid. Also, levels of integration may vary in different aspects of the society. There can be integration in the civil society, and not in the labor market, or vice versa. Which can all be deemed as integration failures but which would require different policy responses?

In this sense, the Republican French Model of Integration is based on the complete assimilation of individuals into a national unity based on values and rights that are binding for all can be achieved thorough citizenship – when the individual enters a relationship with the state, which should not be mediated by any third-party and which should rule out ethnic, religious or cultural belonging which exceeds the immediate personal sphere.

Summary

From an economic point of view, since the Social Model is founded on labor market participation, the high unemployment rates put it under pressure. The Model is expected to be around 9 billion euros in deficit by 2017. And even now, its achievements are overshadowed by the around 1 million people living below the poverty line. The public discourse is also full of controversy, as the current State of Emergency inflates the conflict. International human rights organizations signal abuses and some public figures agree with them. One may argue that the police are merely sanctioning suspicious behavior, but this behavior would originate in the socio-economic conditions from the HLM projects. Residents there experience a strong alienation and lack of opportunities and the French police has been found guilty of racial profiling. Amid the EU context, France’s attitude towards non-EU newcomers has ranked fairly low. With ethnicity questions forbidden from surveys, this study is as close as one can get to statistical data.

III. The Integration of Immigrants and People of Muslim Immigrant Descent

1. Definitions and general data

The French Sociology scholar Didier Lapeyronnie distinguishes two elements within the general concept of “integration”: (1) participation – covering the economic, political and national inclusion and (2) cultural integration – concerning cultural conflicts (Hem-Reun, nd.). The most widely used indicators of integration are the socio-economic status of target groups, and focus on equal treatment and social inclusion. Indicators referring to cultural and religious aspects are popular with approaches emphasizing assimilation, diversity of target groups or factors influencing integration outcomes.

In 2009, immigrants – with and without French citizenship – represented 8, 4% of the population; 43% of them identified as Muslims; around half of the 8, 4% (5.4 mil.) arrived before 1974; in 1999, around 45% of immigrants were from Europe, 39% from Africa and 13% from Asia. Ten years later in 2009, 38% were coming from Europe, 43% from Africa and 14, 5% originated in Asia (decrease from Europe, increase from Africa and Asia).

The *assimilation theory*, on which the French Model is based on, is opposed to the *multiculturalism theory*. The assimilation process is built upon three major pillars: diverse ethnic groups begin to share the same culture with the autochthonous population after a natural process along which they enjoy the same access to socio-economic opportunities. Second, this process leads to the gradual disappearance of original cultural patterns, in favor of the new ones. And thirdly, once set in motion, the process moves inevitably towards the “melting” of the newcomers into the mainstream culture (Algan *et al.*, 2013).

The reality is that this theory has not been functioning in France. In 2011, 51% of the surveyed French population thought that Muslims form a “separate” group (against 44% in 2009), showing a clear increase in islamophobia. One year later, “the [Muslim] veil” represented a problem for 75% of the French respondents, against 68% in 2011 (General Commissariat of Strategy and Prosperity, 2013).

Research from INSEE, France’s national statistical agency, indicates that in 2013, the unemployment rate for all immigrants was approximately 17.3%, nearly 80% higher than the non-immigrant rate of 9.7%, and that descendants of immigrants from Africa have a significantly more difficult time finding work. The report found that the education and skill levels only explained 61% of the difference in employment rates between descendants of African immigrants and those whose parents were born in France” (Journalist's Resource, 2015). Thus, the immigrant population does not seem to enjoy “the same access to socio-economic opportunities”.

In addition, the proportion of Europeans that perceive the presence of people from minority groups as a cause of insecurity increased from 37% in 1997 to 42% in 2000.

It seemed that after 9/11, the trend has been to regard religion as a primary reason for cultural and social conflict and while European Muslims were perceived before as racial, ethnic or national minorities, their identity is now entangled with their faith. This is also the case with the self-perception of Muslim groups, particularly the young, who often emphasize religion above racial identity (Rudiger & Spencer, 2003).

In 2003, the target population for socio-economic integration policies accumulated to roughly 13 million people (around 3, 4% of the EU population at the time) who were third-country nationals, to which naturalized migrants and ethnic minorities are to be added, on which there were no European-wide figures available. Thus, Europe was hosting 12-18 million Muslims, which was (and still is) the second largest religion in Europe. Most of these people of Muslim religion lived (and continue to live) in France, which was home to 3.5-4 million of them, followed by Germany with 2.5-3 million at the time and Britain with only 1,5 million in 2003 (Rudiger & Spencer, 2003).

Socio-economic data for employment, education, health and housing demonstrate that equal inclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities in important spheres is yet to be achieved. Migrants suffer from:

- Concentration in specific segments of the labor market;
- Low employment rates;
- Low wages;
- Poor working conditions;
- Underrepresentation in senior positions;
- Educational attainment is on average lower than that of other groups;
- They are underrepresented in higher education;
- Tend to be concentrated in poorly resourced, ethnically homogenous schools;
- Are generally in worse health;
- Have higher death rates;
- Are more likely to be exposed to risk than the general European population;
- Often live in poorer housing, overcrowded conditions;
- Are less likely to own properties;
- Tend to reside in poorer urban districts with a high proportion of migrant residents.

Though there are also integration successes, it is very difficult to assess any policy impact, because there are almost no statistics available on how certain factors impact the integration of certain groups. Because the ethnicity or religion inquiry is forbidden in surveys, migrants “merge” with the general population as soon as they become naturalized, this means that second-generation migrants are very hard to identify for research or policymaking.

2. Quality of Life

A 2012 survey shows that 90% of the French citizens believe that their country has its own specific social model, and that this is a positive thing in terms of social protection, 86% say that it is an important part of the social identity and 82% feel a degree of attachment to it (General Commissariat of Strategy and Prosperity, 2013). Nevertheless, the same French nation expresses distrust when surveyed in the 2010 Eurobarometer. The abundance of social protection arrangements seemed to be the reason, but 78% of French citizens believed that inequalities and poverty were being poorly dealt with. In 2012, the French Directorate General for Social Cohesion showed that 80% of French citizens believed that social cohesion in France was poor (General Commissariat of Strategy and Prosperity, 2013).

A study done by the EU Accession Monitoring Program (EUMAP) found that “though the majority of Muslims living in France are French citizens, segments of the public continue to consider Maghrebi Muslims— unlike immigrants from other countries such as Italy, Spain or Portugal—to be immigrants even after four generations in France” (Vladescu, 2006, pp. 8-9). Also, “Muslims find few precedents for cultural adaptation” (Vladescu, 2006, p. 10). Alongside all the cultural, religious and social elements associated with their assimilation, Muslims are also poorly represented in the French government, partly because “many of the local and national representatives of French Muslims are tied to religious organizations, making it difficult to enter politics, again, because of the separation of church and state”, leading back to the difficulty in assimilation.

In addition, people of immigrant descent face many additional difficulties:

- Very few working-age non-EU men and women are accessing adult education and training in France, lower than the average in similar EU countries;
- Only 17% were recently enrolled in education or training in EU;
- Around 50% of unemployed working-age non-EU citizens in France were able to count on the support of unemployment benefits (access for women 46% and for men 60%);
- Immigrants in France are not more likely to use social/unemployment/family benefits than the French people in similar circumstances;
- In France, the long-settled non-EU born, who have been there for more than 10 years, are only 10% less likely to have a job than non-immigrants with the same level of education;
- Around 50% of the low-educated non-EU and French-born have a job (about 60% of men from both situations but women non-EU are 20% less likely to have a job than low-educated French women);
- Within the university educated, 75% of the non-EU born are employed compared to 82, 5% of the French-born;

- Employment quality: the low-educated non-EU born people are nearly 3 times as likely to experience in-work poverty (wage and benefits are not enough to fully escape poverty).

Education

France was ranked one of the least successful OECD countries in 2009 with regards to limiting the impact of parents' socio-economic background on the child's academic success and therefore, on their professional success. Thus, pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds were deemed 2.68 times more likely to achieve poor results than those from privileged backgrounds, which they claimed could be explained by the way learning is approached by different children (General Commissariat of Strategy and Prosperity, 2013, p. 8).

The educational career and orientation process is different for young people of immigrant descent, as they finish school more often without a diploma; they have lower average education levels and have lower scores than those of native students (France Strategie, 2015). These facts are essential, as 2012 PISA data showed that foreign-born citizens made up around 5% of all 15-year-old pupils in France, around the same level as in other Western EU countries (Migrant Integration Policy Index, 2015).

Social mobility

Social mobility has progressed very little, as since the 1980s, around 1/3 of individuals have belonged to the same socio-professional category as their father (General Commissariat of Strategy and Prosperity, 2013). There is also the matter of *spacial segregation* as young people of immigrant descent tend to often be discriminated against based on their area of residence which is often "neighborhoods subject to multiple social and economic difficulties [with] high unemployment, longer distance from areas with jobs, inadequate transport network, lower density of certain public services etc". (France Strategie, 2015).

Political Life

Around 2, 2 million non-EU adults, aged 15 or higher, are not French citizens and therefore were disenfranchised in France's 2014 local elections. That accounts for 4, 2% of the population, and is one of the highest levels of disenfranchisement among developed democracies. Even though local voting rights were promised by former President Mitterrand in the 1981 elections, his proposal was not continued by the following French presidents. While President Sarkozy promoted voting rights as a "factor of integration" in 2005, he dropped it from the agenda during his mandate, labeling it as a "communitarian risk" in the 2012 election.

Similarly, President Hollande promised it in the 2012 elections, and promised to act on it before his 5-year period ended. Immigrant associations continue to militate for these

rights, although even under this law proposal, 1, 8 million voters would be excluded. However, as currently none of the non-EU citizens are enfranchised in the French elections, neutralization is essential for their political democratic participation. In spite of this fact, non-EU born who have more than 10 years of residence are 10% less likely to participate politically than French-born people. Data collected in the 2000s showed that 45% of the long-settled (+10 years) non-EU born have recently been involved in a civic act such as a political party, association, petition, demonstration or contacting a politician, which closely compared to 49% of the French-born people.

Naturalization

Around 700.000 foreign residents are expected to benefit from the intermediate multi-annual permit. Today, until the newcomer becomes eligible for a ten-year card, she must renew the temporary permit yearly. This regulation puts excessive work on the state prefectures, which receive 5 million visits annually by France's 3, 7 million foreigners, out of which only 1% are refused. In addition, this system places excessive difficulties for newcomers to obtain jobs and housing. The government has proposed that newcomers with one-year permits receive upon their first renewal a permit until their application for the 10 year card, i.e. two years for parents or spouses of French citizens, four years for other family reunion cases, four-year 'talent passport' for 'high-achieving' immigrants and student permits covering their entire program.

The requirements of integration may also be revised during the first and up to the fifth year, with a higher demanded level for French language fluency. These 'higher' requirements are said to be intended to "match the government's greater offer of French courses to A2 level, according to its 2014 integration strategy" (Migrant Integration Policy Index, 2015).

Naturalization can happen after five years of residence, but according to MEPIX 2015 over the past decade, access to nationality has been undermined as a tool for integration. France's discretionary procedure does not treat all applicants the same, nor does it encourage them to apply, and its demanding requirements – compared to other West European countries – do not provide all with the necessary effort to succeed. On one side, eligibility rules are similar to other countries of immigration, but French immigrants face unmatched naturalization conditions. The citizenship status is conditional upon a person's employment situation, on their B1 level of language fluency (highest in Europe) and since July, 1 2010 prefects in France have a great discretion under this decentralized procedure. In addition, in 2011 and 2012, prefectures were instructed to "use their discretion to restrict naturalization". But because of potential unfair verdicts, in 2013, a circular demanded that prefects be more "flexible in the professional integration and good character requirements" (Migrant Integration Policy Index, 2015).

Young People with Immigrant Backgrounds

Immigrants, especially those of African descent, experience difficulties in education, employment, housing and living conditions, which reflect the socio-economic situation of their families, exposed to “the shortcomings of our public policy: labor market entry barriers for the young and less-skilled, strong influence of the socio-economic background of students in their academic achievement, lack of fluidity in the housing market and discrimination in society”. These disparities cannot be explained solely by socio-demographic factors (France Strategie, 2015).

The unemployment rate for descendants of African immigrants (workers under 25 years old) was 42% in 2012, against 22% for descendants of European immigrants and natives. Studies have shown that on average, the descendants of African immigrants experience greater job insecurity (fixed term contracts, temporary work) and are more exposed to experiencing periods of unemployment after finishing school. On the contrary, descendants of immigrants from Southern Europe for example, experience access to employment that compares with that of young people not directly descended from immigrants. However, it is the young Maghreb descendants who have the largest gap between their level of diploma and the qualification for the position they hold (France Strategie, 2015).

Two out of three descendants from two immigrant parents have a father who works manual labor, while only half of the descendants from couples with only one immigrant parent face the same situation. When it comes to non-immigrant parents, only one in three face the same issue. Consequently, over 20% of the young people of immigrant descent live below the poverty line, 10% of French people not directly descended from immigrants, especially when the youngsters are still living along with their parents (France Strategie, 2015).

Summary

As more immigrants come from Africa than anywhere else, more than half of the French population considers Muslims to be a separate group. And indeed they seem to be, as they experience 80% higher unemployment rates than non-immigrants, they are three times more likely to experience in-work poverty than them, and have an overall lower quality of life. The socio-economic background highly affects the children's school success, and a third of individuals belong to the same professional category as their parent. Young people of immigrant descent have 50% higher unemployment rate and a high risk of poverty. Around 2 million of the people in France do not have citizenship and thus cannot vote, while France has been found by MEPIX 2015 to undermine the access to nationality.

IV. Thriving Third-Parties

1. *The Rise of Le Front National*

The rise of Le Front National (FN) was based on the general discontent of the French population. The economic situation in the 1970s brought to the forefront of political debates in the early 1980s issues such as immigration, the breakdown of law and order, and unemployment. Many voters accused France's traditionally strong parties of not having addressed their concerns. The party benefitted from this failure and from the outspread discontent with the government and with the other major political parties, which Le Pen dismissively termed *la bande des quatre* (the gang of four, i.e. PS, PCF, RPR, UDF). "To put it simply then, the Front National was quick to say out loud what large sections of the French population were thinking" (Vladescu, 2006).

In relation to the media representations, there is a concern about the role the media plays in shaping the popular support for the extreme-Right. But studies have shown that it is not the media coverage of the Front National per-se that raises their popularity, but the coverage of "immigration". For instance, the massive media coverage of the first Islamic headscarf affair in 1989 culminated in the FN winning a parliamentary election near Paris with 61% in the second-round vote. Although the FN was not a major actor in the media reports, as the focus was on mainstream politicians and intellectuals, the emphasis on the anxiety aroused in the majority ethnic population by the presence of Third World immigrants made their supporting appear like a more favorable choice and alternative (European Monitoring Centre of Racism and Xenophobia, 2002).

2. *Jihadist Organizations*

According to the 2015 Global Terrorism Index, the flow of foreign fighters to Iraq and Syria to fight along extremist organizations between 2011 and 2015 is of around 25,000-30,000 fighters. The total number of foreign fighters believed to have joined armed groups in Iraq and Syria more than doubled from December 2013 to October 2015. While Europe comprises 21% of all foreign fighters, a large majority from them are from France.

The Report also states that the most prominent drivers for terrorism in the developed countries lie in the socio-economic factors, such as youth-unemployment, distrust in democracy and attitudes towards immigration (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015). Other major drivers for extremism in Western countries are: the lack of social opportunities, marginalization, discrimination, poor governance, unresolved conflicts, radicalization in prisons and perceived lack of alternatives for achieving personal and professional success. Among non-majority Muslim countries, France has the second highest number of nationals who have travelled there to fight, preceded only by Russia.

In addition, terrorist organizations such as ISIS make smart use of the social media tools they have at their disposal. It is widely known that through their Twitter accounts, they spread their ideology and propaganda, making their message heard and appealing to people around the world. Even if Twitter manages to close their accounts, another series of them appear. They show how “normal” and “pure” the life of those who join them is, by having women post about their daily lives, routines, much like any other lifestyle promoter. They “humanize” their organization while inserting the “divine” element alongside their name. They emphasize on the “holiness” of their mission, on their victories, putting their God in the middle of the rhetoric. A message like this may not be so appealing to a person who is already satisfied with their life, beliefs and range of chances. But to the alienated French young person of immigrant descent, constantly blamed by the society, who has to apologize all the time for their own name, skin color or religion, being somewhere where all of this would be unnecessary seems dreamy.

In assessing the “driver” effect of islamophobia, as a policy and as a public discourse, we must take into consideration the powerful basic human need of belonging and to realize that while addressing the effects – the terrorist attacks all over the world, we must not neglect the causes, the core drivers and enablers of such acts and organizations.

V. Concluding Remarks

The French Republican System of Integration, a color-blind policy that is supposed to achieve the “perfect” assimilation, the melting of a completely different population into the French nation has failed. It is failing economically, with its social benefits pillar collapsing under the strain of raising unemployment of over 10% and strong criticism. But even with its present generosity, it barely keeps floating the large number of people needing it. In France, around 1 million people live below poverty line, struggling to make ends meet. And even though the other millions struggle under the burden of heavy taxes, the System cannot help them with more.

However, the low educated non-EU born people are three times more likely to experience in-work poverty. That is a fact, even though 50% of the low educated non-EU French people are employed. Meaning that even with their salaries added, they still cannot make half of the average national income. Rightfully enough, 78% of French people believe that inequalities and poverty are poorly dealt with, especially when taking into consideration that over 20% of the young non-EU originating people aged 25 and less live below the poverty line, compared to 10% of the French people. This is not an astonishing gap, but the percentage is doubled and it is quite concerning, given that it happens within a system that does not recognize minority groups and claims to promote equality in all senses. An effective system that does not “see” color, race, or religion, should not have such a large gap.

As mentioned above, most French people believe that poverty is poorly dealt with, but at the same time statistics show that around 80% perceive the Social French Model as being a positive factor, an important part of their social identity and say they are attached to it to some degree. The very social system that is so much a part of their identity is incapable of fulfilling its role. Around 88% of the population thinks that there are inequalities within the French society. But the current Integration Model does not provide the necessary tools for leveling them out.

Whenever there's a discussion about the French Republican Model of Integration, the subject of unemployment invariably comes up. That is because one of the strongest indicators of social inclusion of the immigrant population is their ability to find work, and thus provide for themselves and their families. But also, in order to be able to assist the population, the public budget needs financial contributions to feed the demand for social benefits. And thus, employment becomes the center of the immigration narrative in France, much like in other countries.

The segregation is very real, with the people of immigrant origin still living in *the projects*, those *banlieues* that are still in crisis even after 11 years since the 2005 riots. The "wake up call" went to *snooze* and now more than 4, 4 million people live in the toughest of the ghettos where they face what President Holland had called "unbearable discrimination". The French nation does not see color, or religion, but it definitely sees the address. For example in Grigny, a Parisian suburb where over 27.000 people live, 60% children live below poverty line, and unemployment is 22%, two times the national average and over 40% among young people.

That makes it difficult for them to receive proper education and overcome their condition. French pupils coming of disadvantaged families are 2, 68 more likely to achieve poor results in school. And even if they did manage to overcome this obstacle, the French-born will never send their children to the same school as them, and the school will become a cradle for criminality. But even if they somehow escape all that, they will not find work either because businesses are reluctant to set up shop around the *ghettos* and the commute would be too expensive for the income to be worth it, or they will be seen as *immigrants* and refused on some politically correct pretext. So because only 50% of the non-EU originated could count on unemployment benefits, they will get involved in some criminal activities in order to make a living. Then they will go to prison and in prison they will find a few *likeminded* men who will make them feel understood, who share their sentiment about inequality, humility and injustice. So they will be invited to join some organization where they will *belong* and that will be the birth of an extremist. And that can happen to all those 50% of working-age non-EU people who are not in employment, education or training. But even if they manage to find work, in spite of the 5,3 million jobs that are unavailable for non-EU people, France is one of the countries that has the lowest rate of social mobility, with around 1/3 of individuals belonging to

the same socio-professional category as their father. So if it was difficult growing up, the problems will not soon ameliorate.

And on top of everything, until July, 2016 every person of immigrant background will be in danger of being investigated, raided, or put under house arrest within the current State of Emergency. Without the necessity of proof, the police will be able to obtain a warrant for virtually anyone they deem suspicious. And this is the same police that has been condemned in June, 2015 of racial profiling, with a 2009 study showing that Black people were 6,2% more likely to be stopped by the police and Arab people 7,7% respectively. And that was before the *Charlie Hebdo* and *November, 2015* events in Paris. Nowadays, every mosque is presumed to be a terrorist nest, and every Muslim wearing a vest is reason for caution.

Since the instating of the State of Emergency in November, 2005 there have been an official number of 3427 raids and 3023 searches that led to 593 legal actions. That means that around a fifth of the searches actually led to the discovery of criminal activity. The other 2430 war presumably left with their reputation tarnished, with broken valuables in their houses, terrified children, regarded as pariahs by their neighbors, and perhaps layering up to file a complaint against the abuses. But because of the State of Emergency, the conditions and reasoning for the raids can be vague and even discretionary. There are still people who are held under house arrest and those who have to report daily or multiple times per day to a police section. This may involve a costly commute to the appointed police section, financial loss from not being able to go to work or open the business for multiple days in a row and a moral toll that leaves the *suspects* scarred for a long time to come.

The political scene is flourishing with initiatives aimed to tap into people's fears of immigrants: on one side, there is President Hollande's proposal for the punitive stripping of the double-citizenship people of their French citizenship in the case of terrorism-related convictions and the propaganda of Le Front National that hopes to take the lead in the fight against the dangers Muslim immigrants present. Placed in the international context of the refugee crisis, terrorism attacks and the US Presidential elections with Trump's anti-Muslim discourse, the wave of fear spreads over Muslims everywhere. But nowhere as much as in France, where there is the largest non-EU immigrant population.

All of these factors give room for extremist organizations such as ISIS to attract the youngsters to join their rows. France already is the European country from where the most people flee to fight alongside jihadists in the Middle East. And the triggers are clear. With the perceived lack of opportunities they face in their home country, the immigrants feel a strong need to find a place where they are accepted. Islamophobia is growing all over the world, and the window of chance is closing for Muslims all over. The only ones who seemingly want to welcome them with open arms are the terrorist organizations who share their contempt and distrust of the Western world.

National models determine the way in which the newcomers become part of their new societies, as they not only shape the 'willingness' of nation-states to acknowledge immigrants "as ethnic minorities with distinct needs and cultural rights" but they also have an influence on policies and political decisions (Alba & Foner, 2015). Now returning to our **hypothesis** in the beginning, if the Republican Model of Integration is as ineffective as presented above, and through its color-blindness it fails to account for the needs of those who are different from the typical-French culture, then it is a failed model. Can it exist without its discriminatory effects? Our answer is no, because in order to tend to the needs of the disadvantaged, it would need to acknowledge their existence. It would be time for France to modify its societal rules to face the fact that its population is no longer as homogenous as it imagines it be. There is another considerable part of the population, which feels neglected at this point, that may need special attention.

Another clash happens when the French culture and the Model, in fact, are very much secular but two thirds of the French people associate Islam with religious fanaticism. They may be more religious than the average French person and those that are religious feel that this is their primary identity, above their ethnicity or nationality, but now France should make a first step to approach this community. Starting with the *veil matter* which made a clear statement of France's allegiance, and ending with the everyday religious needs that are not taken into consideration, the country needs to face the reality. In order for the *inclusion* of these people, the French society needs to adjust as well.

That would require the modifying of the media discourse, of the political agenda, and the humanizing of the French citizens that are of immigrant descent. And one of the most important steps would be the better political representation for these communities, along with the enfranchisement of the over 2 million non-EU originating adults who do not benefit from voting rights. The basis of democracy and the essence of the French Republic should be representativeness and the possibility to elect. Otherwise, France remains a promoter of *freedom, equality and fraternity* only in theory and betrays its creed for the sake of a utopian preservation of its culture.

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China: Reasons Behind Its Political and Military Expression in the South China Sea

Raoul-Thomas CÂMPIAN

Abstract. *The purpose of this research paper is to prove that China's policy towards the South China Sea represents a preemptive measure based on reducing China's energetic security threat concerning a potential blockade of the Malacca Strait by the US or India, in case of conflict escalation. By proving so, researchers will better understand the issues concerning the South China Sea and give insight into a perspective that is not largely debated. The strategy that was approached in this research and the methodology used was descriptive, analytical deductive. We followed to analyze a wide range of books and articles that are references in the domain. The results seem to prove that China's policy towards the South China Sea is directed towards multiple goals, such as avoiding containment, fighting for resources, protection of its energy security in the Malacca Strait and establishing itself as hegemon in the region. In those aspects, China's action in the South China Sea can be explained on the basis of achieving the means of attaining those certain goals. The hypothesis seems to stand to the degree in which a war would break out. Achieving sovereignty over the region, would endanger the passage of essential energetic inputs for relevant regional actors and for the US, and can be used as a back-up plan of blackmailing those actors in the situation in which China's oil ship imports would be blocked in the Malacca Strait. Until then, China's actions in the South China Sea can be seen as the necessary steps to achieve this leverage in their position with the US and other regional powers. Therefore, we can state that China's policy towards the South China Sea can represent a preemptive measure based on reducing China's energetic security threat concerning a potential blockade of the Malacca Strait by the US or India, in case of conflict escalation.*

Keywords: *South China Sea, Malacca Strait, energy security, national security, Sea Lines of Communications, military development, territorial disputes, resources.*

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Introduction

The international as well as the regional environment, in our case, the Southeast Asia, has been shaped by the transformation that came along with the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold war, bringing new realities to which states have to adapt in order to assure their security and therefore their existence. Timed with the Soviet Union's collapse, the withdrawal of the Soviet Bloc (from Vietnam) and of the US from Indochina created a vacuum of power in the Southeast Asia, which, as history tells us, has to be occupied by another power. Therefore, taking in consideration the delicate situation from the South China Sea, China, as the major actor in the region, opted for a foreign policy that was deemed aggressive by other claimants in order to assert its sovereignty claims over parts of the South China Sea, namely on the Paracel, Spratly, Pratas Islands and the Macclesfield Bank.

Moreover, China's military power has grown considerably, in the same time modernizing its maritime paramilitary forces, as well as their naval capabilities in order to enforce its sovereignty and jurisdiction claims, if necessary, by force in the area under analysis. Furthermore, it is considered that the development of its capabilities renders the US forces useless, further potentially denying access of the US Navy in the western Pacific.

The following research tries to clarify to what extent China's policy towards the South China Sea represents a preemptive measure based on reducing China's energetic security threat concerning a potential blockade of the Malacca Strait by the US or India, in case of conflict escalation. We argue that this may be due to the fact that the Malacca Strait is considered to be Achilles heel. In the case in which a war breaks out, the Malacca Strait could be blocked, therefore endangering China's energy oil supplies from the Middle East that pass through the Strait in a proportion of approximately 80%.

Thus, China's actions in the South China Sea can be seen and understood as a backup plan based on endangering the world trade that passes through the area in the case in which the Malacca Strait would be shut down for its vessels in case of war/conflict escalation. Furthermore, there could be the situation that China's foreign policy considering the South China Sea focuses on the resources that are known to be found in the area. China's interest in the resources can be also based on the situation of the Malacca Strait in case of war, as it can have resources at its near disposal in the case in which its supplies from the Middle East are endangered.

I. Location and geostrategic position and relevance of the South China Sea

1.1. Location

The South China Sea covers around 3.5 million square km, encompassing vital sea routes that link the Indian Ocean to the Pacific. It is bordered in the North by mainland China, in the East by the Philippines, West by Vietnam, Malaysia to the South West and two Malaysian states of Sabah and Saravak to the South as well as Brunei Barussalam

(Rowley, 2013). The four areas of adjacent waters are known to be the Gulf of Thailand located between Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam, the Gulf of Tonkin, between Vietnam and China, the Sulu Sea that is located between the Sabah, Palawan Islands and the Sulu archipelago as well as the Visayas and the Strait of Malacca (Rowley, 2013).

In the region, we encounter three groups of islands as well a submerged banks that are known to be disputed by various claimants: Xisha Quando, Nansha Quando, Donsha Quando and Zhongsha Quando, which translated in English are the Paracel Islands, the Spratly Island, the Pratas Islands and the Macclesfield Bank (Rowley, 2013). Six entities have certain claims in the disputed area, including China, which in economic and military terms, is the strongest of all.

There are many issues that are known to have increased the tensions among the adjacent states, two of them and the most relevant and discussed in the specialty literature and media seem to be the resources that the area known to be found and the relevance of the area in terms of the security to regional and world trade (Rowley, 2013).

1.2. Geostrategic position and relevance

As stated above, the South China Sea is known to have an important geostrategic position as it links the Indian Ocean with the Pacific, representing one of the most vital economic routes for global trade and energy shipment. The argument regarding the relevance of its geostrategic position is further strengthening by the existence in the southern part of the area of two major world ports, namely Shanghai and Hong Kong.

Another aspect that is relevant to our research paper is the fact that all principal routes and traffic lanes in the South China Sea (SCS) pass near or over the disputed islands (Paracel). Other islands such as Nansha Islands have the same characteristics and relevance as the Paracel. According to Rowley (2013), "in theory, occupation of the Nansha Islands leads to a direct or indirect control of most transits from the Strait of Malacca to Japan, from Singapore to Honk Kong and from Guangzhou to Manila, thus these features have a strategic stronghold over the entire SCS" (p. 6).

As stated above, the sea lines of communication (SLOC) in the South China Sea are vital for world trade and regional trade. It is known that more than half of the world's merchant fleet (by tonnage) passes thru the region every year, especially thru the Strait of Malacca. More than 40.000 vessels sail thru annually and also a considerably large percentage of fuel is transported by the sea from Middle East and the African continent to Japan, China and South Korea thru the SCS (Rowley, 2013).

Taking in consideration those aspects, the SCS is considered to be of high relevance to the claimants, but we will focus more on China in this research paper. It represents an important corridor that connects China with the outside world. Over 90% of China's foreign trade is sea-borne and more than half of its transactions by value occur via the SCS.

II. The historical background of the geopolitical environment and the Chinese historical perspective

II.1. Geopolitical environment – historical background

Many scholars argue that one important factor that is known to affect the outcomes concerning the SCS issues from mid 1950s until nowadays is the geopolitical environment of the region. Geopolitical issues in this case include power politics expressed between China, USA, the Soviet Union (Russian Federation) and the development of ASEAN, as a regional organization (Rowley, 2013).

When the world was divided into two spheres of influence after the Second World War, namely the communist and non-communist sphere, the two Great Powers (USA and USSR) that represented those sphere did not occupy any feature in the Nansha Islands, but they were involved in the dispute at a different extent, by maintaining the balance of power in the region. By doing so, it can lead to a direct influence of the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region and over the overall international political order. Therefore, an alignment of this type had enormous implications over the region. In those terms, from a strategic point of view, the United States contained China in order to prevent the communist forces from gaining military advantages, as it considered the People's Republic of China to be an ally of the Soviet Union (until the border dispute between China and the Soviet Union from 1969 was known at international level). Thus the USA believed that by containing China they would contain the Soviet Union (Rowley, 2013). In order to do so, the USA signed in 1954 a Mutual Defense Treaty with Taiwan, and entered into Southeast Asia Defense Treaty with other states such as France, Britain, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, Pakistan and New Zealand in Manila. Therefore, China's policies and actions taken in response to the Paracel disputes seem to meet the constrain of the US containment policy, from 1950s throughout the 1960s. China wished that the USA would maintain its presence in Indochina so as to deter the USSR, the former activating in Vietnam, with which China was in conflict over the Paracel Islands.

The collapses of the Soviet Union lead to a significant change in the regional strategic balance of power, as both Great Powers withdraw from the area. Researchers and scholars believed that this certain well timed dual withdrawal had left the region with a political and military power vacuum. From a geopolitical perspective, this seemed to be the case, but it didn't take long for this vacuum of power to be occupied, as China started to emerge as a strong state entity from an economic and military perspective, filling in the vacuum that was created. It is believed that China started to emerge as a relevant maritime power since 2010. It is from that year that the US started to express its increased interests in the SCS, in order to keep the balance of power or tilt so that China does not hold hegemony over the region (Rowley, 2013).

II.2. Chinese historical perspective

From a Chinese perspective, and based on evidence, the SCS group of islands were first discovered and named by the Chinese state, and remained under its sphere of administration until the colonial occupation. Furthermore, China also recovered after the Second World War four islands groups from Japan, which strengthens those arguments.

Sovereignty and sovereign rights over the four islands groups in the SCS in Chinese perspective are constituted by historical factors as the discovery, naming and continue usage and projection of state authority. From this perspective, China may be entitled to its grievances in what concerns obtaining the sovereignty over the disputed islands (Rowley, 2013). Furthermore, no other state that is involved in the dispute can come up with such strong evidence in order to support its claims of sovereignty over the disputed islands. Many individuals criticized Chinese ancient records due to the fact that they are not sufficiently convincing and strong enough when it comes to supporting such claims of “routine occupation, effective administration or assertion of sovereign control” over the Nansha Islands (Paracel Islands).

Although, an important aspect that has to be taken in consideration when it comes to the weakness of such evidence is the fact that China’s ancestral territorial concept, sovereignty, had its basis on the loyalty of the people that were ruled, and not on a clear delineated national boundary as suggested by the Westphalia system. Moreover, China’s tributary system is strongly related with such a concept, as it is known to have been established with the consent and even the free will of tributary states. Taking in consideration the fact that the dominant international order way back in time in what concerns East Asia was characterized by a Sino centric tributary system, China didn’t need to practice sovereignty based on the criteria of a modern international legal system (Rowley, 2013). Although the UNCLOS does not contain any provision that defines historic rights or relevant regimes to determine sovereignty over the disputed territories, we have to take into consideration that history cannot be overlooked and nation-states cannot abandon such rights when ratifying the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea.

III. The dispute and different perspectives of state entities that clash

III.1. The dispute

The dispute over the political jurisdiction of the Nansha Islands (the Paracel Islands) between the People’s Republic of China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and the Philippines is known to have been triggered by a continuous established human presence and activity on those certain islands and reefs (Martin, 2003).

The dispute is known to be further complicated by the entitlement to a 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) under the UN Convention on the Law of the SEA

(UNCLOS) from 1982. If we take in consideration the UNCLOS regime of the EEZ, if one gains sovereignty over any part of land of the Paracel Islands it achieves a great strategic relevance. This is due to the fact that if such features are proven to be legitimate, in the end they will generate and provide their own continental shelves and therefore their own EEZ (Rowley, 2013).

China's sovereignty claims regarding the disputed area involves two different types of dispute in which it acts with the other claimants. Its claims in what concerns the Paracel Islands involve a certain degree a bilateral dispute with Vietnam for the areas that are not claimed by other Southeast Asian countries, while having a multilateral dispute over areas that are claimed by the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei. As Chris Rowley states (2013), "even before the land features of the Nansha Islands are proven to be qualified to generate EEZ and continental shelves, potential overlapping claims over the Nansha Islands has become an issue which certainly intensifies the territorial disputes over the islands" (p. 5).

Furthermore, because of the speculations regarding an impressive reserve of hydrocarbon resources, the topic is regarded as being of high relevance in what concerns the natural resources. We will further see that different entities gave different values in what concerns the quantity of hydrocarbon resources known to be found in the seabed of the South China Sea. Therefore the delimitation of the area between disputants is thought to be one of the sources of the conflict in this matter.

III.2. Understanding the importance of the disputes

The view over the situation in the SCS seems to be shared also by Enrico Fels and Truong Minh Vu (2016), namely that "by attempting to incorporate the SCS into the People's Republic of China as sovereign and undisputed territory, Beijing would essentially be able to put strategic pressure on SLOCs important for three regional US Allies, namely Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, also gaining a potentially energy-rich area at its doorstep, thus further reducing Chinese dependency on ship based energy transports from the Middle East and Africa (which are strategically vulnerable to other nation's naval assets)" (p. 4). We can further argue here that Beijing will not only put pressure on Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, but on the entire world global trade, thus, affecting other major actors such as the US and India. We can state that the former are not that interested in the resources that are found in the SCS rather than on the importance of maintaining the SLOCs secure for their vessels and world trade. In our perspective, as we will further demonstrate in the resource paper, China's reasoning in what concerns the resources can be either secondary as importance or as important as controlling the SLOCs.

It seems that the approach towards the SCS also relates to China's strategic rivalry with the US, as the different perspectives between Beijing and Washington seem to collide in issues related to the freedom of navigation and the ambiguous reliability of the US

alliance system established after 1945, among other things (Fels & Vu, 2016). What is noteworthy, is that China's long and enormous economic growth gave the opportunity and necessary time for Beijing to finance and manage impressive military capabilities, that would allow the PLA to obtain operational abilities and advantages thru which China would prevail in a military encounter close to its borders with US forces, such as the status of Taiwan (Fels & Vu, 2016). By further attaining sovereignty over the disputed areas, those operational abilities and advantages would be considerably increased, as it would maintain at a certain distance from mainland China any foreign army with which it could clash by Sea.

III.3. Pushing the West out

Although the control and domination of the SCS are known to be the main motives for China's actions and behavior, its actions in what concerns the SCS are believed to be based on a desire to settle score arising from extended humiliations.

Following thousands of years of development, China was a progressive civilization that most of the entities envied. In 1949, at the end of the Chinese Civil War, the West contributed to the decline and division of once a great China into two China's. Besides this unfortunate event in the Chinese history, there seem to be other factors that should also be taken into consideration. As the Qing dynasty in East Asia was on the verge of disintegration during the 19th century, China lost parts of its territory to states such as Russia, France, Britain and Japan. Later, Japan is known to have returned to seize Manchuria and the Shandong Peninsula. Therefore, in this so-called century of humiliation, from 1839 to 1949, China experienced considerable losses of sovereignty because of the Western powers, many of which enforced extra-territorial arrangements to facilitate trade and avoid legal prosecution, in the form of treaties. China suffered seriously as a consequence of the behavior of Western powers, so seriously, that by the late 1930s, there were fears that China would cease to exist as a nation. Some state that this dark episode of China's history will not cease until Taiwan is reunified with mainland China. Therefore, we can argue that China's actions and interests in the SCS is a sign, a message that it will no longer abide by the rules of others (Bateman & Emmers, 2008).

It seems that a viable option for China to regain its patrimony, namely Taiwan and the South China Sea, is to push the US out of the Asia Pacific region, as it is the only actor that could deter China at the moment and stand behind their goal. From a broader perspective, if we are looking into China's maritime disputes over the disputed islands, we can observe that beginning with 2002, all its claims reveal that it will work with the countries from ASEAN in order to limit tensions regarding the islands and solve all differences in a peaceful manner. In particular, even doe Taipei is one of the major claimants of these disputed islands and possesses several of them – Taiwan is specifically excluded from this agreement. This seems to pave the way for China to resort to

force in the South China Sea. It reveals that China does not want any foreign power to intervene in those affairs and engages in multilateral discussions with the claimants rather than bilateral (Bateman & Emmers, 2008).

China seems to be carrying out a naval strategy through which it exerts and extends regional maritime control. This statement is based on the development of its communications, intelligence, gathering and naval supply structures found on its bases from the islands of the South China Sea. It wishes to create all-purpose bases on certain strategically placed offshore islands and linked them with a modern electronic communication network instead of investing in a project of which progress would take way too long to put into use. If we take into consideration the past, China will not oscillate or hesitate in whether or not to take a certain action against what it clearly perceives as an threat and constrain to its status of a great power, if a military conflict would erupt. Therefore, we can expect that China can and may adopt a more aggressive policy, based on Chinese surface ships, naval air, submarines and marine forces, taking advantage and making use of these strategic bases located on the islands from the SCS in order to support further expansion (Bateman & Emmers, 2008).

Although the regional climate of competition in the SCS in what concerns the sovereignty of certain islands, together with the memories from the “century of humiliation” that haunts China, makes China’s maritime frontier a strategic necessity, overcoming certain technical shortcomings in its naval forces puts China in a difficult position. In order to guarantee its position and claims, it would have to overcome certain technical shortcoming in its naval forces that are considered to be serious. This is due to the fact that from a military perspective, it cannot engage and challenge simultaneously all of the claimants, but it is perhaps developing a long term maritime strategy in order to overcome those challenges. As the region is known to be an ideal place for a US lead coalition to contain China, the People’s Republic considered that having good relations with ASEAN would keep away the US. Thus, as stated above, the Chinese state proposed that no other foreign entity should intervene in the territorial disputes (Bateman & Emmers, 2008).

Some researchers claim that China may wish to acquire the extensive hegemonic power that the USA wielded over the western hemisphere after securing control of the Caribbean Basin. The reasoning behind this claim may be that if the USA did it, then China can do it as well thru the assets and islands in the SCS. In this perspective, China may imagine a situation in which its neighbors’ are free to act as they wish when it comes to running their own governments, but making clear that Chinese ideas and views need to be given complete consideration and must prevail over and above any proposals by foreign actors. The only difficulty that China may encounter in what concerns this certain wish is Japan’s position, as it will not tolerate Chinese hegemony at any degree (Bateman & Emmers, 2008).

III.4. The “China Threat” Argument – A Chinese perspective

China has started to exert an increase geopolitical pressure on other entities in the region in what concerns its development in political, economic and military terms. The claim that China poses a threat was widely popular and it seems it still is in the Southeast Asia. Various Chinese researches claim that China is perceived as an ambitious rival for dominance over the disputed area, and this is mostly due to the Cold War mentality that seems to be deeply established (Wu & Zou, 2009).

According to Chinese scholars, China represents a constitute force for regional security, as being in the position of an emerging power with a strong sense of responsibility. On various occasions Chinese leaders are known to have expressed that the People’s Republic of China has no intention to fill in the “strategic vacuum” left behind after the almost simultaneous retreat of the Great Powers in the 1990s. In those circumstances, we can claim that Chinese arguments towards this perspective are strongly countered by its policy and by the measures taken when acting in the disputed region.

Furthermore, Chinese scholars Wu and Zou (2009) further argue that with the support of China’s great economic development and social stability, it has adopted diplomatic measures and initiatives in order to firmly promote a new security perspective, with the purpose of improving the general security situation in the disputed area. They argue that in those aspects, the Chinese leaders have started to visit numerous ASEAN nations, signed political protocols, and also maintain a political position that favors the conduct of dialog and cooperation with all parties concerned (although a counter argument here is that they did not include Taiwan). Moreover, scholars also claim that through the ASEAN Regional Forum, the People’s Republic of China seeks to establish a mechanism of confidence building. The Chinese state is following the guidelines and directions of a foreign policy that helps to facilitate higher levels of economic, security and political cooperation in Asia. The foreign policy is based and guided on the friendship and great neighbor policy promoted by President Hu Jintao. Therefore, in Chinese perspective, the People’s Republic of China represents opportunity to the Southeast Asia, rather than threats, and that countries concerned should collaborate and work hand in hand with the Chinese state in order to effectively strengthen the security in the region.

IV. Energy and the South China Sea

IV.1. Energy security

The concept of energy security is closely tied to resource security due to the fact that the means of transportation such as vehicles, ships and planes run on hydrocarbons, thus, in order to transport and deliver the inputs you need to use hydrocarbons. Because of the globalized trade and the dependency on it, energy security represents more than an economic problem for states. It is a diplomatic, military and political issue. China’s energy insecurity concerns are directly related and connected to its dependence on

foreign oil. The oil is traded in international markets as a commodity and its price is influenced by various factors such as supply and demand dynamics, geopolitics and wars (Caceres, 2013).

Due to the fact that most oil shipments that come to China arrive by sea, Chinese government officials consider that the control and protection of SLOCs is a state priority, particularly choke points that could be interdicted. The probability and the risk of having essential inputs cut off or endangered represents a vital concern for China as it would affect its economy and therefore its development. Taking in consideration those aspects, China's economic engine is considered a strategic vulnerability and, therefore, influences Chinese officials in what concerns the decision making process regarding regional and international relations.

As Chinese supply and demand for key energy sources such as oil is threatened by imbalances and uncertainties, China engages in conflicts with neighbors' over maritime and territorial disputes in the SCS, searching to reduce this energy security threat either by finding alternative source or by assuring the security of the SLOCs in what concerns their inputs. Therefore, China's motives are various and depend on many factors such as resource security, potential income from the sale of the resources, averting the US and Japanese influence in Asia, being perceived as a core (and not as peripheral) point of contact to address regional challenges, and protecting the lifeline of China's economic success: free and open trade with the world (Caceres, 2013).

All types of governments, autocratic, authoritarian or democratic – consider oil security as an inherent component of their national interests. The dominant rationale behind China's energy security policy is its quest to confidently secure foreign oil supplies. This is due to the fact that the Government perceives the increasing dependence on foreign oil as a strategic vulnerability. China's approach towards its oil security is geostrategic and politically driven and it is based on:

1. A pragmatic participation in the international oil market, while at the same time attempting to resist against price volatility and supply disruptions;
2. A strong reliance on state-owned entities, in order to attain national strategic interests and advantageous decision-making that take place within a tactical framework that is designed to deepen and strengthen the dominance of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Chinese energy companies (Caceres, 2013).

In order for China to ensure political legitimacy and social stability, it must keep annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth at about 8% and inflation below 5%. For this rate of economic growth to be sustained, Chinese officials need to ensure that oil supply disruptions, or even the risk, are either eliminated or kept at minimum. The Chinese Government has responded to the challenge of potential oil shortages by driving a state-led effort directed to reducing its perceived vulnerabilities.

From a rational point of view, the challenge that the Chinese Government is facing is to better manage its dependence on oil and to define a sustainable energy security path, rather than simply to seek resources beneath the SCS. The fight for resources that may be found beneath the shores of the SCS may not be worth the risk of engaging into conflict with other countries. Thus, this comes as an argument that its actions in the SCS are preemptive and are directed towards assuring a sustainable energy security path, rather than strictly directed towards the resources found in the SCS.

IV.2. The impact of the SCS on the security of China's energy transportation

As stated above, due to the rising oil imports and as well as on the SLOCs, the South China Sea is of great importance to China's energy security. Therefore, in order to protect the security of the SLOCs in what concerns its oil imports, we see that it started to look for other alternative routes, by constructing other ports that would facilitate the shipment of its oil. Such ports that are under construction with Chinese support include Gwadar Port in Pakistan, Shiite Port In Myanmar, and Chittagong Port in Bangladesh and Habantota in Sri Lanka (Bateman & Emmers, 2008). Taking in consideration the strategic importance and relevance of the South China Sea to China's national, economic and energy security, we can expect that it will not give up on its sovereignty claims in the region.

Furthermore, as a strengthening argument to the statement that China's national, economic and energy security interest collide in the SCS, the Vice Chairman of the Military Commission of the Central Committee of the CCP, Liu Huaqing, wanted to develop the Chinese navy in the early 1990s, claiming that the most probable place to wage a war in the near future is the South China Sea. In this situation, he emphasized the need of having an aircraft carrier battle group, which along with assuring its national and economic interests, would also be vital for safeguarding the oceanic rights and benefits of the People's Republic of China, namely its energy security (Bateman & Emmers, 2008).

If an armed conflict would erupt in the SCS because of jurisdictional and territorial disputes, the cut down of SLOCs is a certain probability, and this in turn would severely affect the economic interests of states from the Asia Pacific including the US. This is due to the fact that over half of the worlds' merchant fleet (by tonnage) passes through the South China Sea every year, especially from the Strait of Malacca. China seems to know this, and they act without too much restrains and this could be the reason why they act in the way they do in the SCS. It is a backup plan for them in case its energy supplies coming from the Strait of Malacca would be in danger or blocked in case of conflict escalation in the region. It could be a mean to blackmail in such situations.

States with considerable military and economic capabilities are considered to be reluctant to use force against each other when it comes to the energy sector according to some strategic planners. "Energy security" is considered nowadays to be vital to "national security", to such extent that threats to the former are liable to be reflexively

interpreted as threats to the later. One of the most alarming prospects facing the international system nowadays is considered to be large-scale armed clashes that could arise due to the access to energy resources. This is mostly due to the fact that resources are starting to be scarce and states such as China seem to have a “huge appetite” for those types of resources (Moran & Russell, 2004)

V. Explaining China’s military development

V.1. China’s strategic thinking

China’s strategic thinking is known to be comprehensive and holistic in prospect. It is linked to the country’s internal security, and political and economic needs. In this regard, we can see that China’s primary concern in the post-Cold War era was internal rather than external.

Beijing has further consolidated its strategic position in the SCS through the construction of four concrete structures on Mischief Reef in February 1995. The PLA Navy can monitor closely the passage of ships along the Palawan international waterway, between Mischief Reef and Palawan island (Kim, 1998). China believes that the strategic order in the Asia-Pacific region will be shaped by the US, Russia, Japan and China, who will be the most relevant player in this game. In China’s perspective, China’s strategic concerns shifts from the strategic security challenges it faced from the two superpowers in Northeast Asia in the 1960s to regional and territorial conflicts emerging from East and South East Asia and its southwestern borders. This is mostly due to the shifting towards a multipolar system after the Cold War. Although, China considers that peace is a necessity for it as it can further concentrate on economic growth and military modernization (Kim, 1998).

V.2. China’s military growth

Taking in consideration that in 1991, the USA spent around 25 times more money on defense than China, the Chinese state is now considered to be the 2nd state in the world in what concerns the investment in the military department. The difference between the two states in this perspective has been reduced nowadays, as the US is considered to be spending around three times more than China, which is considered to be a significant progress (640 billion US \$ vs. 188 billion US \$ in 2013). In the period from 2004 to 2013, the US defense budget has grown around 12 %, while the Chinese budget is considered to have grown by 170% in the same timeline (Fels & Vu, 2016).

In 2013 China had almost half of the combined defense budgets of Asian-Pacific nations (407 billion USD). In addition to those described above, it has considerably improved its maritime forces, forces that are considered to be of great importance in its approach in what concerns addressing maritime disputes. Therefore, such dynamics are considered to pose a challenge to the US position in the Asia Pacific.

China's military growth also can be explained to how various officials from the American administration regarded China throughout the years. For example, the Clinton Administration saw China as a "strategic partner", a relation that was filled with tensions since the mid-1990s because of the Taiwan Contingency Crisis and other aspects. George W. Bush Administration saw China as a "strategic competitor", although this certain administration managed to establish a healthy working relationship with China after a couple of years. In the end, the Obama Administration decided for a "pivot to Asia", with the purpose of rebalancing military assets and diplomatic attention. Foreign Policy experts speculate that this would finally lead to the appearance of new points of stress and heighten competition with the Chinese state for influence in the region (Fels & Vu, 2016).

The initiative of Obama Administrations can be better understood if we take in consideration Thomas E. Danilo's statement, at that time Obama's national security advisor, which underlined the importance of Asia-Pacific to the US by stating that "the US is a Pacific power whose interests are inextricably linked with Asia's economic, security and political order. America's success in the 21 century is tied to the success of Asia. Therefore, when analyzing the issues concerning the SCS, we have to take in consideration that in the prospect of a global and regional process of shifting economic and military capabilities, the sovereignty question is just an argument between China and the claimants, but if we look in a broader perspective we see that it also involves the competition between the US and China (Fels & Vu, 2016).

The "rules of the game" that assured the freedom of navigation in the area seem to be challenged by the confrontation of different visions regarding the topic. It seems to be clear that there is an attempt in reshaping the "rules of the game", but the uncertainty that arises is who will exert influence to a greater extent in the region. It is believed that China may form new "rules" that would ultimately seek to limit the ability of foreign vessels to move freely in the region.

This development seems to provide at least four major challenges but I will briefly discuss one that is relevant for the research and which is directly related to US interests (Fels & Vu, 2016).

According to many official and semi-official American documents, the main priority for the USA is to maintain the freedom of navigation in the region. Although the US affirms its position as an outsider to the region without having any sort of claims, it is well known that it has interest in stability of the region and in the norm based behavior. In those circumstances, the US also tries to maintain its neutrality in what concerns the territorial disputes, although, it is very difficult not to take any side in this matter, as your interest collide to some degree with the main player, namely China.

In those circumstances, we can affirm that since 2009, the US is balancing between focusing on the legal upholding of the freedom of navigation while in the same time

remaining neutral to the sovereignty based disputes. As stated above, taking in consideration the pressure that comes from China, such a position would be very difficult to combine and uphold in the long run. Moreover, some argue that the US can only solve this situation if it gives up on its neutrality. Either way, because of the general strategic competition with China, its position of neutrality seems to be compromised. Although the freedom of navigation is of main relevance for the USA in the disagreement with the People's Republic of China, it also has to uphold the defense Treaty signed with Japan and the Philippines against Chinese threats (Fels & Vu, 2016).

As recently stated in the research paper, the economic growth of the People's Republic of China relies in great degree on the imports of raw material and on the export of its products, therefore the security of the SLOCs is of extreme relevance to Chinese shipping. Around 80% of its imported oil passes via the Strait of Malacca, which is portrayed as being the life line of the state. If such strategic SLOCs were to be controlled by certain state entities, the development of the People's Republic of China as well as its national security could be under great threat. Thus, the buildup of Chinese naval capabilities in order to protect its energy security in the Strait of Malacca can only be seen as being of vital interest for the state (Fels & Vu, 2016).

According to a Chinese analyst, taking in consideration the experience of the Second World War, maritime states possess a distinct advantage over continental states in what concerns the ability to mobilize the necessary resources in time of war. According to this statement, we can assume that the reason why China's is building up its naval capabilities is so that it can be prepared to dispatch at any time the necessary resources in case of conflict escalation, so that its energy supply would not be hindered (Fels & Vu, 2016). It seems that more and more security analysts from China seem to share the same vision in what concerns the need of a powerful navy. One states that "if China doesn't have a powerful navy, it will certainly not have a great future". Therefore, more and more security analysts from China argue that the sea power has to be treated with maximum interest and attention, as those who pose such capabilities possess in the same time a stronger position to defeat their enemies, maintain a great power status and also safeguard their security and interests. Such view seems to lead us into acknowledging that the Chinese state is willing to defeat any enemy and maintain their status of great power with all means necessary. Such a view is also shared by the actual president Xi Jinping and the former Hu Jintao, who had advocated the building of China as a naval power in this century (Fels & Vu, 2016).

Developing China as a maritime power is considered to be an important part for Chinese leaders in fulfilling their "China dream". Some authors, such as Robert Ross, argues that the Chinese naval policy is driven by what he calls "naval nationalism", representing a form of "prestige" that is pursued by government in order to seek a greater domestic legitimacy (Fels & Vu, 2016, p. 124).

V.3. China's new security doctrine

Since 1998, China is known to have developed a new National Security Doctrine. The doctrine is based on premises such as:

- Regional dialogue and cooperation as being the best way through which to ensure peace and security, taking in consideration the multipolarity of the Asia-Pacific region and the rest of the world.
- Measures that promote confidence-building and border agreements with neighboring countries in order to improve the existing relations.
- Deeper collaboration with the Russian Federation in order to counterbalance the international posture of the US, related to peace enforcement and weapons control. Here we see China is trying to vanquish the US from the SCS, while in the past it wanted them to stay longer in Indochina at the detriment of Russian retreat.
- Implementing a new regional diplomacy based on "anti-hegemony" so as to shape a regional security environment in which the US alliance system is no longer necessary or relevant (Connors, Davidson, & Rosch, 2004).

Thus we can state that this NSC possesses a direct threat and challenge to the regional security diplomacy promoted by the United States. It also reveals that the main issue between the US and China remains a political-military one, rather than economic in its nature, due to the counter hegemonic behavior and challenges that are directed towards US's traditional dominance in the region (Connors *et al.*, 2004). As security against any external or internal threats is vital for prosperity and stability of any state, China seeks both of them. Power and control of natural resources is providing this sense of security (Caceres, 2013).

Many foreign diplomats and government officials are suspicious and concerned about the significant increase in China's military power. It is here important to underline the fact that taking in consideration China's heavily dependence on foreign oil that comes from the Middle East and Africa, the Chinese state is more concerned and willing to engage with the South China Sea routes that are used by its oil tankers, as well as with the ones from the Indian Ocean, the Strait of Malacca and the Taiwan Strait. Chinese officials believe that in the case in which its oil supply lines are blocked in case of conflict escalation, China will face an energy and economic crisis. Therefore, some argue that the buildup of China's navy is directed to protecting its commercial ships and oil tankers and to verse shared shipping routes (Caceres, 2013).

This new naval strategy is known to encompass defensive as well as offensive approaches. In this aspect, China is focusing on forging strategic relationships along sea lanes that run from the Middle East to the South China Sea, in order to protect its commercial and energy interest. Moreover, it has close collaborations with Pakistan in what concerns future infrastructure projects, with Myanmar so as to establish radar systems and to

build airstrips, and also with Bangladesh in what concerns naval facilities (Caceres, 2013). Furthermore, China has access to several Burnese offshore islands in the Indian Ocean, due to tis military cooperation with Burma. This cooperation gives the Chinese state strategic leverage in the Malacca Strait and in Southeast Asia. If we speculate that China would seize control of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, it would control the Japanese access to the resources from the Middle East and from European markets (Moran & Russell, 2004). It is obvious that the People's Republic of China wishes to construct its own capabilities to secure critical sea lanes that are vital for its security, but in the same time it seems they are willing to continue to cooperate at a certain degree with Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Europe, Japan and the US in order to keep the SLOCs (including straits) open.

The Strait of Malacca is a narrow, 500-mile stretch of water between the Malay Peninsula and the island of Sumatra, Indonesia. Oil Shipments coming from the Indian Ocean all the way to East Asia have to pass through the Strait of Malacca and the SCS. The volume maritime traffic passing through this strait is reported to be greater than that sailing through the Panama Canal and Suez Canal. In terms of trade, the strait is of significant relevance given that those exports to and imports from Europe and Central, South and West Asia have to pass through those choke points, where there is always the risk of interdiction, mostly in times of conflict escalation in the region. Due to the fact that China depends heavily on oil imports to sustain economic growth, it is easy to understand why China might be interested in controlling or securing this global sea route. Therefore, due to the various potential threats in what concerns the vital sea lanes, China inclines to address this "evolving situation" unilaterally as the Government moves to modernize its military force (Caceres, 2013).

Concerns related to the likelihood of blockages or closure of the Strait of Malacca has also been raise by ASEAN and the international community. Blockages or closure would lead to the immediate increase in sea freight rates that could put some low-cost producers (the case of China) at risk of losing clients and market share because their prices are no longer competitive. If we put this alongside the potential conflict in the SCS, we can certainly argue that claimants will be particularly affected, due to the fact that close to 70% of South Korea's energy imports, approximately three-fifths of Japan's and Taiwan's oil shipments, and nearly four-fifths of China's energy supplies are brought from the Indian Ocean into the Strait of Malacca and pass directly to the SCS (Caceres, 2013). Therefore, we assume that the key geostrategic relevance of the SCS is based on its geographical positioning, its function as a main maritime corridor. The Paracel and Spratly archipelagos are undeniably two of the world's most strategically important inter-ocean basins and the also serve as China's southern maritime frontier.

V.4. China's expanding Maritime Ambitions

As the Strait of Malacca represents a crucial waterway for China's maritime interests, China believes that through close co-operation with Myanmar, Pakistan and Iran, it could guarantee the security of sea-lines of communication in Southeast Asian seas and the Indian Ocean. China's leadership believes that a strategic alliance with these nations is beneficial to counter U.S. hegemony in the region as well as secure the SLOCs. The plan aims not only at China's future economic interests in the region but also at the monitoring of Indian and US naval activities in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. In those circumstance, in order effectively apply a plan for maritime expansion into the Indian Ocean region, China has been maintaining strategic partnerships with Myanmar, Pakistan and Iran (Hyung, 2002).

In order to secure the existent strategic partnerships, China has supplied about 1.2 billion US\$ worth of weapons and other military equipment to Myanmar. In return, China has secured a profitable market for its huge defense industry and probably access to intelligence on movements from the Indian Ocean and the Strait of Malacca SLOCs. China began to support Myanmar's naval modernization programme by providing six Hainan-class fast attack craft, and by supporting the construction of naval facilities on the Hainggyik and Great Coco Islands between 1992 and 1993. What is noteworthy is the fact that these islands are located at a geographically important point in the shipping lanes between the Bay of Bengal and the Strait of Malacca. Thus, the waterway could become in the future an important passage for commercial goods, weapons, and equipment from China to Myanmar and other Chinese allies. Moreover, if China secured a naval base in Myanmar, the Irrawaddy River waterway could provide China with necessary supplies for its naval force. As Bertil Lintner has noted: "China has already taken several steps towards establishing a trade route through Myanmar to give its Yunnan province an outlet to the Indian Ocean, which neighboring states fear that the Myanmar connection might contribute not just for trade but also for Beijing to play a significant naval role in the Indian Ocean" (Hyung, 2002, p. 553).

China's upgrading of Myanmar's naval bases on the Mergui and Coco Islands caused concerns among India and Japan. While India's concern relates to Coco Island, which is an outlet to the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea and where the Indian Navy had established presence and control, Japan's concern relates to Mergui Island as an entrance to the Malacca Strait which Japan considers to be a lifeline for its economy. China is also interested in naval facilities at Bassein (an island in the Irrawaddy River delta), which might spark-off Sino-Indian naval rivalry and constitute a negative development for ASEAN security (Hyung, 2002). India is concerned that if China were to establish a naval base in Myanmar it would have serious implications for its national security and interests. From India's point of view, the Beijing-Yangon alliance enables China to contain India between China's two allies, Myanmar and Pakistan, and effectively survey India's

naval activities in the Indian Ocean. Myanmar's geostrategic location is also of great importance for the US as well. Washington has imposed sanctions against Yangon since 1998, therefore, Beijing's "military" support directed to Yangon is a cause of concern to the US. More important, is the fact that Beijing-Yangon naval ties pose a potential threat to US naval strategy in the Malacca Strait and the Indian Ocean. If China were to have a naval base in Myanmar, Washington would reconsider its military presence in regional countries (Hyung, 2002).

V.5. China's Navy Extends its Combat Reach to the Indian Ocean

In the beginning of 2014, a Chinese surface action group (SAG) carried out a sophisticated training exercise across the SCS, eastern Indian Ocean, and the Philippine Sea. The 23 day deployment was used by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy to improve operational proficiencies for antisubmarine warfare, air defense, electronic warfare, and expeditionary logistics; train to seize disputed islands and reefs in the SCS; improve its ability to conduct integrated and multi-disciplinary operations; and prove to the Indo-Pacific region that China's combat reach now extends to the eastern Indian Ocean. Although the PLA Navy in the near term likely will not seek to develop the ability to establish sea control or sustain combat operations in the Indian Ocean against a modern navy, PLA Navy operations within weapons range of US bases and operating areas in the region probably will become more frequent as China expands and modernizes its fleet of submarines and surface combatants (U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2014).

According to the PLA Navy SAG timeline of activities, in January 20, the SAG departed from a naval base on Hainan Island and then "conducted exercises for the joint submarine-ship breakthrough of "enemy" blockade zones". On the 21 and 22 of the same month, the SAG patrolled the Paracel Islands, including waters surrounding Woody Island, Duncan Island, Prattle Island, Triton Island, Lincoln Island and Momney Island. Multiple helicopters, one hovercraft, and marines from the Changbaishan formed a "vertical assault group" to conduct a "landing training exercise" on an unspecified island in the Paracel Islands (U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2014). On the 23rd and 25th of January, the SAG patrolled the Spratly Islands and the SAG commander "[landed] on every reef guarded by China's navy staff". The Haikou "conducted maneuvers against submarines under assumed air threat, and commanded forces guarding reefs to conduct attack and defense drill (U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2014, p. 3).

While in the proximity of James Shoal, on the 26th January the SAG personnel "swore an oath of determination to safeguard the country's sovereignty and maritime interests". The next two days the SAG passed through the Sunda Strait. At the beginning of February, the SAG conducted an exercise between Jaa and Christmas Island that "involved antip-

iracy, search and rescue, damage control and combat drills". The Changbaishan simulated an electronic warfare attack and drilled against national "enemy" airplanes and submarines, following a passage through the Lombok and Makassar straits in the next days (U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2014, p. 4).

By 7th and 8th of February, the SAG organized "live-fire training" in an unspecified location in the Philippine Sea. The SAG was joined by the replenishment ship The Dongtinghu in order to conduct "logistics support exercises in realistic battle conditions [so as to] inspect comprehensive logistics support capabilities for blue water training". The Changbaishan then simulated an attack by "enemy biological and chemical weapons". After sailing for 23 days, the SAG returned to Zhanjiang Naval Base on 11th of February (U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2014, p. 4). It was the first time the PLA Navy conducted a "combat readiness patrol" or "blue-water training" in the Indian Ocean through the deployment of the SAG. Although the PLA Navy has made forays into the region since at least 1985, its presence there has increased considerably over the last five years.

In order to protect Chinese commercial shipping interests, the PLA Navy has sustained counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden since January 2009. This operation marked China's first operational deployment of naval forces outside of China's regional waters aside from naval diplomacy. The PLA Navy deployed maritime intelligence collection ships to the Indian Ocean for the first time in 2012. Those ships are supposed to possess equipment that enables them to collect signals and electronic intelligence, map the ocean floor, and gather bathymetric data. This suggests that the PLA Navy may be building the foundation for more routine naval operations in the near future (U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2014).

In what concerns the financing and construction of civilian port infrastructure in the Indian Ocean, China has played a large role over the last couple of years. Its support is known to have been directed towards the Port of Colombo in Sri Lanka, the Port of Hambantota in Sri Lanka, and Gwadar Port in Pakistan. Furthermore, PLA Navy counter-piracy task groups have made ports calls in at least 12 regional countries for resupply and replenishment and military-to military engagements. Chinese investments in commercial ports in the Indian Ocean and Chinese naval diplomacy with countries in the region is considered to improve the PLA Navy's ability to replenish using regional ports and could lay the groundwork for future logistics hubs in the Indian Ocean (U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2014). It can be stated that China's desire to improve its ability to combat perceived threats to sea routes vital to its economic development are without no doubt reflected by the PLA Navy's growing operations in the Indian Ocean. Most of China's energy and raw materials imports travel through the Indian Ocean, including over 80% of China's crude oil imports.

Furthermore, China is known to develop operational concepts and proficiencies for more traditional expeditionary missions for its amphibious force, such as amphibious raids, direct action operations, airfield and port seizure, and seizure/recovery of personnel and materiel. A US think tank affiliated with the US Army recently issued a report exploring the deployment of land-based anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs) to land choke points in Asia. In order for such a strategy to work and be implemented, regional countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, or South Korea need to acquire systems that could partner with US C4ISR or permit the use of them on their territory. These ASCM batteries could allow the US and its partners to challenge China's maritime freedom movement in critical sea lanes in the Indian Ocean and SCS. The concept is designed to be a "complementary approach" to Air Sea Battle that employs "the same inexpensive... technologies [used in China's anti-access/area-denial strategy] to significantly raise the cost of a conflict for China and, should deterrence fail, to limit China's ability to inflict damage off the Asian mainland. The SAG transit near some of these potential ASCM deployment sites as well as its training for amphibious assaults before it reached the Indian Ocean indicate the PLA Navy is able to deploy adequate assets and combat power to conduct an amphibious raid or air strike against such ASCM batteries, if they are deployed (U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2014).

India is concerned as it considers China's growing investment and activity in and around the Indian Ocean a plan designed to encircle India militarily. Most of India's naval modernization program appears to be aimed towards ensuring that India remains the dominant regional maritime power in the Indian Ocean. Over the next decade, the Indian Navy plans to expand its power projection capabilities with additional aircraft carriers, major surface combatants, diesel and nuclear-powered submarines, fighter aircraft, helicopters, and long-range surveillance aircraft. It seems that India considers its security relationship with the US as central to its efforts to deter a considerable Chinese naval presence in its traditional area of influence. The US is India's most frequent partner for security engagements that include military exercises, dialogues and exchanges. Furthermore, India is expanding its purchase of US defense items. While some issues in what concerns the bilateral security relationship exist, India may seek to strengthen cooperation with the US in order to enhance its capabilities in the detriment of China (U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2014).

VI. India's implications for Southeast Asia Security and the String of Pearls

VI.1. India's Geopolitics and Southeast Asia Security

The year 2005 was the year when the Indian Navy conducted naval exercises for the first time in the SCS. India's presence in the region was seen by some as a challenge to China, as it entered its strategic waters. INS Viraat, the Indian Aircraft carrier, arrived

for the first time in the ports of Southeast Asia – Singapore, Jakarta in Indonesia and Klang in Malaysia. Two years after, in the spring of 2007, the Indian Navy conducted a series of bilateral and multilateral exercises with a number of nations that included major powers such as the US, Japan, Russia and China as well as regional actors like Singapore, Vietnam and the Philippine's after sailing to Vladivostok (Mohan, 2008).

India also expressed its interest in supporting the efforts of littoral states of the Malacca Strait, including the conduct of bilateral naval patrols, to promote security in this vital sea lane. Its recent military diplomacy is marked by large-scale naval exercises with the US, Japan, Australia, and Singapore in the Bay of Bengal. Although those operations raise awareness about a potential "Asian NATO", we can state that India is focused more on expanding its own regional profile rather than the creation of a new alliance (Mohan, 2008).

From the early 1990s, India proceeded towards a wide and institutionalized cooperation with the combatant establishments of Southeast Asian nations. In this aspect, India and Malaysia signed a memorandum of agreement on defense cooperation in 1993 under which India began to train the air force personnel of Malaysia. Also, the relation between India and Singapore in what concerns the training of Singapore military personnel expanded steadily and ultimately culminated in a more comprehensive arrangement in 2003 when the two countries signed a bilateral defense cooperation agreement. As New Delhi gave Singapore convenient and wider access to training facilities in India, in turn, India obtain for its Navy a useful arrangement through which it could frequently call at the Changi naval base. Some of the more recent agreements signed by India reflect the possibility of going beyond training to transfer of arms. An example in this case could be the strategic partnership issued by the Indian and Vietnamese prime minister in July 2007 (Mohan, 2008).

Indian policy-makers state that their aim is to expand India's strategic weight in the region and not to set up a rivalry with China. Therefore, their main objective is to emerge as a vital element in Asian balance of power. India's focused will be on simultaneous expansion of political and economic relations with all the great powers and avoid choosing sides between them. In those circumstances, we can expect a greater military and strategic content to Indo-US relationship than the Sino-Indian ties in the near future.

VI.2. The string of pearls

Many are concerned that the trade-oriented ports could be upgrade into permanent naval bases. This is mostly due to the large-scale naval modernization program implemented by China's army. Here, we have a worst-case scenario, in which Beijing could use these bases to threaten India's security, menace global sea lanes and challenge the United States for regional naval primacy (Indian Current Affair, 2011).

The South Asian harbors and their overland management to China will permit some Chinese-bound tankers to offload Persian Gulf oil without having to sail all the way to East Asian waters. Such arrangements will reduce China's dependence on precarious shipping routes through the Malacca Strait "choke point", where Beijing fears that its tankers could be blockaded in case of conflict escalation by US warships already deployed to the region. In the name of energy security, such facilities offer a degree of flexibility for China's otherwise vulnerable Indian Ocean supply lines- across which roughly 80% percent of Beijing's imported crude oil must travel (Indian Current Affair, 2011).

To establish a "string of pearls" one would face serious practical obstacles. In order to transforming commercial ports into defensible bases, it requires high levels of technical, logistical and strategic expertise. Although China's naval proficiency is growing, such an initiative regarding this strategic task is expected to exceed China's capabilities for at least another decade. China's navy has little experience in force projection, joint operations or sophisticated intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. It would be a difficult task to fortify distant bases with local air defenses, mine-clearing assets or munitions storage facilities, and is likely to be inefficient because of its inflexible command structure. The defense of isolated naval bases from cruise-missile strikes or airborne attacks by potential WE or Indian adversaries are probably impossible. While these scenarios are fictional and seem highly unlikely, why would China invest billions in South Asian bases that would be impotent during wartime? (Indian Current Affair, 2011).

A reason, many argue, may be that China's base-building ambitions and initiatives are largely defensive in nature and are designed to equilibrate China's sea-lane vulnerabilities by deploying naval capabilities to challenge rivals' sea lanes. As China is aware of the constriction threat Indian and US forces pose to Beijing's Indo-Pacific energy supply lines, some Chinese strategists claimed that offshore naval bases are means of protecting China's economic interests. As forward bases would permit Chinese warships to wield some "tit-for-tat" coercive power over Indian and American vessels, Beijing's modest objective would be to project limited sea power for deterrence – not to position itself for great power confrontations (Indian Current Affair, 2011). However, the string of pearls strategy provides a presence for China along the sea lines of communication that connect China directly to the Middle East. The issue that arises both for the US and India is whether China's strategy is intended solely to secure supply lines and trade routes, or whether China will use these in the future in order to enforce regional supremacy (South Asia Journal, 2012).

India is known to have been contributing to the development of the "string of pearls", through its threat to cut off China's choke point for oil and trade – the Malacca Strait in both 1971 and 1999, when it moved to blockade Karachi Port which at the time handled 90% of Pakistan's sea trade, including oil supplies to China.

VII. Conclusion

The South China Sea represents a delicate and a complicate issue. We saw that when engaging with the topic we have to take into consideration numerous and various variables and reasons such as historical background, geostrategic position and relevance, geopolitical environment, China's perspective, the West's perspective, national, economic and energy security, the importance of the SCS to the world and to China's energy transportation, strategic thinking of different actors, military buildups and patterns of behavior in what concerns the PLA Navy , all of which bring about the conflict in the South China Sea.

The literature review reveals the fact that scholars attribute China's behavior in what concerns the South China Sea to various motives that are depended on many factors such as such as the vast amounts of hydrocarbon resources that are found beneath, sovereign and legal claims, avoiding containment from other major powers by averting their influence, being perceived as a core (and not as peripheral) point of contact to address regional challenges, resource security and protecting the SLOCs that are the lifeline of China's economic success. Thus, this reveals that China's policy towards the South China Sea is directed towards multiple goals, such as avoiding containment, fighting for resources, protection of its energy security in the Malacca Strait and establishing itself as hegemon in the region.

From a rational point of view, the challenge that the Chinese Government is facing is to better manage its dependence on oil and to define a sustainable energy security path, rather than simply to seek resources beneath the SCS. According to Fels & Vu (2016), "the amount of resources found beneath the South China Sea varies from one analyst to another. For example, China National Offshore Oil Company (CNOOC) suggested that the SCS would contain approximately 17 billion tons of oil and around 14 billion cubic meter of natural gas, while others claim that the resources found are not that large" (p. 99). Therefore, it is debatable how much of these supplies are viable and worth the risk of getting into conflict with neighboring countries, taking in consideration the past 2014 collapse of global petroleum prices, that made the developing of new drilling projects much more expensive. Either way, the country cannot ignore exploitable energy supplies that are found so close to the state.

China's energy security concerns are known to be related to its dependence on foreign oil. Around 80% of China's oil imports are passing through the Strait of Malacca and to the South China Sea strategic sea lanes. The probability and the risk of having essential inputs cut off or endangered represents a vital concern for China as it would affect its economy and therefore its development. Taking in consideration those aspects, China's economic engine is deemed strategically vulnerable and therefore influences Chinese officials in what concerns the decision making process regarding regional and international relations. Therefore, government officials believe that the control and protection

of SLOCs is a state priority, due to the existence of the risk of having essential inputs cut off.

We saw that China's military underwent relevant modernization through massive investment in what concerns its army and military capabilities. From a Chinese perspective, it is vital to have a strong navy as some believed that a war can break out in the future in the SCS. Such capabilities are considered to be vital in order to safeguard the oceanic right and safeguarding the SLOCs for its oil imports. If the strategic sea lane is controlled by other powers, China's national development and national security could be under serious threat. Thus, it is in Beijing's interest to build up such naval capabilities in order to protect its energy security in the Strait of Malacca and in the South China Sea. In this aspect we can argue that the buildup of China's navy is directed to protecting its commercial ships and oil tankers and oversee the shipping routes.

The flow of crude oil that passes through the Strait of Malacca and through the SCS goes right between the disputed Spratly Islands and Paracel Islands. This means that if China holds sovereign control over the islands it has control over one of the most important economic and energy routes of the globe. The question here is why would it do so? They say for securing its security in what concerns the energy flow that passes through, but, if in current terms the area is represented as being part of international waters it means it is secured, as it affects the world economy.

If China gains sovereignty over the SCS, it will probably attach an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), in order to severely limit the movement of US military close to Chinese shore, which will diminish the military role the US can play in containing China. Although the UNCLOS does not contain any provision that defines historic rights or relevant regimes to determine sovereignty over the disputed territories, we have to take into consideration that history cannot be overlooked and nation-states cannot abandon such rights when ratifying the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (Rowley, 2013).

For the US the most important aspect seems to be the maintenance of the freedom of navigation. It opted for a neutral position in what concerns the sovereign claims, but it is interested in maintaining a norm based behavior. Therefore, the US is stuck between focusing on legally upholding the freedom of navigation and remaining neutral in the sovereignty dispute at the same time. Such a position is difficult to keep because of China's behavior. The US also has to uphold the defense treaty signed with Japan and the Philippines. In this aspect, China is known to have concluded cooperation on different levels with states such as Myanmar, Burma or Pakistan. This cooperation gives the Chinese state strategic leverage in the Malacca Strait and in Southeast Asia. India is known to have contributed to the developments of the Chinese state, as it threatened to cut off China's choke point for oil and trade - the Malacca Strait in both 1971 and 1999, when it moved to blockade Karachi Port which at the time handled 90% of Pakistan's sea trade, including oil supplies to China (Fels & Vu, 2016).

Another interesting argument is proposed by Caceres (2013), that China may tend to act as a hegemonic power in the same way the US did in the Western hemisphere after securing control of the Caribbean Basin. This would create a situation in which Asian neighbors' are free to act as they like when it comes to the running of their own governments but with the clear understanding that Chinese ideas and views need to be given complete consideration, over and above any proposals by foreign actors. The only issue here is that other regional actors such as India or Japan will not tolerate Chinese hegemony. It is clear that through the construct of its own capabilities to secure the SLOCs that are vital for its security, China also tends to act as a hegemon in the region, potentially denying the US presence in the SCS and further keeping from away its mainland any hostile foreign army.

In those aspects, when analyzing the issues concerning the SCS, we have to take in consideration that in the prospect of a global and regional process of shifting economic and military capabilities, the sovereignty question is just an argument between China and the claimants, but if we look in a broader perspective we see that it also involves the competition between the US and China. Therefore, we can claim that China's policy towards the South China Sea is directed towards multiple goals, such as avoiding containment, fighting for resources, protection of its energy security in the Malacca Strait and establishing itself as hegemon in the region. In those aspects, China's action in the South China Sea can be explained on the basis of achieving the means of attaining those certain goals.

Furthermore, it is clear that China's behavior in the South China Sea, and its increased military expenditure, has raised concern among other nations. China is feared as it is unpredictable in its behavior. Although, we must take in consideration that in order for China to put pressure on other nations and uphold its offshore naval bases would take an enormous and considerable military effort, that China cannot afford for the time being.

The hypothesis "China's policy towards the South China Sea represents a preemptive measure based on reducing China's energetic security threat concerning a potential blockade of the Malacca Strait by the US or India, in case of conflict escalation" stands to the degree in which a war would break out. Having sovereign claims over the region, would endanger the passage of essential energetic inputs for relevant regional actors and for the US, and can be used as a back-up plan of blackmailing those actors in the situation in which China's oil ship imports would be blocked in the Malacca Strait. Until then, China's actions in the South China Sea can be seen as the necessary steps to achieve this leverage in their position with the US and other regional powers. Therefore, we can state that China's policy towards the South China Sea can represent a preemptive measure based on reducing China's energetic security threat concerning a potential blockade of the Malacca Strait by the US or India, in case of conflict escalation.

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Sierra Leone: Promoting peace or prolonging violence? The duality of the UN Peacekeeping

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Abstract . *Based on different mechanisms of intervention deployed by the United Nations to intra-state conflicts – peace enforcement, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding – it is possible to assume that, in specific cases, the role of the UN in the field contributed to perpetuate the levels of the violence. Such elucidative argument is justified in accordance to the analysis provided in both missions promoted by the institution in Sierra Leone – the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone, UNOMSIL (1998-1999); and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL (1999-2005). To discuss this argument and substantiate it, this research was divided into two parts: a critical analysis of both UNOMSIL and UNAMSIL. In each peacekeeping mission, the research focused on a chronological analysis based on the documents published by the both UN missions, such as reports, statements and letters regarding their security, humanitarian, political and economic issues. This division is necessary to understand not only the role of the UN in the field, but how this same international system can influence and also be considered responsible for maintaining and prolonging violent conflicts, while its mission is to promote a world peace.*

Keywords: *Armed Conflict, Peace, Sierra Leone, UN Peacekeeping, Violence.*

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Introduction

Based on the different mechanisms provided by the United Nations (UN) to intervene in post-armed conflict countries, such as *peace enforcement*, *peacemaking*, *peacekeeping* and *peacebuilding*, it can be argued that at different times the UN, more precisely in the case of Sierra Leone, as well as promoted a negative peace as prolonged and worsened the already existing structural violence in that country. The analysis of these dynamics is developed in this paper. Given the existence of a concomitant relationship between agent and structure, it is possible to identify each of these elements to, subsequently, analyze their interaction. The structure in analysis is the armed conflict in Sierra Leone. The agents identified in this process are the Government of Sierra Leone, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the UN, the governments of Liberia and Guinea, humanitarian agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as civilians, mainly refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) and others actors. However, the UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) is the core of this analysis, identifying the worsening of the armed conflict and weak points of its intervention from four issues of concern: security, humanitarian, political and economic. The analysis is provided into two parts: the first one focus on the role of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone – UNOMSIL (1998-1999); and the second on the role of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone – UNAMSIL (1999-2005). The division proposed in this analysis aims to point out how violence was prolonged faced the dynamics between all actors involved in the process of ending the war and, consequently, promoting peace. I also argue that identifying where the UN contributed to the perpetuation of the violence is not an easy task, considering that its practice and its existence, in this analysis, are in between the lines.

UNOMSIL: an observer for peace

The United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) was the first peacekeeping operation authorized by the UN on 13 July 1998, according to resolution 1181 (UN, 1998a), and remained in the country until 22 October 1999, by resolution 1245 (UN 1999a). This operation was deployed as an observer character seven years after the outbreak of armed conflict in which RUF rebels were against the national government. At the time it was authorized, the security, humanitarian, political and economic structures were completely in collapse. During the period UNOMSIL was in Sierra Leone, it was supported by 210 military observers and 35 doctors and had a financial contribution of US\$ 53.6 million (UN, 1998a). Its objectives only highlighted the monitoring of military and security situations in the country; disarmament and demobilization of combatants; the guarantee of international humanitarian law and the voluntary disarmament of members of the Civil Defense Force – CDF (UN, 1998a).

Even the UN had established those objectives, the institution was interested in making the national government the main agent responsible for the implementation of a peace

process. A statement issued by the Security Council (SC) reiterated this reasoning attesting that “a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Sierra Leone remains the responsibility of the Government and people of Sierra Leone” (UN, 1999b: 2). This institutional quotation not only reminded how the UN became distant of getting involved in a peace process as, at the same time, emphasized that few UN observers which were in Sierra Leone before the deployment of the UNOMSIL warned the institution to deploy a peacekeeping mission as soon as it was possible.

Security structure

The deployment of the UNOMSIL in Sierra Leone had not provided any improvements in the country’s security structure. Throughout the designated period for this peace operation, Sierra Leone witnessed several levels of violence, further accentuating its condition of being labeled as a threat to international peace and security (UN, 1997). Actions taken by the UNOMSIL were punctual and they did not indicate a commitment to intervene directly in the armed conflict. Just after the authorization of UNOMSIL, Sierra Leone had increased the number of the attacks provided by the rebel forces, such as destruction of villages, torture, mutilations and executions of civilians (UN, 1998b; UN, 1998c). The consequence of these hostilities was a reduction in the number of the representatives of diplomatic missions in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone. At that time, the United Kingdom embassy planned the evacuation of its staff and other civilians (UN, 1999c), emphasizing that the security situation in Sierra Leone was becoming more deteriorated (UN, 1998b).

In this scenario, the work carried out by the UNOMSIL – and also by the forces of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and the Civil Defense Forces (CDF) – was a permanent challenge in promoting a ceasefire between the parties and, consequently, to achieve other mission’s objectives. The types of assistance regarding the security issue were demonstrated by supporting ECOMOG and training the Sierra Leone Army (UN, 1999d). While the UN was working in order to achieve and to strengthen the role of the ECOMOG as an institution capable of diminishing the hostilities in Sierra Leone, hardly the UNOMSIL was becoming involved in the process of promoting a direct intervention in the country. First, because ECOMOG was responsible for protecting the UN personnel and humanitarian agencies’ staff, as established in its mandate (UN 1998b). Second, because the external financial supports strengthened the role of the ECOMOG in Sierra Leone, such as the financial support of 1 million pounds provided by the UK to both the Government of Sierra Leone and ECOMOG forces (UN, 1999c) and, thirdly, because the governments of Côte d’Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea, Mali and Niger provided military support in sending troops to act in partnership with ECOMOG (UN, 1998b).

All these factors, when combined, influenced the UN in its decision-make to maintain the observer character of the UNOMSIL. The evidence of a constant direct violence in

the country and the fragility of the ECOMOG to provide security highlighted that peace promotion strategies undertaken in Sierra Leone were not the most effective ones. It was necessary to promote a 'change for better' in the scope of the UN intervention in order to reverse the level of the violence in Sierra Leone, although it was recognized that UNOMSIL should intervene directly in the armed conflict in order to facilitate dialogue between the Government and the rebels; to help reactivate the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; support initiatives for the reconstitution of a national army and reform the national police; and monitor the situation of human rights (UN, 1999c). However, the situation became worse. In January 1999, rebels attacked Freetown and the country's eastern region (UN, 1999d). This confrontation resulted in the death of 3 to 5 thousand people, including rebels, and also ECOMOG's soldiers and CDF's members who were protecting the capital and citizens (UN, 1999d). In this attack, "many civilians were severely mutilated by the rebels. Up to 150,000 people were displaced in and around Freetown, and the rebels burnt down large numbers of public building and homes" (UN, 1999d, p. 1).

As the security situation in Freetown became more volatile (UN, 1999d), the UNOMSIL evacuated all its personnel, vehicles and equipment – followed by other UN agencies, government and NGOs – and, consequently, reallocated its personnel with a reduction in the number of staff (UN, 1999d). In an attempt to provide 'a change for better' in the intervention in Sierra Leone and recognizing that it would be necessary to work effectively, the UNOMSIL expanded its responsibilities. It were included: a) the strengthening and expansion of the contacts with the troops of the RUF which were established by the UNOMSIL; b) the extension of the monitoring of the ceasefire to other geographical areas; c) to assist the *Ceasefire Monitoring Committees* and the *Joint Monitoring Committee* regarding the maintenance of the ceasefire; d) monitoring the military and security situations; e) assistance and monitoring of disarmament and demobilization of combatants in areas where security should be provided; f) the operation in conjunction with humanitarian organizations and exchange of information regarding security conditions to allow access for humanitarian assistance; g) acting in conjunction with human rights agencies; h) the constant action in partnership with ECOMOG; and i) the elaboration of plans to send neutral peacekeepers troops (UN, 1999e).

The Security Council decision in creating the UNOMSIL and, consequently, in expanding its objectives, was well accepted by the Government and people of Sierra Leone (UN 1999f). Adding more functions on the mission scope did not represent any improvement in the security issue, but an adaptation of the UN faced the security challenges in the ground (UN, 1999f). The cessation of hostilities was considered a first step in the peace process in Sierra Leone, which was marked by the end of direct attacks. However, this process had become increasingly difficult to be achieved because the UNOMSIL was dependent on the military results obtained by the actions of the national government,

by the forces of the ECOMOG and by the CDF. Despite the limitations of these actions, the UN had deployed the UNOMSIL as a demonstration for both the Government of Sierra Leone and for the local population that the international community was committed to restoring order and peace (UN, 1998c), while recognizing that “the restoration of stability in Sierra Leone will be a long and arduous process and will continue to require military support as well as various other forms of assistance” (p. 16). Therefore, the emergence of the UNOMSIL was already subject to act as a palliative in the process of ending the armed conflict, once their objectives did not match with the promotion of a direct intervention to end hostilities.

Humanitarian structure

To put an end to the hostilities between RUF and the Government of Sierra Leone – represented by the end of the military attacks – meant to interfere directly in the reduction of the worsening humanitarian situation in the country. A consequence based on the reduction in the level of hostilities would have, at least, two benefits: first, a decrease in the number of refugees, IDPs and direct violence, such as mutilations and murders; and, second, a guarantee in the access of humanitarian aid supplies to communities affected by the civil war (UN, 1999g). As the security issue was less than it was expected, the humanitarian situation tended to get worse because the financial resources requested by the UN were not sent in its entirety by donor countries. In August 1998, only 5% of the amount of US\$ 20.5 million requested by UNOMSIL had been received (UN, 1998d). This condition would damage further work on the humanitarian improvements.

As mentioned the report, humanitarian organizations continued “to face fundamental questions on the modalities for the delivery of relief assistance in an environment characterized by unpredictable hostilities” (UN, 1998d, p. 10). In September 1998, UNOMSIL received several reports regarding on crimes against humanity (UN 1998b). While UNOMSIL was not able to intervene directly in order to contain the worsening of the humanitarian situation, the mission’s mandate allowed the emergence of a human rights unit to act as a means of coordination and exchange of information in different sectors – public and private ones – regarding the practice and the guarantee of human rights in Sierra Leone (UN, 1998b). Its main task was to promote assistance to the Government of Sierra Leone in order to orient the government regarding its obligations under international treaties on human rights, especially those specified on the Convention on the Rights of the Child¹, as well as acting as a facilitator for the

1 The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20 November 1989. Sierra Leone ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in June 1990 and its two Optional Protocols in September 2001 (on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography) and May 2002 (on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict). These commitments were subsequently enshrined in national legislation through the 2007 Child Rights

restoration of the judicial system in this specific issue of concern (UN, 1998b) and to encourage the leadership of the ECOMOG to sensitize all troops in order to ensure full respect for international humanitarian law. Strengthening the UN position in this issue was maintained in accordance with the results of the ECOMOG regarding the humanitarian issue (UN, 1998b).

The work performed by UNOMSIL, as regards the guarantee of human rights and joint action with other UN agencies, is considered in the scope of this paper a construction of different mechanisms to promote a positive peace. While hostilities became more aggravated in the country, the human potentialities were increasingly likely to be neglected. Similarly, it would be with the work carried out by the UN agencies, which would not be destined to encounter the victimized population. The evidence of this scenario emerges with a constant repetition of humanitarian crises that were taking place in isolated areas of the country (UN, 1998b) as well as cases of malnutrition and deaths from diseases. The World Food Programme (WFP) continued to provide food assistance to vulnerable groups (UN, 1998b), while the World Health Organization (WHO) had confirmed a high number of deaths caused by cholera; and the child mortality rate was increased: 1,800 per 100,000 live births (UN, 1998b). In addition, the Security Council highlighted the work provided by the UN agencies regarding the number of refugees and the demand in this sector to minimize the humanitarian situation in the country (UN, 1999d, 1999g).

Parallel to the actions provided by the UN agencies, the UNOMSIL continued, with limited financial resources, to assist the Government of Sierra Leone and civil society in order to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms (UN, 1998c). In November 1998, the UNOMSIL facilitated a monitoring program on human rights in the country which had a participation of 70 people (UN, 1998c). This program aimed to train multipliers to work throughout Sierra Leone and to develop a work in partnership with the UNOMSIL, which continued to promote a culture on the importance of ensuring human rights (UN, 1999f).

In this regard, the UNOMSIL Office for Human Rights visited Freetown and other cities in the rest of the country to monitor the situation and concluded that “the ultimate responsibility for the fighting, for most of the civilian casualties and for the related humanitarian emergency in Freetown rested with the rebels forces” (UN, 1999d, p. 5). The reason to hold accountable RUF as the main responsible for violations concerning human rights lays on the fact that the rebels have kidnapped several people in Freetown and other cities, especially children, to serve in their bases (UN, 1999d). Notwithstanding, the most interesting in this fact is to analyze rebel forces as the main

Act – which supersedes all other national laws and is considered compatible with the Convention and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

responsible for human rights violations in Sierra Leone (TRC, 2004a) while RUF was a result of human rights violations committed by the Governments of Sierra Leone in a time previous to the civil war which represented a failed state's structure (Hirsch, 2000).

Political and Economic structures

The process of ending the civil war in Sierra Leone was not based only in the restructuring of the security and humanitarian issues, but also in both political and economic ones. Since the beginning of the armed conflict in 1991, Sierra Leone had presented several damages in its politics: either through the extensive political mandates and the consequent violation of human rights or by a constant *coup d'état*. In this way, political instability has become an obstacle to the promotion of peace. Despite the scenario of instability, UNOMSIL also did not intervene in this regard. Some actions had initial support from the UK Government that "has taken the initiative of convening an international contact group on Sierra Leone in London early in November" (UN, 1998b, p. 2). Nevertheless, the responsibility for providing stability in this sector was only the government of Sierra Leone, that "has continued its efforts to consolidate its position, to restore the stability of the country and to improve relations with its neighbors" (UN, 1998c, p. 1).

In an attempt to contain further hostilities, the two presidents – Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, from Sierra Leone and Charles Taylor, from Liberia – kept in touch by phone and took the strengthening of relations between the two countries (UN, 1998b). "The two leaders were reported to have agreed to be in regular telephone contact in order to work towards strengthening relations. I welcome this constructive approach" (UN, 1998b, p. 2). The first result of this contact was the resurgence of the *Mano River Union* (MRU)². The three heads of state – Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea – have pledged to ensure, again, compliance with the Agreement on Cooperation and Non-Aggression between these three countries. Therefore, the "three Heads of State agreed to work collectively to restore peace in Sierra Leone and [to] maintain stability in the subregion" (UN, 1998c, p. 3). But negotiations for peacebuilding in Sierra Leone only happen in an effective way if hostilities were ceased. This is what was proposed by the President of Togo, Gnassingbe Eyadema, on 7 January 1999 in a recommendation directed to the president of Sierra Leone, Kabbah (UN, 1999c). As a recommendation, the forces of ECOWAS and ECOMOG worked for peace and this mission existed to support the Government of Sierra Leone in order to put an end to the armed conflict (UN, 1999c).

2 The Mano River Union (MRU) was created in 1973 from an economic cooperation agreement between Liberia and Sierra Leone. In 1980 the Republic of Guinea was admitted as a member, followed by Ivory Coast in 2008. The agreement established an economic base with prospect of promoting peace, amity, freedom and progress between those signatories.

At that time, the Government of Sierra Leone was unable to provide advances on ending hostilities. Consequently, the political sector remained unstable. The country was totally dependent on external intervention because it was not able to manage a peace process independently. As much as UNOMSIL staved off a direct intervention, more the armed conflict got new proportions. In this situation, President Kabbah pressed the UN in order to have more effective resolutions. He asked the Security Council, especially its permanent members, to be pressure on states and individuals who continued to supply the weapons and logistics used to spillover the armed conflict.

President Kabbah stated that it was no longer enough for the Council to condemn the activities of the rebels, but to consider the possibility of taking further action, not excluding the threat of force, against the rebels in order to give effect to the Council's previous demands that the rebels cease all violence and seek genuine dialogue for the restoration of lasting peace and stability in Sierra Leone (UN, 1999d, p. 4).

Kabbah's request, which referred to a more active UN intervention, can be analyzed based on the normative power that the institution sets to a certain structure. But, in contrast, did not result in a structural change. Even the Security Council "condemned" the attacks of the rebel force, its position at different times of the armed conflict in which the SC "demands that the rebels lay down their arms immediately and cease all violence" (UN, 1999g, p. 1), "stresses the importance of dialogue and national reconciliation for the restoration of lasting peace and stability to Sierra Leone", "expresses its concern at the serious humanitarian consequences of the escalating fighting in Sierra Leone" (UN, 1999g, p. 2), "urges all States urgently to provide resources (...) to help maintain an effective peacekeeping presence in Sierra Leone", "expresses its intention to continue to monitor the situation closely, and to consider urgently any further action which may be necessary", "commands, once again, the continued efforts of the Government of Sierra Leone and the ECOMOG (...) and calls for sustained support for ECOMOG from the international community" (UN, 1999b, p. 1) and "[s]tresses the urgent need to promote peace and national reconciliation and to foster accountability and respect for human rights in Sierra Leone" (UN, 1999h, p. 2), did not represent any intention to promote an intervention, but the UN estrangement in establishing and promoting peace, both negative and positive.

The second result obtained with the contact between the three leaders of the *Mano River Union* was the announcement by the Government of Liberia, in which stood out, with the UN, the repatriation of citizens, and offered amnesty to Liberians who were participating in the Sierra Leone civil war (UN, 1999d). Even the UN wanted to abstain from a more direct intervention in Sierra Leone, the political processes among the countries of the *Mano River Union*, had an influence on the institution's performance.

The future of the UNOMSIL – based on the scope of the mission, its mandate and its configuration – depended on two factors: the signing of any peace agreement between the government and RUF and the strengthening of activities performed by ECOMOG (UN, 1999i). The assignment of the Lomé Peace Agreement took place on 18 May 1999 (UN, 1999i) and was considered a milestone in the peace process in Sierra Leone because the parties involved in the armed conflict, especially RUF/AFRC (Armed Forces Revolutionary Council), proposed some conditions and demands to end the violence, such as amnesty for all RUF/AFRC's combatants and the establishment of four years of transitional government (UN, 1999i).

In response to the conditions presented by RUF/AFRC, the Government of Sierra Leone emphasized that the proposed amnesty for all combatants would be examined with the prospect of building a permanent peace, while many violations of human rights were committed against Sierra Leonean citizens (UN, 1999i). Besides that, the "government statement endorsed the importance of the transformation of RUF into a political party and pledged the Government's full support for that process" (UN, 1999i).

The signing of the agreement represented to the UN an opportunity to repair some damage caused by the armed conflict and to be an instrument for the promotion of peace and the establishment of prosperity (UN, 1999f). However, the peace process in Sierra Leone was conceived in being a result based on national effort in partnership with international assistance. The second factor – strengthening the activities of ECOMOG – was uncertain. Since the beginning of its operations in Sierra Leone, the strengthening of ECOMOG was a response faced its vulnerability to the hostilities of the RUF/AFRC's attacks, even then the UN has established that "ECOMOG should remain in Sierra Leone as a stabilizing influence, with a well-defined mandate that would include ensuring the security of vital areas of the country" (UN, 1999i, p. 12). However, the UN recommended the Security Council the deployment of a *United Nations force* that, in joint operation with the military observers from the UNOMSIL, should integrate the new phase of the intervention in Sierra Leone, called the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone – UNAMSIL (UN, 1999f).

UNAMSIL: a peace mission?

The hostilities occurred during the attempts to promote peace in Sierra Leone evidenced the need for direct intervention in the country. It was evident that the objectives proposed by UNOMSIL had to be redesigned and expanded to put an end to these hostilities. The constant weaknesses in security, humanitarian, political and economic issues, as well as the shortcomings of the Government of Sierra Leone, the forces of ECOMOG and the CDF in dealing with the armed conflict, resulted in the emergence of a new UN intervention phase in the country – the United Nations Mission in Sierra

Leone (UNAMSIL). Authorized by the Security Council on 22 October 1999, pursuant to resolution 1270 (UN, 1999j), the UNAMSIL remained in Sierra Leone until 31 December 2005, by resolution 1620 (UN, 2005a), totaling six years of intervention. Different from the first mission, UNAMSIL was more active in Sierra Leone, regarding its amount of military to act in the peace process, its units spread over almost the entire territory of the country, as also its responsibility on ensure the safety of its staff, without excluding the responsibility of the Government of Sierra Leone and ECOMOG to act together in this sector (UN, 1999j).

This second phase of intervention can and should be analyzed as a result of the process of interaction between the different agents of the conflict considering the issues' dynamics analyzed in the first UN observer mission. And the result of this interaction can be seen both in the change provided by the UN regarding its objectives:

- a) cooperate with the Government of Sierra Leone and other parties to the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement; b) assist the Government of Sierra Leone to implement the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration plan (DDR); c) establish a presence in key locations in the territory of Sierra Leone; d) ensure the security and freedom of movement of UN personnel; e) monitor the ceasefire as set out in the Lomé Agreement; f) encourage the parties to create confidence-building mechanisms and provide support for its operation; g) to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance; h) to support the operations of United Nations officials; i) support, when required, the elections (UN, 1999j, pp. 2-3).

At this stage, UNAMSIL achieved some objectives, such as the disarmament of hundreds of ex-combatants, assistance in the presidential elections, support in rebuilding the police force and contributing to the functioning of the government's infrastructure and basic services to the community (UN, 2001a). However, its presence in the field has proved vulnerable to the hostilities in Sierra Leone, where hundreds of peacekeepers were kidnapped in May 2000 (UN, 2000a) and later, when the peace process was influenced by the outbreak of conflict in Liberia (UN, 2000a). These situations had an influence on the Security Council in order to make it authorizes, again, a change in the mission's scope, providing a character of *peace enforcement* on it, regarding the adoption of the Brahimi report by the UN as the strengthening of peace missions.

In addition, it would be essential for the international community to demonstrate the necessary will and resolve to sustain such a commitment to impose peace in Sierra Leone. If such conditions cannot be met, UNAMSIL would unduly raise expectations, increase the risk of loss of life, and undermine the credibility of the Organization. (UN, 2000a, p. 15).

As in the first mission, the analysis of the extension of the armed conflict by the UN will be made from the involvement of UNAMSIL in security, humanitarian, political and

economic issues. The purpose is to identify gaps at different times of the peace process in the second phase, but also to emphasize the progress made by the UN in each of the mentioned sectors and justify the need to maintain the UN presence in Sierra Leone even after the end of the armed conflict in 2002.

Security structure

The security situation that has spread since the beginning of the armed conflict in Sierra Leone can be considered one of the main factors in which the UN's interventions became vulnerable on the ground. The change in the mission's scope did not have an immediate positive impact on the UN's responsibility in promoting the cessation of hostilities. Therefore, the mission continued to work in partnership with ECOMOG's forces to ensure security in the country and to implement the DDR program (UN, 1999j). Gradually, the situation became more hostile, resulting in attacks in October and November 1999 as a result of violations of the cease-fire agreement and abuses of human rights (UN, 1999j). The weakness in the security issue hindered the development of the mission, which became the subject of the RUF attacks such as occurred on 3 January 2000, when 100 fighters tried to attack a UNAMSIL's unit which was responsible for the disarmament program (UN, 2000b).

In this sense, the UN acknowledged that establishing and maintaining security in the country – which was characterized by the removal of the threat from the implementation of the reintegration program of ex-combatants and the promotion of a recovery into the social and economic issues in Sierra Leone – were essential conditions for the success of the peace process. At that time, UNAMSIL assumed gradually more responsibilities in the security issue once peace process was still fragile (UN, 2000b). The first step taken was to assume the responsibility of the ECOMOG based on the increase of the UNAMSIL's field of work (UN, 2000b; 2000c). Although resolution 1289 (UN, 2000c) have increased the number of the UN militaries, hostilities undermined peacekeepers' work, compromising the effectiveness of the mission. The peace process established by peacekeepers suffered several attacks, such as the detention of the UN personnel and the destruction of one area which was available to the DDR program (UN 2000a).

Under these circumstances, the recommendation provided by the UN which was directed to itself was based on the advice of assuming the control in Sierra Leone to, consequently, minimize the hostilities and the differences between the national government and the RUF rebels as also between RUF rebels and the UN peacekeepers. The recommendation proposed by the UN to prevent hostilities were based on the reinforcement of the peace process, regarding the defense of strategic positions, such as at the airport in Lungi and other places in East and West of the country, as well as the increase in the number of peacekeepers, rising to 13.000 military (UN, 2000a). In this sense Pinto (2011) emphasizes that “the lack of adequate preparation of peacekeepers and their

vulnerability to the belligerents (...) expose the weaknesses and inadequacies of the current peacekeeping molds”³.

Fearing that the security situation became more tenuous in establishing a peace process, the UN sent troops to the UNAMSIL in four phases (UN, 2000a) as a strategy to provide necessary actions to monitor the mission and as a result of other actors’ interference in the conflict. The first phase consisted in the presence of the UNAMSIL in strategic locations to the West and East of Sierra Leone and the inclusion of a monitoring unit by the sea, with a foothold in Freetown (UN, 2000a). The second phase depended on the conditions on the ground and it was associated with the activities established by the DDR program. Once it was able, the UNAMSIL would move gradually eastward, depending on a careful analysis of the situation on the ground and ensure safety as the inclusion of former combatants into the society. The third phase was marked by deploying troops in the diamond-producing areas and border areas in the Eastern Province of Sierra Leone (UN, 2001b). The last one was marked by a transition of responsibilities, in which UNAMSIL would begin to hand over its security responsibilities to the Government and, gradually, to reduce its strength (UN, 2000a).

The implementation of these phases would require a very strong presence for the maintenance of peace, which should operate on the basis of a clearly defined and implementable mandate with pragmatic deadlines (UN, 2000a). While the reduction of UNAMSIL troops was not held, its actions were committed to strengthening its military power (UN, 2000a). The strengthening could arise through the acquisition of materials that could monitor the area for 24 hours (UN, 2000a), but also other external actors such as the United Kingdom Government’s support, announcing a military assistance package both for the Government of Sierra Leone and for the UNAMSIL, which included the training of the Armed Forces of Sierra Leone to work together with the UN peacekeeping (UN, 2000d).

The clashes on the borders of Sierra Leone with Guinea in 2001 intensified hostilities and brought another dimension to the armed conflict: conceived firstly as an intrastate, it passed to the intrastate level, further aggravating the security situation in both countries. In response to the cross-border attacks, Guinean forces intensified shelling and launched helicopter attacks in positions that were supposed points of support of the RUF, causing civilian casualties and increasing the number of IDPs (UN, 2001c). All these events in Sierra Leone highlight the continuing deterioration in the security issue, which hinders the peace process. According to the UN (2002a), two challenges emerged: one, based on the impact of the armed conflict in Liberia on Sierra Leone’s

3 Free translation from the portuguese quote “a falta de preparação adequada dos peacekeepers e a sua vulnerabilidade face aos beligerantes em contextos em que a sua presença não é amplamente aceite, expõe, as fragilidades e a inadequação dos moldes actuais do peacekeeping” (p. 162).

stability remained a source of serious concern. It was inconceivable to contemplate sustained peace in Sierra Leone in an unstable neighborhood.

The second challenge in this process was related to the lack of preparation and lack of capacity of the Sierra Leone's armed forces and civil police in assuming the security issue throughout the country after the end of UNAMSIL (UN, 2002a). As the armed conflict ended in 2002, the UN's concern about the capacity of Sierra Leone in assuming the security in the country was due to the knowledge of the weaknesses regarding this sector by the national government (UN, 2003b). In this sense, was the government of Sierra Leone prepared to assume its security issue after UNAMSIL leaving the country? Regardless of the answer be 'yes' or 'no', UNAMSIL began to reduce its contingent.

Moreover, the gradual decrease of UNAMSIL occurred because the UN did not believe that there were "security threats" in the country and that the internal peace process depended directly on the subregion peace process, especially in Liberia and the Ivory Coast (UN, 2003c). Parallel to the decrease in the mission contingent, UNAMSIL continued to provide support to the Government of Sierra Leone with regard to the joint work to strengthen the structure of the state and police in the border of the country, while the UK Government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) led efforts to equip the police and rehabilitate its infrastructure.

In this regard, resolution 1562 (UN, 2004) which authorized the permanence of UNAMSIL until the end of 2005, provided a new phase to the UN intervention in the following years in order to justify that the United Nations were "not leaving Sierra Leone altogether, but will be adjusting its strategy in the light of new challenges" (UN, 2005b, p. 14). To continue on the work to strengthen state's structures and, consequently, attend the demands of these new challenges in promoting peace, it was necessary to establish a sequence of actions in the security issue, such as supporting the military and civil police in patrolling the diamond production areas, supporting the civil police in maintaining internal order and the Special Court for Sierra Leone, assisting Sierra Leone in the recruitment program, training and monitoring the police staff and protecting the UN personnel (UN, 2004). However, the situation in Sierra Leone remained fragile (UN, 2005b) and much more still needed to be done in regarding the security issue in order to promote stability in Sierra Leone and recover it from the consequences of the armed conflict.

Humanitarian structure

Hostilities in Sierra Leone affected directly humanitarian issues in the country. During the second phase of the UN mission, the situation regarding human rights has proved worse. The frequency in which the attacks occurred further hindered the free movement of civilians and humanitarian supplies access (UN, 1999j). The result of this reality can be observed by 2.6 million civilians who remained without food and medical aid

for months (UN, 2000b). Moreover, this fact was negatively influenced by RUF attacks against UNAMSIL officials which took place in May 2000 (UN, 2000d). And even there was an end to the armed conflict, human losses were to perpetuate for the long run. This analysis is based not only on the structural damage of the country, such as destruction of buildings, houses and roads; but also those damages regarding others types of violence committed against children, women, IDPs and refugees.

This scenario is the main challenge – both for the Government of Sierra Leone and the UN peacekeeping mission – with regard to the promotion of the human potentiality. Taking into account that there was a gap of seven years between the beginning of the armed conflict in Sierra Leone and the deployment of the first UN intervention, violence against this international was also aggravated, constituting a threat to the future of the country. During the UNAMSIL completion plan, the recommendation was to strengthen the Government of Sierra Leone's structures and programs and its partners in order to protect children who acted in the civil war, whether defending RUF or defending the Government of Sierra Leone (UN, 2000d; 2003c).

To facilitate the implementation of this task, UNAMSIL began a joint work with the non-governmental organization *Physicians for Human Rights* and local researchers in order to collect information about children who acted defending RUF and women and girls who were sexually abused. The data was used to elaborate a better plan to protect those them (UN, 2001a; 2001c). Besides children, the situation of women during the armed conflict was also considered a case of constant concern for the UN. The UNAMSIL's Human Rights Section continued to promote women's rights from the monitoring program in order to collect information regarding cases of sexual abuse committed by both RUF rebels as by UN peacekeepers (UN, 2005d).

The situation of IDPs and refugees was a direct reflection of the increase in hostilities in Sierra Leone. According to the UN, the protection of IDPs and refugees continued to be a source of great concern, which needs to be urgently resolved (UN 2000a). IDPs and refugees not only suffered the loss of their homes as they have also become victims of abductions and forced labor committed by RUF (UN, 2000a). During the attacks against the UN staff in May 2000, there were more than 300,000 new IDPs. Consequently, the expansion and the creation of new camps to accommodate all of them were not enough, which generated up to three times overcrowding in comparison to the actual capacity of the camps. At that time, the armed conflict had affected 1.5 million people. One million of this total amount was in inaccessible areas under RUF control and lacked humanitarian assistance (UN, 2000d).

In 2001, the armed conflict has generated 1 million of refugees (UN, 2001d). The constant movement of refugees and IDPs had serious implications on the recovery process of the national government, to the population of the sub-region and to the international community. The reason for that is based due to the fact that refugees and IDPs

were constituted by government officials, teachers and professionals working in basic services in the country. As the United Nations mentioned, the promotion of a better security and political conditions was directly related to the improvements for refugees and IDPs, but the institution believed that there were not favorable conditions for their return (UN, 2001d).

In an attempt to punish the crimes against humanity committed in the country, the government of Kabbah sent a letter to the UN on 12 June 2000 requesting the institution's assistance to establish a Special Court for Sierra Leone. The Court's jurisdiction included genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other violations regarding the international humanitarian law. Concomitantly, UNAMSIL continued to work with the national government to restore the functioning of basic public services such as clinics for hospital care, schools and seed distribution programs with the help of UNICEF, WFP and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations – FAO (UN, 2001b). Schools began to be reopened in all parts of the country from 2004 and were carried out programs for training teachers. This action resulted immediately in increased enrollment by 70% compared the last two years (UN, 2004). Despite the advances to contain and minimize the humanitarian weaknesses, the UN presence after the end of UNAMSIL would be required to continue the monitoring work on the human rights situation in the country because factors such as high levels of poverty, illiteracy, discrimination against woman, corruption and high unemployment continued to cause concern to the international community (UN, 2004, 2005b), emphasizing the idea that peace cannot be promoted without political, economic and social marginalization are resolved in Sierra Leone through intervention.

Political and economic structures

When the UN authorized the first peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), it was found that its main interest was to let both national government and Sierra Leoneans assuming the end of the armed conflict and, consequently, in promoting peace. The second mission was not different in this issue. The main UNAMSIL's objectives focused on the restoration of the Government of Sierra Leone's authority, restoration of the justice and order to gradually stabilize the situation in the country "and to assist in the promotion of a political process which should lead to a renewed DDR programme and the holding, in due course, of free and fair elections" (UN, 2001c, p. 9).

This second phase of the UN intervention was marked by the inclusion of four RUF/AFRC's members to integrate the Government of National Unity and the transformation of the rebel force into a new political party: the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUF) on 22 November 1999, which was conceived in the Lomé Peace Agreement (UN, 1999j). Despite the apparent political progress, the sector was still unstable because it would be necessary to maintain a dialogue with RUF to negotiate the end of hostilities

and to promote political stability in the region, especially in Liberia. One evidence of this instability in the region took place on 21 November 2000, when the former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, requested the withdrawal of UK troops which were active in Sierra Leone, if they had not been requested by the UNAMSIL (UN, 2000d).

Another evidence happened after the kidnapping of the UN peacekeepers when the UNAMSIL became able to maintain contact with RUF on 27 November 2000. The UN mission received a letter containing RUF's responses regarding its participation in a workshop based on peacebuilding activities. This exchange of letters resulted in a meeting between UNAMSIL and RUF on 1 December 2000. During the discussions, "the UNAMSIL representatives emphasized the urgent need for RUF to show concrete signs of compliance with the ceasefire agreement of 10 November, in particular, the confidence-building measures contained therein" (UN, 2000d, p. 2). Consequently, there was a new meeting between UNAMSIL and RUF on 8 December 2000 and UNAMSIL stressed the importance of maintaining a constant communication with the rebel forces in order to intensify efforts to promote peace in Sierra Leone.

As a result, RUF proposed to assume some responsibilities, such as opening the roads that were in its control, delivering all weapons and equipment to UNAMSIL, accepting the deployment of military observers and troops from UNAMSIL in the country and allow NGOs and government organizations in providing humanitarian activities in the areas in which the national government had no control. Another challenge, given the political instability in the country, would be to provide support to the presidential elections scheduled for 2002. The aim was to prevent atrocities which occurred in previous years, such as mutilation of the hands of civilians during the electoral process in 1996 (TRC, 2004b). Regarding this scenario, the UN was faced with new adaptations of its intervention strategy (UN, 2000d; 2001b).

The strategies used for elections were authorized by resolution 1370 (UN, 2001e) in which it recognized that extending the administrative activities of UNAMSIL, as well as the holding of elections "fair, free and transparent" were necessary to promote sustainable peace and development in Sierra Leone. The engagement of the UNAMSIL in this process was considered important because it was a way to protect elections from hostilities. After elections, UNAMSIL troops remained on alert in 39 locations in order to avoid any disturbance to public order (UN, 2002a). The 2002 elections marked the consolidation of the second phase of UNAMSIL and began the third one, which aimed to monitor the new government elected as its political authority conquest (UN, 2002b).

Recognizing the need to keep UNAMSIL on the ground, the mission was extended for more six months until September 2002, pursuant to resolution 1400 (UN, 2002c). Even that, the UN declared that the elections without hostilities were not a sustainable solution to the crisis in Sierra Leone. Although the political situation in the country remained

relatively stable until 2005, year that marked the end of UNAMSIL, there were numerous factors considered as potential threats to the stability of the country, such as the widespread of poverty, unemployment especially among young people, corruption in the public sector, shortcomings in the judicial system, and resource constraints that may inhibit the government to provide services to the population (UN, 2005c).

Although the economy is not included as a primary cause of the armed conflict in the scope of this argument, the economic situation, especially the diamond trade, was considered a major factor for its extension (Hirsch, 2000). And the decisions provided by the UNAMSIL regarding the security, humanitarian and political issues had a direct influence on the economy of the country because the economic growth depended on the results obtained by the actions of both the national government and UNAMSIL. The UNAMSIL's efforts were directly related to the attempt to curb the illegal trade and thus prevent the support of the conflict.

Emphasizing that the legitimate diamond trade is of great economic importance for many States, and can make a positive contribution to prosperity and stability and to the reconstruction of countries emerging from conflict, and emphasizing further that nothing in this resolution is intended to undermine the legitimate diamond trade or to diminish confidence in the integrity of the legitimate diamond industry (UN, 2000c, p. 1).

The main objective of this measure was to enable the Government of Sierra Leone as a regulator of diamond trade and security provider in the diamond mines (UN, 2001f) by two factors: in one hand, the illegal mining and the international diamond trade played an important role in fostering violent conflict in Sierra Leone, and remained a potential source of instability (UN, 2002d) and, on the other hand, because UNAMSIL began its withdrawal plan. Therefore, “[r]estoration of effective government control over diamond mining has become even more urgent as UNAMSIL draws down” (UN, 2002d, p. 6) and the national government would be responsible for keeping track and monitor diamond trade in the country to prevent non-state actors to begin to control this sector. When the national government assumed the control of the diamond trade there was an increase in the number of diamond mining licenses which rose from 900 in June 2002, to 2091 by the end of 2003, while consolidated exports of diamonds increased from US\$ 10 million in 2000 to US\$ 76 million in 2003 (UN, 2003c; 2004). Even the national government started monitoring the diamond trade, the international community did not identify safety-related efforts (UN, 2003d). Lacked policing in diamond mines and this aspect constituted a vacuum (UN, 2003a) which could be considered a factor in the resurgence of hostilities. “The Government [of Sierra Leone] is making further efforts to improve the quality and number of mine monitors in key areas and has also commenced publishing diamond export analyzed on a monthly basis.” (UN, 2003c, p. 7).

In this regard, the continuous improvement of the security situation, combined with sound macroeconomic policies and large external aid flows, has stimulated the beginning of the economic recovery and price stability, after years of depression and high inflation. Inflation was slightly negative in 2000, while real GDP expanded almost 4 percent and the agricultural sector, rice production increased 78%, but still accounted for only 50% of current needs (UN, 2001f). This recovery was the result of a 47% increase in the total area planted, due to the increased access of farmers to their land, and seed distribution program, benefiting 144,000 farmers with 5,772 tons of rice. The apparent growth of the economy would not mitigate the short-term crisis. The social and economic problems continued to be a catalyst for frustration among the population, because the prices of the commodities and imported goods continued to rise in Freetown and throughout the country, with the record of a series of public sector strikes as the late payment of wages and benefits (UN, 2004).

Conclusion

The UN Peacekeeping Operations deployed in Sierra Leone – UNOMSIL and UNAMSIL – not only brought to the surface the challenges to achieve a positive peace as well as became an issue of concern by the international system. The issues analyzed in this paper – security, humanitarian, political and economic – enabled a comprehensiveness, not on success or failure, but how the UN peacekeeping operation became vulnerable on the ground. In both missions, the UN became an easy target for the rebels forces. If the first mission has been defined in this paper as a palliative mission regarding the necessity of being on the ground with a military force, the second one revealed how the UN was fragile face different types of vulnerabilities. In this mission – UNAMSIL – 300 peacekeepers were kidnapped, representing a gap in what was specified by UNAMSIL's mandate and its work in the field. Besides that, the second peacekeeping operation faced the spillover effect of the armed conflict in Sierra Leone, regarding the influence which emerged in Liberia and Guinea.

Therefore, it was a hard work in providing security stability in this issue considering that scenario. Consequently, structural violence put in practice by the national government before the outbreak of the armed conflict is directly related to the level of violence perpetrated by the Revolutionary United Front during the civil war and, also, the same level of violence which was put into practice by the UN peacekeepers, who were also responsible for sexual abuse against women and girls. Even the armed conflict had an end in December 2002, Sierra Leone does not remain in peace. The end of the direct violence between RUF and the national government does not represent and end in the structural violence in the country. Sierra Leone is one of the most poorer countries in the world. Once the UN is responsible for providing international security and peace, one question is necessary: what kind of peace? Just a negative one, symbolized by the end of direct violence, marked by the end of hostilities in that case; or a positive peace,

symbolized by an equitable society? In the case of the missions analyzed, there are much more of negative peace than positive one, which pose unaccountable challenges in providing peace before, during and after an armed conflict.

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