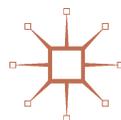


**CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN
POLITICAL ECONOMY**

AFRICAN
FOREIGN POLICIES
IN INTERNATIONAL
INSTITUTIONS



**EDITED BY
JASON WARNER
& TIMOTHY M. SHAW**



Contemporary African Political Economy

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“This rich collection of essays by an impressive group of diverse African and Western scholars is a substantial contribution to a much understudied field, and deserves to be widely read by scholars and practitioners.”

—Dr. Adekeye Adebajo, *Director, Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation, University of Johannesburg*

“*African Foreign Policies in International Institutions* is the right book at the right time. As African foreign policies and multilateral institutions evolve to meet the challenges of the 21st century, this book explains the complexities inherent in Africa's pursuit of its collective interests in the world. It is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand Africa's place in the emerging global order.”

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“Shaw and Warner have studiously assembled a remarkable collection: well-conceived, impeccably executed, and all-encompassing in its breadth, depth, and significance. The book provides valuable insights from diverse perspectives on how African states conduct their foreign policies within international organizations, demonstrating how international organizations matter in a globalized world, and how African states can use them at sub-regional, continental, and global levels to advance their foreign policy objectives. This work will truly be acclaimed as a seminal contribution to our knowledge of the relationships between African states and international organizations.”

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“It no longer makes sense to talk of uniquely ‘African’ foreign policies nor to write off the impact of international organizations on the continent's politics. Instead, this book's case studies usefully illustrate the symbiotic relationship between African states and international organizations in the formulation and implementation of their foreign policies. They reveal how African heads of state increasingly have to compete with other actors to determine their country's foreign policies and the considerable variety of foreign policy strategies African states now adopt towards their peers and relevant international organizations.”

—Dr. Paul D. Williams, *Associate Professor, Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University*

This book is dedicated to Jim Hentz, a scholar, friend, and mentor.

FOREWORD

Conventionally, foreign policy is a set of strategies and actions conceived by a state or group of states to advance national, regional or global interests in interaction with other states and international organizations regarding any areas of human endeavor, including political, military, economic, social, cultural and environmental. Shaped by the relevant social forces determining it and in whose interest it is adopted, foreign policy is ultimately a reflection of the power dynamics in the national, regional, or global arenas. Thus, to speak of African foreign policy in international institutions, both African and global, is to interrogate its determinants, objectives, and beneficiaries. Through this volume of well-researched papers by both young and established scholars, Jason Warner and Timothy Shaw have done an excellent job in addressing these three issues with respect to the conduct of African foreign policies in and towards international organizations.

With respect to the determinants of foreign policy, I wholeheartedly endorse the volume's argument that "observers should understand African states to make foreign policy along broadly similar logics as do other non-African states." For a long time, Western scholars have had the tendency of treating Africa as a unique, if not abnormal, case in world politics. Our leaders were always portrayed as patrimonial and corrupt, as though patrimonialism, nepotism and corruption were unknown in other parts of the world, including the developed Western democracies. Foreign policy in African countries was usually portrayed as being

determined by the ruler's obsession with self-enrichment and regime security rather than national welfare and human security.

What this radical dichotomy between personal and national interests seemed to ignore is that regime security was in many cases threatened by foreign powers who did everything to keep in power those authoritarian and corrupt incumbents they liked, while they sought to overthrow leaders who were determined to use their countries' natural resources to improve the living conditions of their peoples. Examples of the latter case include the Suez crisis of 1956 and Western hostility to Egyptian president Gamal Abdul Nasser; Western-backed military coups d'état against radical leaders like Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana) and Modibo Keita (Mali); and the assassinations of visionary leaders such as Félix Moumié (Cameroon), Patrice Lumumba (DRC), Louis Rwagasore (Burundi), Amílcar Cabral (Guinea-Bissau/Cape Verde), Thomas Sankara (Burkina Faso), and Chris Hani (South Africa).

In addition to advancing regime and national interests, African foreign policy objectives do include peace and security as well as economic cooperation and integration at the sub-regional and continental levels. Several of the contributions to the volume deal with these issues, including the role of the African Union (AU) through its Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in conflict prevention and peacekeeping, and the AU involvement in developing a continental foreign economic policy. Except for the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the RECs seem to be more involved in peace and security matters than in economic integration and development. In both areas, a major weakness is their dependence on external funding, instead of mobilizing their own resources domestically.

The challenges facing the continent in both areas of peace and security and development include the fight against terrorism and improving the quality of life of ordinary people through developmental regionalism. The limits of the RECs in putting an end to terrorism and trans-border crimes such as drug and human trafficking have been exposed in both west Africa and the Horn of Africa. On the one hand, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), despite its positive contribution in ending civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, is currently unable to cope with the proliferation of terrorist groups in the sub-region and the staying power of drug traffickers in Guinea-Bissau and in the Sahel. On the other hand, the Intergovernmental Authority for

Development (IGAD) is incapable of coping with the Al Shabab insurgency, piracy and banditry in Somalia and Kenya. New sub-regional groups or arrangements are being created to deal with terrorism, particularly in ungoverned spaces such as the Liptako-Gourma border region between Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso. These three countries, along with Mauritania and Chad, have established the G5 Sahel group to fight Jihadists and other criminal groups active within their borders.

One way of defeating the Jihadists and other transnational threats to security is to transform African economies so they could cease being dependent on the export of primary commodities and begin producing manufactured goods and thus generate more jobs. As outlined in the Lagos Plan of Action, such a strategy can best be achieved through economic cooperation and integration sub-regionally and regionally. At the present, the best strategy for attaining the goal of economic transformation in Africa is the 5 major priorities of the African Development Bank, which call for (1) electrifying Africa, (2) feeding Africa, (3) industrializing Africa, (4) integrating Africa, and (5) improving the well-being of Africans. The ADB is already involved in the funding of the Grand Inga project for the biggest hydroelectric dam in the world. If completed, it will have the capacity to generate 40,000 MW, or twice the power of the Three Gorges Dam in China, and furnish 40% of Africa's electricity. With its arable land, 80% of Africa's fresh water and other assets, Central Africa can feed the entire African continent. But, as Samir Amin has argued in most of his writings on Africa, the industrialization of African agriculture is the *sine qua non* of development and the amelioration of the standard of living of Africans.

Finally, with respect to the beneficiaries of African foreign policy, it is important to point out that African leaders, however self-centered or corrupt they might have been, did not consider foreign policy as designed exclusively for their own narrow interests. The most important achievement of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was its unswerving opposition to colonialism and white minority rule. The organization provided moral and material support to liberation movements against Portuguese Fascism and white racism in southern Africa, and succeeded in ostracizing apartheid South Africa and having it excluded from many international organizations, including the Olympic Games. Detractors of the OAU must remember that despite its weaknesses, it succeeded in promoting peace and stability through the principle of the inviolability of the colonially-inherited borders and that of the

peaceful settlement of all interstate disputes by negotiations, mediation, conciliation, or arbitration. When it became evident that internal conflicts were the major issue, the OAU adopted in 1993 the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, which is the precursor to the AU's PSC.

It is also significant to note that African leaders betrayed their pan-African principles at the UN World Conference Against Racism (or Durban I) in 2001 by siding with their Western donors or "development partners" in refusing to endorse the demand for reparations for slavery by their brothers and sisters from the Diaspora. In this act, as in the lack of commitment to pan-African solidarity with victims of armed conflict or gross violations of human rights on the continent (Uganda under Idi Amin, Central African Republic under Bokassa, Rwanda, Burundi, DRC, etc.), the OAU and the AU are not that much different from one another. The AU does in principle have beautiful documents on human rights, democracy, elections and governance, in addition to an increased role in internal conflicts as part of what former AU Chairperson Alpha Oumar Konaré once referred to as "the pan-African right of intervention in domestic conflicts" in cases of gross violations of human rights, but there are severe limits to its ability to do so. Like the OAU, it is still dependent on external funding for most of its programs.

Most of the issues raised in this foreword are discussed in detail in the chapters of this book. Readers will find it very thought-provoking and informative on African foreign policy in international institutions.

Chapel Hill, NC, US

Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja
University of North Carolina at
Chapel Hill

CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction: African Foreign Policies and International Organizations: The View from the Twenty-First Century** 1
Jason Warner
- Part I African Foreign Policies in African International Institutions**
- 2 An Ambivalence to the Norm Cycle: The African Union’s “New” Approach to Continental Peace and Security** 19
Jide Martyns Okeke
- 3 The AU and Continental Foreign Economic Policymaking in Africa: Institutions and Dialectics on Integration in the Global Economy** 33
Kwame Akonor
- 4 The Troubled Socialising Agent: Democratic Governance and the African Union’s Quest to Become an Independent Foreign Policy Actor** 49
Chris Landsberg

- 5 Beyond the Collective: The Comparative Strategic Utility of the African Union and RECs in Individual National Security Pursuits** 63
Jason Warner
- 6 The Role of African Regional Organizations in Post-Election Governments of National Unity** 79
Alexander Noyes
- 7 Nationalism Underpinned by Pan-Regionalism: African Foreign Policies in ECOWAS in An Era of Anti-Globalization** 95
Raheemat Momodu
- 8 The Intergovernmental Authority on Development: Internal Culture of Foreign Policymaking and Sources of Weaknesses** 113
Redie Bereketeab
- 9 The Uses (and Abuses) of the Economic Community of Central African States: The Hidden Functions of Regional Economic Community Membership for African Regimes** 127
Graham Palmateer and John F. Clark
- 10 The Instrumentalisation of SADC to Achieve Foreign Policy Agendas** 149
Tim Murithi
- Part II African Foreign Policies in Global International Institutions**
- 11 Partnering for Peace: United Nations and African Union Cooperation in Peace and Security** 165
Colin Stewart and Line Holmung Andersen

- 12 African Agency and the World Bank in the Twenty-First Century** 183
Karelle Samuda
- 13 South Africa's Foreign Policy and the International Criminal Court: Of African Lessons, Security Council Reform, and Possibilities for an Improved ICC** 199
Max Du Plessis and Christopher Gevers
- 14 The International Labor Organization and African States: Internationalizing States and Dispersed Foreign Policy** 215
Nick Bernards
- 15 Global Humanitarian Organizations and African Goals: The Case of Médecins Sans Frontières in South Africa** 229
Jessica L. Anderson
- Part III Country Case Studies of African Foreign Policies in International Institutions**
- 16 Consistency in Inconsistency: South Africa's Foreign Policies in International Organizations** 247
John Akokpari
- 17 Leverage in a Tight Space: Zimbabwean Foreign Policy in International Organizations** 265
Sarah J. Lockwood
- 18 Angola's Measured Distance from International Organizations** 283
Assis Malaquias
- 19 Decolonizing International Relations: Insights from the International Financial Institutions in the Congo During the Cold War** 297
Carol Jean Gallo

20	Nigeria's Foreign Policy in Relation to the Economic Community of West African States	311
	Cyril Obi	
21	Senegalese Foreign Policy: Leadership Through Soft Power from Senghor to Sall	327
	Mamadou Bodian and Catherine Lena Kelly	
22	International Organizations as Shields in Cameroonian Foreign Policy	353
	Ada Peter and Remi Mbida Mbida	
23	Regional Powers, Great Power Allies, and International Institutions: The Case of Ethiopia	371
	Michael Woldemariam	
24	Djibouti's Foreign Policy in International Institutions: The Big Diplomacy of a Small State	389
	Sonia Le Gouriellec	
25	Conclusion: The Future Nexus of African Foreign Policies, International Institutions, and Developmental Regionalism	403
	Timothy M. Shaw	
	Index	417

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Introduction

African Foreign Policies and International Organizations: The View from the Twenty-First Century

Jason Warner

Beginning with Hegelian tropes describing Africa as a “land of childhood” and “enveloped in the dark mantle of night,” even the more ostensibly inclusive post-World War II Western academy found Africa as a generally an inadmissible, or at least, uninteresting, topic of study for a specialist of international relations (IR). This trend was squarely bucked in the post-Cold War era, with Christopher Clapham’s (1996) *Africa and the International System*, which remains the standard-bearer for rigorous analysis of African international relations. And, while no analogous single-authored works have approached the topic of African international relations as broadly, sundry edited volumes (Harbeson and Rothchild 2000; Dunn and Shaw 2001; Brown and Harmon 2013; Murithi 2014; Bischoff et al. 2015) have worked to bring African states into the mainstream of the study of IR. More narrowly, another series of excellent edited volumes—though

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now decades old—(Mazrui 1969; Shaw and Aluko 1984; Wright 1998; Khadiagala and Lyons 2001a) worked to interrogate the nature of African foreign policies more acutely. Concurrently, editions too numerous to be named individually have investigated the nature of foreign policy processes of larger African states, especially South Africa and Nigeria. While various factors account for the general aversion to the study of African foreign policies, – including problems associated with data collection, the difficulty of locating a purely “foreign” policy in many African states, and an apathy of Western scholars toward African foreign policy generally (Wright 1998: 1) – scant focus has been given to African foreign policies in the past several decades; nor have many of the sub-topics related thereto been investigated with rigor.

To that end, this volume addresses one of the most auspicious omissions of the still seemingly inchoate study of African international relations: how African states conduct their foreign policies in international organizations and international institutions. Thus, the contributors to this volume were presented with the following motivating questions: How do African states conduct their foreign policies within international institutions and organizations? What strategic utility do states attach to these institutions? In short, how do we understand the relationships between African states and international institutions and organizations at the sub-regional, pan-African, global, and non-governmental levels of analysis? More broadly, are there particular analytics, expectations, or logics that undergird the enactment of foreign policies in Africa? If so, in what ways might we apply insights from African experiences of statehood and statecraft to better understand the dynamics of foreign policies and international organizations in the world more broadly?

As an entry point to this edited volume, this introduction argues that while at one point in time, it might have been rightfully argued that there existed a uniquely “African” approach to the construction and effectuation of foreign policy—undergirded by what this piece refers to as the “Omnipotent African Executive” approach—the rise of a multiplicity of geopolitical actors over the past two decades has lessened the power of African executives, thus leading to more variegated African approaches to foreign policy—or what this chapter terms as the “Decentered Inputs” model of African foreign policy enactment. Precisely because of the contemporary diversity of inputs informing African foreign policy creation and effectuation, this introduction asserts that it is analytically unhelpful to attempt to corral under one

rubric the interpretation of a singular, monolithic “African” approach to foreign policymaking.

HISTORIC VIEWS OF AFRICAN FOREIGN POLICIES AND IOS: THE “OMNIPOTENT AFRICAN EXECUTIVE” MODEL

The prevailing orthodoxy in the limited study of African foreign policy-making over the past 30 years has been an assumption of the outstripped role of the executive, African head of state, in the creation of foreign policies. Or, as this chapter refers to the phenomenon, there has been a reliance on the “Omnipotent African Executive” model of foreign policy analysis. In brief, this paradigm for the study of African foreign policy understands that foreign policy has historically been made by African heads of state, who, wielding inordinate and often unchecked influence over the states and statist apparatuses over which they preside (generally due to a lack of democracy and/or an inordinate control of the military), could effectuate foreign policy decisions for their own personal benefit, rather than for the benefit of their country and its citizens. Indeed, an analysis of leadership by heads of state shows the long-held intuition of this model. Among others, the Omnipotent African Executive paradigm has been exemplified by broad and deep control of foreign policy by executives like Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire; Jean-Bédél Bokassa in the Central African Republic; Sani Abacha in Nigeria; Teodoro Obiang Nguema of Equatorial Guinea; Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe; Ali Omar Bongo of Gabon; Isaias Afiwerki of Eritrea; and, until January 2017, Yahya Jammeh of the Gambia. Given the above, the Omnipotent African Executive model has been an unsurprisingly salient way to think about the origins of African foreign policy, and one that understands African heads of state to be inextricably linked to African foreign policy construction and effectuation, and the primary reapers of its spoils, be they financial, reputational, or security related.

The Omnipotent African Executive trope of African foreign policy analysis is directly linked to the broader question of what constitutes “foreign policy” at all. A foundational—if not somewhat pedantic—statement at this point is the recognition that the construction and effectuation of “foreign policy” is an activity that is intrinsically undertaken by states themselves. Thus, though it might seem obvious, to understand what sorts of foreign policies have been produced on the African continent, one must inherently look at the nature of states and statist

apparatuses that create foreign policies. To that end, our discussion on African foreign policymaking—in international institutions or otherwise—must inherently begin at the emergence of the African state in the late 1950s and early 1960s and the sorts of playing fields that such sovereignties offered to African leaders as they ascended to power. More acutely, then, the Omnipotent African Executive mode of analysis is premised upon the notion that to the extent that a somewhat unique genre of “African” foreign policymaking exists, it is derived from the fact that Africa’s post-colonial states shared common features that were more or less unique to them, to include: late entry into the global system of states; independence by legal fiat of decolonization that required no exertion of Weberian control over territory; and a general lack of Lockean social contract between government and citizens. Put otherwise, the nature of the emergence of African states has had a direct bearing upon the nature of foreign policies that the leaders of these states have elected to pursue.

For his part, Clapham (1996) has offered one of the most thorough discussions of how the nature of the post-colonial African state engendered specific tendencies for foreign policy creation, centered on the whims of the leader. Once assuming the top executive office, African leaders, he argues, worked assiduously to command as much presence over the state and its institutions as possible, a process he refers to as the pursuit of “monopoly statehood” undertaken in the service of protecting newfound positions of power. Controlling new states’ foreign policymaking portfolios was especially valuable, given early African leaders’ omnipresent threat environment, which included rival politicians and their followers, elements of the national military, non-co-ethnic groups within the country, belligerent neighboring states, and imperialist global states. Thus, the protection of *individual* interests of leaders, most typically tied to regime security—and not broader *state* interests of geopolitical power maximization—became the desired ends that determined African foreign policymaking processes. Calculations about the utility of managing nascent states’ foreign relations meant that once assuming executive offices, African leaders realized:

[T]hey could use their role in the diplomatic game together with their internal resources, in order to help keep themselves in power, to extend their control over the national territory and to extract resources from their domestic environment with which to strike further bargains on the international scene. They could well have general moral goals such as the economic development and national unity of their states, or the achievement

of independence or majority rule for territories still under colonial or minority control, which their foreign and domestic economic policies were intended to achieve. They almost certainly had personal goals, such as glory or perhaps merely self-enrichment. But all of these depended on their ability to keep themselves going through the effective management of their external as well as their domestic environment. This was what foreign policy in African (and indeed most other) states was all about (Clapham 1996: 23).

Put in yet more explicit terms, Khadiagala and Lyons (2001b: 5) describe that:

African foreign policy decision making has always been the province of leading personalities. Foreign policy as the prerogative of presidents and prime ministers has dovetailed with post-colonial patterns of domestic power consolidation...The charismatic leader became the source, site, and embodiment of foreign policy... From this perspective, foreign policymaking emerged as a tool for leaders to both disarm their political opponents and compensate for unpopular domestic beliefs.

The Omnipotent African Executive Model: African Foreign Policies and IOs

Assuming that the Omnipotent African Executive paradigm of foreign policy analysis is true, we can also expect to derive useful sets of expectations about how African states will formulate foreign policies toward international organizations. If it is true that African foreign policies are primarily derived from leaders whose primary goals are regime security, then we can expect that: a) when African states create IOs, these IOs will hold as their primary goal to ensure regime security; b) that if many African leaders across the continent feel both insecure and can control foreign policy apparatuses, they might work together to protect mutual regime security via IOs and; c) given the primacy of regime security over statecraft, African foreign policy goals toward IOs will be rather narrow in scope.

Given these predictions of the Omnipotent African Executive model, do we see these played out in reality? Yes: the historical record indicates the profound saliency of this model in the analysis of early African foreign policy action, wherein African states understood IOs to primarily useful for the protection of incumbent regimes. To that end, a review at the creation of African IOs—especially the Organization of

African Unity (OAU) in 1963—gives tremendous credence to the Omnipotent African Executive model of foreign policy analysis. While space does not permit a thorough elucidation of the history of organization, its founding Charter (OAU 1963) vaunted, above all, non-interference, non-intervention, the respect and inviolability of colonial borders, and non-critique of member regimes. In the decades following its inception, the OAU's constituent decision to remain “ingloriously silent” (Haggis 2009) led it, and the broader intra-African community, to bear silent witness when state leaders such as Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, Idi Amin of Uganda, Moussa Traouré of Mali, Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Jean-Bédél Bokassa of the Central African Republic, and Omar al-Bashir of Sudan ravaged their populations of wealth, security, and representative governance, only rarely challenging the right of these leaders to rule. In no uncertain terms, the OAU served to ossify the privileged positions of African heads of state: perhaps no wonder then that it was often ignominiously referred to as “African Dictator’s Club.”

CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN FOREIGN POLICIES AND IOs: THE RISE OF THE DECENTERED INPUTS MODEL

While the Omnipotent African Executive paradigm of African foreign policy analysis has been shown to have had merits during a certain era, the general dearth of academic studies attempting to understand African foreign policies over the decades has meant that the literature has not moved much beyond this trope. Although it accurately described the period of African foreign policy creation and effectuation for a certain period of post-colonial history, it is here argued that this no longer the case.

Instead, the more appropriate way to think about the ways that African states now formulate their policies toward IOs and otherwise is via what this chapter calls the “Decentered Inputs” model of African foreign policymaking. In contrast to the Omnipotent African Executive Model, this chapter proposes this paradigm to accurately account for the sundry forces of globalization that have, in essence, “flattened” the capacity of some (though not all) African leaders to unilaterally commandeer the foreign policies of their states for their exclusive benefits. The Decentered Inputs approach therefore argues that African foreign policies in the twenty-first century are more rightly characterized by a proliferation of inputs—described presently—which, when combined with the still

unconsolidated nature of some states, render the logics and expectations of African foreign policymaking to be underwritten by diverse objectives and varied inputs, and thus to be non-monolithic in character.

If we propose to move away from the understanding of foreign policy as determined primarily African leaders for the purposes of regime security, what inputs should we then turn towards? This chapter suggests that a combination of the emergence of new actors, on one hand, and shifts in the geopolitical landscape, on the other, were collectively responsible for the inauguration of the new “Decentered Inputs” era of African foreign policy creation. First, the emergence of new – and sometimes newly powerful – actors has been one catalyst in taking away some foreign policymaking power from executives. Among others, these new and newly powerful actors include African bureaucracies and ministries (foreign affairs, economics, national planning, public health); national militaries; national and local civil society groups (related to economic development, gender, and education); global diasporas; think tanks; media; and universities. Simultaneously, parallel forms of traditional, pre-colonial governance continue to challenge the validity of the African state, while the rise of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) fill in for the state, and multinational corporations (MNCs) operate with budgets that can easily overwhelm the state. Moreover, the rise of conservative religious movements to include Pentecostalism in the Christian tradition and Salafism in the Islamic tradition and new insurgencies of both religious and secular bent all work in tandem to further flatten the foreign policymaking space, wresting certain amounts of agency away from leaders who historically had profound control. (For more on the increasingly disperse inputs into African foreign policy formation, see: Shaw in Chapter 25 of this volume).

Second, shifts in the post-colonial geopolitical environment have also worked to weaken African executive authority over foreign policymaking processes. Among others, we might rightly cite the rise of fiscal interventions by the international financial institutions (IFIs) in African states in the early 1980s as some of the most powerful catalysts in reducing the unilateral foreign policymaking power of African executives. Through the IFIs’ introduction of structural adjustment policies (SAPs)—which demanded privatization of state-run enterprises and reduction of state bureaucracies—they served to weakened African leaders’ networks for patrimonial relations. The end of the Cold War also hastened the weakening of the omnipotence of the African executive in foreign policymaking, with the departure of the superpowers reducing capacities for clientelistic rents,