

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rspe20>

Rwanda's Military Deployments in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Neoclassical Realist Account

Brendon J. Cannon & Federico Donelli

To cite this article: Brendon J. Cannon & Federico Donelli (2023) Rwanda's Military Deployments in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Neoclassical Realist Account, *The International Spectator*, 58:1, 109-127, DOI: 10.1080/03932729.2022.2132046

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2022.2132046>



© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group




Published online: 24 Oct 2022.



Submit your article to this journal



Article views: 2706


[View related articles](#) View Crossmark data 

Citing articles: 1 View citing articles

RESEARCH ARTICLE



Rwanda's Military Deployments in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Neoclassical Realist Account

Brendon J. Cannon ^a and Federico Donelli ^b

^aKhalifa University, Abu Dhabi; ^bUniversity of Trieste

ABSTRACT

The Rwanda Defence Force recently staged military operations against insurgents in Mozambique and the Central African Republic. Both actions were performed outside regional or multinational efforts. This makes the contemporary actions of Rwanda outliers in the international relations of Sub-Saharan Africa and heralds shifts in conflict management on the continent. An explanation is found in the application of neoclassical realist theory to the case of Rwanda – a first – as the country's leaders have taken advantage of a permissive strategic environment, high clarity, leaders' beliefs and a strategic culture to produce the output of extra-regional military deployments.

KEYWORDS

Rwanda; neoclassical realism; foreign policy; security provider; defence diplomacy

When elements of the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) swept into Cabo Delgado in northern Mozambique in mid-2021 to combat a violent Islamist insurgency, both regional and international observers were surprised. That a small state in East Africa's Great Lakes region would deploy its military into the heart of Southern Africa – let alone be invited to do so – had no historical precedent. In the space of a few months, the RDF pacified much of Cabo Delgado, agreed to train contingents of the Mozambican military and saw their deployment extended. Their intervention in Mozambique followed similar actions undertaken in the Central African Republic (CAR), a country over 3,000 km away from Mozambique and nearly half that distance from Rwanda. In CAR, Rwandan troops made headway against a variety of anti-government insurgents as part of a United Nations (UN)-sanctioned mission. In December 2020, more RDF troops were invited – based on a bilateral agreement between the leaders of Rwanda and CAR – to operate outside the UN's mandate.

The RDF's deployments and operations represent significant outliers in the international relations of Sub-Saharan African states.¹ These states' militaries have, since independence, exhibited little appetite for either bilateral deployments or for operations

Contact Brendon J. Cannon  brendon.cannon@ku.ac.ae  @cannon_brendon

¹There is some precedent, nevertheless. For example, the Moroccan military intervention in Zaire in 1977 (Boussaid 2021) and the Chadian army in CAR (2012–2014), as well as Mali (2013) and the Lake Chad Basin (Gnanguenon 2021). However, these were neither sustained nor, apart from Morocco, were they truly extra-regional. Morocco's intervention had much to do with the Cold War and French policies in Zaire. The troops were airlifted on French planes, for instance.

© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

in states outside their geographic region.² Rwanda's actions therefore signal a significant rupture with the past six decades as its leader, President Paul Kagame, seeks to identify himself and project his country – through word and deed – as an African security provider in Sub-Saharan Africa.

This theory-driven research aims to understand Rwanda's foreign policy behaviour. Specifically, we seek to explain why Rwanda's approach to African crises has recently changed by implementing a policy agenda based on military deployments to states far removed from Rwanda and its Great Lakes region. In short, Rwanda's palpable foreign policy shifts – the why, when and under what conditions it decided to promote regional security bilaterally rather than multilaterally – require explanation. In this actor-specific study, we employ neoclassical realist theory to identify and analyse the processes, outputs and effects of Rwanda's current foreign policy behaviour on the African continent, highlighting the important role of one individual, President Kagame, and one institution, the RDF, in the process. Neoclassical realism's emphasis on the international system and the nature of the strategic environment open the door for an exploration of how this small, landlocked, densely populated and resource-poor state came to possess one of Africa's most capable militaries, but also why its deployments extra-regionally became a reality.

The article proceeds as follows. First, the place of Sub-Saharan African states in International Relations (IR) is explored, highlighting the under-exploration of African foreign policy in IR, both as a discipline and in its literature. We then discuss our rationale for utilising neoclassical realism to test our case-specific study. Second, a brief history of Rwanda is provided, emphasising its foreign policy behaviour in the nearly three decades since the 1994 genocide. An exploration of Rwanda's foreign military actions and their shift from multilateral to bilateral deployments forms the third part of the article. Fourth, it analyses the interplay of internal-external factors and tests variables of neoclassical realism and their relative influence on shifts in Rwanda's foreign policy outputs in the form of military deployments. The final section forms the conclusion.

Theory and rationale

IR as a discipline has often viewed Sub-Saharan Africa as an anomaly. Cases involving Sub-Saharan Africa – despite growing interest – remain relatively marginal in the field (Brown 2012; Harman and Brown 2013; Bischoff *et al.* 2016, 1). This is compounded, *mutatis mutandis*, by a belief that African case studies fail to substantially contribute to the theoretical development of the discipline (Nkiwane 2001; Engel and Olsen 2004). As a result, the paucity of foreign policy analyses of Rwanda, Gabon or Niger, for example, is startling. This, in turn, has been partially rectified with the emergence of Global IR, the launch of new research directions and the application of IR theories to area studies (Acharya 2014; Bischoff *et al.* 2016). With a few exceptions, such as the regional powers of South Africa and Nigeria (Obi 2008; Ukaogo *et al.* 2020), however,

²Instead, Sub-Saharan African states have shown great propensity to intervene unilaterally within their own regions using their militaries (apartheid-era South Africa being the exception because it intervened in a number of conflicts throughout Sub-Saharan Africa). This has occurred most often when states are contiguous. Examples include Somalia's 1977 invasion of Ethiopia, Rwanda's and Uganda's actions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in the Congo Wars, as well as Kenya's unilateral intervention in Somalia that began in 2011.

applications of IR theory to African cases and contexts – with a continental rather than case-specific focus – remain the exception rather than the rule.³

Regions and states in Sub-Saharan Africa such as the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, Somalia and Nigeria did become the object of analysis after the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington in 2001. However, most of these focused on Islamist terrorist movements, their origins (Morier-Genoud 2020; Pérouse de Montclos 2020), their *modus operandi* (Cannon and Iyekekpolo 2018; Cannon and Pkalya 2019; Speckhard and Shajkovci 2019) and the counter-terrorism policies and strategies implemented by external states and international organisations (Firsing 2012; Cannon 2020; Bala and Tara 2021). While the literature did contribute to a greater understanding of the security dynamics on the continent, it also exacerbated what was already a marginalisation of the study of regional power dynamics and the agency of Sub-Saharan African actors (Chipaike and Knowledge 2018; Cannon and Rossiter 2022). In terms of foreign policy analysis, only a handful of case-specific IR studies exist (Khadiagala and Lyons 2001; Graham 2017). In terms of Rwanda and to the best of our knowledge, only Jonathan Beloff (2020) has analysed its foreign policies from a major IR perspective when he explored Rwanda's post-genocide international reintegration trajectory with a constructivist approach.

We have selected the case of Rwanda because its recent foreign policy actions set it apart from all other Sub-Saharan African states. Rwanda's extra-regional military deployments – based on bilateral agreements with host states – offer a clear variable to test. In terms of theory, the international structure forms the foundation for this analysis. Neoclassical realism, however, utilises domestic politics “to explain why states do not heed the imperatives of the system” (Rathbun 2008, 298). Despite its strengths, especially when applied to area studies, neoclassical realism has been underutilised in terms of its application to African cases (Gelot and Welz 2018; Amao 2019; Donelli and Gonzalez-Levaggi 2021). Because Rwanda's elected governing bodies are relatively weak, domestic politics continue to be largely shaped by the beliefs and self-image of Kagame, Rwanda's unchallenged leader, as well as the strategic culture of the country, with Kagame's ruling party and the RDF at its core. When these variables are combined with an analysis of systemic stimuli as affected by levels of clarity – as defined by neoclassical realism – it holds out the promise of greater explanatory power. Such an approach to this discussion is also appropriate given that Rwanda's military deployments to CAR and Mozambique coincided with shifts in the way states outside Africa – notably, former colonial powers – engage in conflict management. There is, therefore, an expectation that the explanatory and prescriptive strengths of a neoclassical realist approach should be applied to Rwanda to test the theory and provide much needed explanatory value that is currently lacking.

Rwanda's foreign policy (1994-2019)

Rwanda's road to recovery after 1994's genocide is both controversial and worthy of acclaim. The country, led by President Kagame since 2000, has succeeded in generating significant economic growth as well as the successful implementation of order and public

³The following studies are also dated: Clapham (1996); Herbst (2000); Dunn and Shaw (2001).

safety. However, the results achieved by Kagame have extracted significant socio-political costs. He has quelled internal opposition to his rule, silenced any criticism and created, in the process, an authoritarian state (Desrosiers 2020). Despite the muzzling of internal dissent, Kagame and his ruling political party, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), have instituted successful infrastructure and development initiatives across the country. Rwanda is assessed to be one of the most technologically connected and advanced societies in Sub-Saharan Africa and is often used as a poster child for how development should be done. Yet, like many hybrid or authoritarian regimes, Kagame and the RPF have used development projects to increase state power and expand their political control over society (Rafti 2008; Mann and Berry 2016). They have been assisted by the country's armed forces, the RDF, of which Kagame is the commander-in-chief.

A strong link existed between Rwanda's military and its political elites prior to the 1994 Rwanda genocide.⁴ That cataclysmic event resulted, however, in a radical reconfiguration of the Rwandan army (Rusagara 2009). The backbone of the post-genocide military corps shifted from the *Forces Armées Rwandaises* (FAR) – with its genesis as well as its heavily ethnic Hutu composition dating to Belgian colonial times – to the armed wing of the RPF, the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), composed primarily of ethnic Tutsis (Waldorf 2011). From 1994, the RPA began the transformation from a regional Tutsi army into a national army (Prunier 2017, 105). Although active-duty soldiers were greatly reduced, the new Rwandan army, renamed RDF in 2002, was assessed to be well trained and highly disciplined within a few years (Wilen 2012).

The genocide led Rwanda's new leaders to emphasise self-reliance. Despite its dependence on external support, the RPF distrusted the international community and considered it jointly responsible for the genocide. Accordingly, Rwanda began to pursue an approach summarised by the motto 'Rwandan solutions to Rwandan problems' (Rusagara 2009). Rwanda's conservative foreign policy was due to inherent weaknesses and narrow margins of manoeuvre, exacerbated by extreme insecurity on Rwanda's borders and in the wider region: in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and South Sudan. The RDF, for example, was compelled to operate within Rwanda as a stabilisation force during the lengthy post-genocide transition phase that concluded in 2003. But it was also a major belligerent in the Second Congo War (1998–2003), in which the presence of Hutu militias in Congo's North-eastern provinces prompted Rwanda to intervene. Its strategic ambitions and territorial claims were masked and justified as a border protection effort and to shield ethnic Tutsi communities inhabiting the region. Despite subsequent negotiations between Rwanda's capital of Kigali and the DRC's capital, Kinshasa, Rwanda remained heavily involved in political affairs in Congo's east. Between 2010 and 2012, for example, several African states criticised Rwanda for its ties with a Tutsi-led armed group, the March 23 Movement or M23, operating in the country's North Kivu province and capturing Goma, the key city in eastern Congo in late 2012. The presence of Kigali-backed militants and their influence throughout the provinces remain unresolved and continue to fuel tensions with Kinshasa. In early 2022, the report of a UN group of experts presented further evidence of cooperation between Rwandan forces and M23 (Le Cam 2022).

⁴For a theoretical appraisal of the causal factors that led to the 1994 genocide, see Verdeja (2002).

While post-genocide Rwandan foreign policy has often been conflict-prone, these conflicts were largely confined to Rwanda's own region. Kagame and the RPF, using the RDF as their agent, pursued a policy of containment of regional rivals as seen in the Second Congo War. This, in turn, resulted in greater investment in the RDF's training and capabilities, to include weaponry. Deploying the RDF outside of Rwanda also laid the foundation for the country's subsequent involvement in multilateral missions. To date, approximately six thousand Rwandan soldiers have been involved in UN missions, including those conducted in Mali, Darfur and Haiti. Rwanda, with a population of just over 13 million, is currently the fifth-largest contributor to UN missions worldwide, and the second-largest from Africa – just behind Ethiopia, with a population over ten times its size.

The result of Kagame's foreign policies meant that he and Rwanda were both condemned and applauded; condemned for prioritising domestic order at the expense of democratisation and for deploying the RDF to the DRC; applauded because Kagame was able to institute a homegrown *Gacaca* justice system,⁵ integrate (on the surface) the Hutu majority into the RDF through *Ingando*⁶ and avoid another round of violence along Hutu/Tutsi ethnic lines. Applause became louder at the international level as Rwanda willingly deployed the RDF on UN missions.⁷

From multilateral to bilateral interventions (2020-onwards)

Changes to Rwanda's foreign policy, from local and multilateral to extra-regional and bilateral, became evident in November 2020, when Rwanda signed bilateral agreements with CAR. This guaranteed the deployment of RDF's contingents beyond those already operating under the UN's Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).⁸ While the bilateral agreement between the two presidents, one in CAR's capital, Bangui, and the other in Kigali, stated that the newly deployed RDF soldiers were to support local authorities and MINUSCA, it gave *carte blanche* to the RDF to operate autonomously and thus dispense with the UN mission's rules of engagement. Thus, Kigali's decision to deploy extra units of the RDF to CAR should be understood as complementary but separate from its multilateral engagement in the country.

Rwanda's military presence in CAR rapidly increased with the deployment of several RDF units – mainly to the CAR-Cameroon border to ensure supply lines from the west to Bangui (see Figure 1). Concurrently, relations between the two states improved, with Kagame providing military troops as well as training to reform CAR's security and defence sectors.⁹ The country's President, Faustin-Archange Touadéra, offered

⁵*Gacaca* courts were a system of community justice that was reportedly rooted in "tradition". The success of the courts in trying the hundreds of thousands of people accused of perpetrating Rwanda's genocide is contested. See Brounéus (2008).

⁶According to Gerard Prunier (2017, 105), *Ingando* was "the ideological/nationalist propaganda program developed by the Army in the years following the genocide. This program was part and parcel of the enormous ideological effort by the RPF to reintegrate—socially and ideologically—the (Hutu) majority of the Rwandan population".

⁷Kate Sullivan de Estrada and Rosemary Foot (2019) detail the international status-seeking that states engage in by contributing to UN mission.

⁸Rwandan troops have constituted the backbone of MINUSCA efforts since 2014.

⁹Although the two countries are geographically distant, both are Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) members. Within the forum of the economic community, CAR and Rwanda developed common lines for the enhancement of peace and security, for example, in the framework of the Central African Peace and Security Council (COPAX).

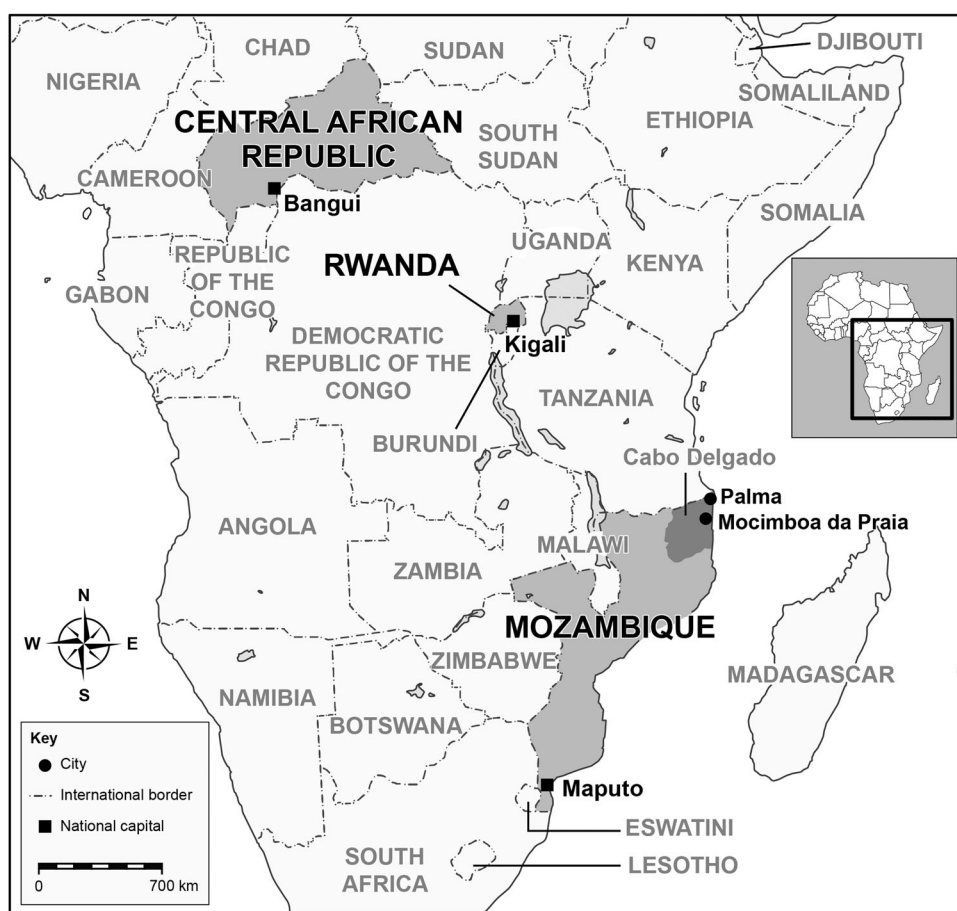


Figure 1. Rwanda and its RDF deployments to CAR and Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province

concessions to Rwandan firms in CAR's mining sector. Soon after, Rwandair, Rwanda's national airline, began to fly between Kigali and Bangui.

The second extra-regional RDF intervention began in Mozambique. This had no precedent in terms of either a multilateral or regional mission. The catalyst was Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi's secret visit to Kigali in late April 2021. Kagame reportedly responded to Nyusi's personal request for an RDF deployment with alacrity by first sending small RDF contingents for intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance, and then deploying upwards of 1,000 troops by early July. Like Nyusi's visit to Kigali, the RDF's actions were initially shrouded in secrecy on account of the sensitivity of the situation. Nyusi and his ruling cadre were asking Kagame for nothing less than armed action against the Islamist group *Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jamaah* (ASWJ) in Mozambique's northern Cabo Delgado province (see Figure 1).¹⁰ ASWJ had operated with growing impunity since 2016, and, in March 2021, the group overran the small coastal town of Palma,

¹⁰ASWJ is often referred to as the Islamic State-Central Africa Province (IS-CAP). This article refers to the Islamist group as ASWJ because: "Although Islamic State adopted ASWJ in June 2019 as the Mozambican wing of its Central Africa Province, the ties between Islamic State Central and the group remain nebulous" (Lister 2020, 35-6).

killing dozens of people, and sent hundreds of expatriates, working on what were to be highly lucrative offshore gas exploitation projects, on the run.

Previous efforts to quell the insurgency by the Mozambican military, the South African private military contractor Dyck Advisory Group and the Wagner Group – a Russian mercenary outfit with ties to the Kremlin – had all ended in humiliation at the hand of ASWJ.¹¹ The Islamist rebels’ advance and their siege of Palma effectively marked the cessation of efforts by major hydrocarbon companies to export Mozambique’s significant gas reserves. They left behind a USD 20 billion liquefied natural gas project operated by French energy giant Total. This caught the attention of external states like France and the US as well as regional entities. The Southern African Development Community (SADC), for example, voiced its fears over the risk of contagion generated by the instability in Cabo Delgado and offered to send a mission, the aptly named Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) (Demuyne and Weijenberg 2021). Unlike the RDF’s deployment, the SADC-proposed mission had much precedent (Vhumbunu 2021). Other regional organisations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), had deployed peacekeeping missions, for example, to regional hotspots such as Cote d’Ivoire, in 2003, and The Gambia, in 2017 (De Wet 2014).

Nyusi was reluctant to accept the regional organisation’s intervention in Mozambique due to its creation and control, to a large extent, by South Africa and Pretoria’s role during the Cold War period, when South Africa intervened repeatedly in its neighbour’s bitter civil war (Hall 1990; Donelli 2021). Nevertheless, the worsening of the security situation forced Nyusi to bow to the SADC’s pressure, and SAMIM deployed in July 2021. It was given a supporting role, however, generally kept on the periphery of Cabo Delgado and was reportedly poorly manned and under-equipped (*DefenceWeb* 2022). In contrast, the RDF, operating on its own by invitation from Nyusi, had already chalked up successes against ASWJ. By early August, for instance, the RDF troops had rolled back ASWJ advances and retaken the strategic town of Mocimboa da Praia. They then turned to pacifying and assuming control of Palma, establishing a 50-km-long safety zone that allowed hydrocarbon companies like Total to attempt to restart their stalled gas projects (Cascais 2021). According to a former South African diplomat, the RDF’s successful intervention proved that “bilateral interventions are more direct and effective than those negotiated in regional organisations [like the SADC]. Nyusi [...] believes that Rwanda is a reliable partner who has mastered this type of conflict” (Gras 2021).¹²

It is Rwanda’s shift from major contributor to multilateral operations to bilateral security provider outside its Great Lakes region that forms our test case using neoclassical realist theory.

¹¹ ASWJ reportedly killed seven Wagner mercenaries in October 2019, a result of their failure to understand the local environment, communication problems and unwillingness to cooperate with the Mozambican military. See Sixto (2020).

¹² The RDF’s successes have not removed the threat posed by ASWJ entirely, though. In early September 2022, for instance, it perpetrated violent attacks and beheaded six Mozambicans in Nampula province south of Cabo Delgado (*Reuters* 2022).

Determinants of Rwanda's new foreign policy behaviour

Neoclassical realist theory agrees with structural realists that the state is the building block of the international strategic environment. A state's foreign policy, therefore, should exhibit congruence with the international strategic environment – identified as neoclassical realism's overarching independent variable. In turn, units such as states and leaders, operating within the anarchical system and reacting to its nature (permissive or restrictive), generate outputs. Neoclassical realism, therefore, attempts to identify why units within the same international system and recipients of the same inputs – referred to as systemic stimuli – give different responses. Structural modifiers also play an important role in the theory; they include geography, the rates of technological diffusion and the offence-defence balance in military technologies. Even though they are not part of the structure, these factors can modify the effect of the system's structure – namely, its anarchic ordering principle and the relative distribution of capabilities – on the parameters of strategic interactions and the likely external behaviours of individual units (Ripsman *et al.* 2016, 40).

Rwanda's deployment of its military as a security provider to states outside its region sets it apart, as noted, from other Sub-Saharan African states. Conforming with neoclassical realism's selection criteria for a dependent variable,¹³ we have identified Rwanda's military deployments to CAR and Mozambique as our dependent variable. Kagame's decision to deploy the RDF constitutes a shift from Rwanda's foreign policy behaviour since 2003. As such, questions such as why and under what conditions these decisions were made should be answered.

Permissive or restrictive

The international strategic environment is either permissive or restrictive according to the theory. A permissive environment is defined by threats and opportunities that are more remote and less intense. In contrast, the immediacy of threats and opportunities typifies a restrictive environment. In Rwanda's case, the threats it faced from neighbouring states were remote. Indeed, relations between Rwanda and neighbouring Burundi and Uganda have warmed significantly since late 2021 (AI 2022a; Havyarimana 2022). In addition, the opportunities offered to Rwanda to combat a variety of non-state armed actors in extra-regional states were promising, but unnecessary for Kigali to undertake. Kagame seems to have grasped at the promise and thus deployed the RDF. If he had chosen the opposite course of action (no deployment), no negative consequences would have occurred for either Rwanda or his regime other than losing another opportunity to burnish his and the RDF's credentials. Instead, he was able to showcase yet another example of Rwanda as an African success story and as a competent security provider, as described below.

Clarity

Clarity refers to the signals and information transmitted by the international system to states. It has three components: (a) the degree to which threats and opportunities are

¹³“An example of a dependent variable at the level of an individual state's external behavior and over a relatively short time-span [...] would be a study of elite decision making in a single international crisis” (Ripsman *et al.* 2016, 110).

readily discernible; (b) whether the system provides information on the time horizons of threats and opportunities; and (c) whether optimal policy options stand out or not (Ripsman *et al.* 2016, 46). The level of clarity influences the way states and leaders react to threats or take advantage of opportunities. Less clarity, for example, may allow leaders to put in motion distinctive solutions based on their preferences and/or the strategic culture. An analysis of Rwanda's clarity of opportunities is instructive. First, however, it is necessary to demonstrate the clarity of threats Rwanda faces.

Clarity of threats emanates from expressions of hostility or revisionism from another (potentially adversarial) state. Questions are asked to gauge intent and capability such as: Has the potentially adversarial state first, threatened the other's core national interests, foremost territorial integrity? Second, does the state in question possess the capabilities to cause harm? Third, what is the sense of proximity – both in time and space (geography) – of the threat? Rwanda's, at times, acrimonious relations with its neighbours, especially the DRC, have already been detailed. None of these, however, has involved threats being made against Rwanda's sovereignty and territoriality. In turn, Rwanda's neighbours possess militaries that are generally deemed to be less capable, the closest peer to the RDF being Uganda's military (Beswick 2014; Prunier 2017). Thus, Rwanda has a greater clarity of threats vis-à-vis its neighbours, and no other state – African or outside the continent – has the intent of harming Rwanda.¹⁴

Clarity of opportunities 1: Improving capabilities vis-à-vis other states

What of Rwanda's clarity of opportunities? First, as noted previously, Rwanda, with its well-trained and disciplined RDF, possessed a favourable balance of power vis-à-vis other regional actors, allowing it to contribute RDF troops to extra-regional peacekeeping mission, at first, and then as a unitary actor in dyadic relations with both CAR and Mozambique.

Second, following meetings with the presidents of both CAR and Mozambique, Kagame could count on their unstinting support for the deployment and subsequent actions – outside the law, if need be – of the RDF. Indeed, Nyusi asked Kagame to deploy the RDF to Cabo Delgado because he had heard of the professionalism and military acumen of the RDF, understood the headaches associated with an SADC deployment and was aware of the deleterious condition of the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces (Himbara 2021). As a result, Kagame saw clear evidence of opportunities in that the RDF's capabilities were coupled with the resolve of external state leaders in supporting the Rwandan deployment to their respective states.

In hindsight, particularly in Mozambique, Kagame made the right call. The RDF reportedly sent ASWJ members fleeing into the bush on bicycles to escape Rwandan soldiers (Cascais 2021). Not only did the RDF strike a blow against Islamist terrorists, but its actions also meant that lucrative gas exploitations efforts may resume. It also resulted in tangible political and economic gains, as evidenced by Rwanda's strengthening of relations with France (Donelli 2022). The RDF's foray into Cabo Delgado after Nyusi's secret trip to Kigali dovetailed nicely with French President Emmanuel Macron's interest

¹⁴The ongoing conflict involving Rwanda in the DRC points back to the genocide and Kigali's belief that the DRC continues to provide refuge for some of its perpetrators. It also has much to do with centre-periphery dynamics within the DRC and the weakness of the Congolese state in the distant (from Kinshasa) Kivu provinces bordering Rwanda.

in stemming the advance of the ASWJ, and France reportedly promoted the idea of Paris and other European capitals funding the RDF's operations in Cabo Delgado (AI 2021a). Rwandan actions also slotted nicely into Paris's new strategy of 'leading from behind' and they followed on the heels of Macron's meeting in Paris with both Kagame and Nyusi in mid-May 2021. This, in turn, was followed by Macron's visit to Kigali at the end of May. The RDF's actions earned Rwanda (and Kagame) the praise and generosity of both France and its major hydrocarbon company, Total Energies. Indeed, the RDF had established their Cabo Delgado military headquarters at Afungi, the facilities occupied by Total before they were forced to flee the advance of ASWJ. To show its gratitude, Total reportedly added Rwandan construction company NDP at the last minute to its list of bidders to complete site clearance and structural work on the Afungi peninsula, the future site of gas liquefaction trains (AI 2022a). Total also announced its plans to invest in Rwanda's energy sector (AI 2022b).

Clarity of opportunities 2: Systemic information about time horizons of opportunities

According to the neoclassical realist theory, "time horizons are often difficult for leaders to estimate, as they require an accurate knowledge of both adversary capabilities and intentions" (Ripsman *et al.* 2016, 48). In Rwanda's case, its strategic dilemma was eased because it faced no imminent danger from actors within its own region. In addition, the state and its regime faced no menace from the insurgents the RDF would confront in either CAR or Mozambique. Indeed, the gravity of the danger – despite the potency of ASWJ, in particular – was felt to be manageable by the RDF's Chief of Staff, Mubarakh Muganga, based on his troops' initial reconnaissance and surveillance (AI 2021b). Nyusi's personal request to Kagame for the RDF to combat the terrorist group was welcomed as an opportunity – one more way to show that Rwanda possessed a military capable of quelling insecurity far from its borders. Moreover, in the eyes of several international stakeholders like France, the intervention in Cabo Delgado enhanced Rwanda's image as an actor engaged in, and capable of, fighting radical terrorism.

Clarity of opportunities 3: Clarity of options

According to Norrin Ripsman *et al.* (2016, 48), "while the international system constrains states and often limits the available options that states have at their disposal, it rarely provides clarity about the optimal policy responses in a given situation". The Rwandan regime had a great degree of clarity of opportunities. It faced neither adversaries domestically nor within its neighbourhood. It possessed a more capable, trained and well-equipped military than its neighbours as well as its designated non-state actor opponents in CAR and Cabo Delgado. It also had the blessing of both President Nyusi in Mozambique and President Touadéra in CAR. Kagame certainly grasped the opportunities and said, during a late September 2021 visit to Cabo Delgado, "I don't see any insurmountable problem here; whether it is fighting with insurgents, dealing with terrorists, and at the same time dealing with development matters that have been talked about. I don't see any insurmountable problem" (*Africanews with AFP* 2021).

To sum up, Rwanda's foreign policy can be analysed as a product of a relatively permissive strategic environment and high clarity. These were, in turn, enhanced by the

remoteness of both the threats in Rwanda's immediate neighbourhood and promising opportunities for military adventurism. Our testing of the Rwanda case, however, fails to fit tightly within some of the key theoretical suppositions of neoclassical realism. The theory holds, for example, that domestic institutions and patterns of state-society relations should become more pronounced in defining foreign policy behaviours in cases like Rwanda. Conversely, the theory holds that "leader images will be less relevant, as the importance of individual leaders tends to decrease the more time is involved" (Ripsman *et al.* 2016, 94–5). As demonstrated below, both assumptions are only partially borne out in Rwanda's case.

The domestic factors (intervening variables)

While the systemic stimuli determine the strategies that states adopt to increase their security in the international arena (Taliaferro 2006), the tools and tactics that states choose to enact these strategies are influenced by unit-level conditions that neoclassical realists call intervening variables (Kitchen 2010; Götz 2021). The intervening variables at the domestic level, according to neoclassical realism, are identified as:

- a. leaders' beliefs or images;
- b. the country's strategic culture;
- c. state-society relations;
- d. domestic political institutions.

These variables determine the three internal black-box processes: threat/opportunities perceptions; decision-making; and policy implementation. The intervening variables "reflect the various constraints on the central actors, the interactions within and between decision makers and society as a whole, and the processes and mechanisms by which foreign policy is formulated, each of which can affect the manner in which states respond to external stimuli" (Ripsman *et al.* 2016, 59). Neoclassical realist theory hypothesises that two categories of intervening variables – domestic institutions and patterns of state-society relations – should be prominent in states like Rwanda that possess permissive environments with high clarity. Yet, these two categories appear to have had marginal influence on Rwanda's foreign policy shifts in the form of extra-regional military deployments. It is the nature of the Rwandan regime that substantiates this consideration.

The country is considered a hybrid regime by scholars such as Cyanne Loyle (2016) while others see it as authoritarian (Stroh 2010; Grimm and Hackenesch 2019). These scholars, along with Lars Waldorf *et al.* (2011), broadly agree that the realm of political decision-making lies with the ruling party, the RPF. The party, with Kagame as its supreme member and in power for over two decades, might have begun as an "armed refugee group in exile, an armed rebel group fighting a civil war in its 'home state'". Nevertheless, it has become "the dominant force in post-genocide politics" (Beswick 2014, 219). The RPF has come to dominate all aspects of Rwandan politics, economy and society. This control extends to foreign policy decision-making (Beloff 2020). In this, Kagame is assisted by a trusted inner circle that includes his wife as well as the head of Rwanda's intelligence service.

Their political dominance is reinforced by the RPF's economic supremacy. Party members close to Kagame have constructed a vast business empire, the most conspicuous being Crystal Ventures, an investment fund that reportedly grooms senior officials for posts in the RPF. It is staffed by Kagame's close associates. Given the RPF's dominance and mutually constitutive interests described above, we have good reason to believe there is a high level of cohesion within the foreign policy executive – a group defined by neo-classical realism as comprising the leadership, foreign and defence ministries, as well as other government officials responsible for formulating and conducting foreign policy (Lobell 2009). Underpinning their decisions is Kagame's worldview and beliefs.

Leaders' beliefs

We know much about Kagame's beliefs vis-à-vis Rwanda's role in Sub-Saharan Africa because of the public narrative he has adopted on the topic. Kagame's narrative, as offered in speeches, tweets and utterances, emphasises how Rwanda's involvement in multilateral missions and its subsequent bilateral deployments are part of an innovative and peculiar Rwandan conception of the principle of the responsibility to protect. This goes beyond mere brand diplomacy, but it is nonetheless directly connected to Kagame's desire to project a particular image of Rwanda to the outside world. According to Kagame, Rwanda has a moral obligation to intervene in crises such as those in CAR and Cabo Delgado (Clark 2021). This obligation stems, firstly, from the natural solidarity shared by the continent's states through their pan-African ties and, secondly, Rwanda's horrific experiences during the 1994 genocide (Schipani 2021; Donelli 2022). The scope of Kagame's beliefs and related discourse – no matter how cynical or self-interested – thus seeks to transcend Rwanda's diminutive political and economic size.

While it partially justifies Rwanda's new interventionist foreign policy, the heart of Kagame's worldview is his desire to develop an African *modus operandi* for peacekeeping and conflict resolution on the continent – led by Kigali. In Kagame's world, it is Rwanda, with him at its helm, that will, at long last, implement policies and strategies aimed at finding “African solutions to African problems”. This phrase, coined by the political economist George Ayittey (1994) in response to the disastrous, repeated foreign interventions in Somalia, advocates for African ownership of problems as well as finding African solutions to the same. In short, imported or dictated solutions from entities outside Africa are no longer acceptable. Kagame's decisions to deploy entirely Rwandan resources, to include initial funding, are therefore meant to put this phrase into practice. In doing so, Kagame can be understood to be promoting a form of pan-African solutions that suit his own interests. In the process, he has supported other leaders to remain in power; Rwanda's actions helped to ensure regime security for both Touadéra in CAR and Nyusi in Mozambique.

Statements rationalising the RDF's deployments bear this out. Rwanda's “willingness to partake in these operations [...] has given us a good reputation globally. It's got a lot to do with African solutions for African problems”, noted RDF Colonel Ronald Rwivanga (Schipani 2021). The recipients of Kagame's assistance, in turn, have helped further the RPF's interests inside and outside Rwanda. Kagame's decision to send more RDF troops to CAR, for instance, was quickly matched by Bangui's willingness to enhance business opportunities for RPF-affiliated businesses. The money flowing back to Rwanda – and

into the RPF's coffers – may succeed in mitigating the impact of two structural weaknesses that have plagued Kagame for decades: the country's lack of natural resources and its dependence on the outside world for development aid and funding.

Kagame's improved relations with Mozambique have, in turn, enhanced his ability to silence dissent coming from outside Rwanda. Many Rwandan critics of the RPF have found refuge in other African states because Rwanda's political space is so tightly controlled by Kagame and the RPF. This has generated tensions between Kigali and various host states such as when former Rwandan intelligence chief and influential critic of Kagame, Patrick Karegeya, was assassinated in Johannesburg (*Africanews with AFP* 2019). This soured Rwanda's relations with South Africa and, in turn, influenced Kagame's demands to Nyusi that the RDF be allowed to operate independently of the South Africa-dominated SAMIM. Moreover, Mozambique, like its neighbour, had also provided asylum to Rwandan exiles and, soon after the RDF's intervention, a major political opponent of Kagame, Revocant Karemangingo, was killed in Maputo, while a journalist and critic, Ntamuhanga Cassien, was arrested (Jalloh 2021).

Strategic culture

The concept of strategic culture captures a state's fundamental views and assumptions regarding foreign, security and defence policy (Doeser 2017). States have identities that help shape how elites and policymakers understand their strategic environment and national interest (Lantis 2002). As a result, foreign policy choices are shaped by a strategic culture in which historical experiences and past lessons are prominent. According to Michiel Foulon (2015), neoclassical realism combines the realist approach with assumptions typical of constructivism and views strategic culture as one of the intervening variables that can explain a states' foreign policy behaviour. This is a domestic process, as are the other three intervening variables identified by neoclassical realism: leaders' beliefs, state-society relations and domestic institutions. Yet, the strategic culture developed in Rwanda by Kagame and the RPF/RDF is exclusively a top-down process that bears similarities with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's politico-societal engineering in Turkey in the 1920s (Berkes 2013). In Turkey's case, the vacuum left by the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the ensuing struggle between a fledgling Turkish state and various external states formed the incubator for Turkey's re-engineered strategic culture; one that conformed to Atatürk's preferences and beliefs and was, therefore, secular and Western (on the surface, at least) rather than religious and non-Western. In Rwanda, the 1994 genocide was the exceptional pretext that allowed Kagame and the RPF to reconstruct the country's strategic identity along lines that suited their unique interests. This was a very conscious act, as it was in Turkey, and one that has shifted over time for Kagame, from inward-looking to outward-facing – a change that only became possible as internal threats were quelled and Kagame and the RPF ensured their political and economic supremacy. As the threat of another round of ethnic cleansing within Rwanda receded in the early 2000s, the strategic culture fostered by Kagame and the RPF found its perfect ensample in the RDF. It is the RDF, then, that best showcases the reality Kagame wants to project to the world – a refashioned, post-genocide Rwanda that provides domestic security and security to other African states.

The results achieved in CAR as well as Cabo Delgado, to date, have reinforced Rwanda's strategic culture and burnished Kagame's image of himself and his country as actors able to fight terrorism and counter insurgencies. The most recent invitation to Rwanda came from Benin and further confirms this. As a West African state on the Gulf of Guinea suffering from a terrorist insurgency in its north, Benin requested the deployment of RDF soldiers and Kigali's assistance in training local security forces simultaneously (Sguazzin 2022). If deployed, Kagame could easily present Rwanda as a sort of 'bobby' or police officer who can walk the beat from West to Central to Southern Africa and, when it so chooses, intervene independently at the behest of a host state's leader. Individuals from Kagame's inner circle, for example, have been sent on missions inside and outside Africa to push Rwanda's new defence diplomacy (AI 2021b). Yet, the picture is not entirely rosy in that the role Kagame is pushing clashes with its uninvited, unilateral actions in the DRC's Kivu regions, which are viewed by Kinshasa as destabilising. Influenced by his beliefs and the strategic culture he personally fostered in post-genocide Rwanda, Kagame is attempting to promote a new model of African armed intervention. In the process, Rwanda seems to be implementing an indigenous African security architecture, one in which states and interests play the deciding role rather than supranational organisations.

Other intervening variables

Patterns of state-society relations and domestic institutions outside the purview of the RPF are necessarily difficult to divine in authoritarian Rwanda, a country in which Kagame was re-elected with 99 per cent of the vote in 2017. Both variables affect the "autonomy of leaders and the constraints under which they operate" (Ripsman *et al.* 2016, 61). The near-absolute power wielded by Kagame and the RPF/RDF, however, means that constraints on Kagame's foreign policy choices are minimised. In addition, and as near as we can tell, the successes of the RDF, initially as peacekeepers and then as bilateral security providers, appear to be uncontroversial within Rwanda. Certainly, there is no scrutiny of the RDF's bilateral missions – as there is in its multilateral engagements under UN auspices. Military actions in CAR and Mozambique would therefore be unexpected to engender either dissent or open avenues for greater transparency and participation from society in what has been, for over two decades, a country ruled by a commanding leader who is head of both the omnipotent political party as well as the military. In short, neither state-society relations nor domestic institutions – beyond the RDF and RPF, which are an extension of Kagame himself – seem to have had a noticeable impact on the President's selection of foreign policy choices.

Conclusion

The research demonstrated that the decisions taken by Kagame and his ruling cadre in the ranks of the RPF and RDF have resulted in foreign policy outputs that defy not only Rwanda's previously inward-looking, localised actions, but the military deployment record of Sub-Saharan African states. To wit, Rwanda's military deployments by invitation to states outside its geographic region mark a significant break in the history of post-colonial Sub-Saharan Africa. That a small, landlocked, resource-poor state has produced such adventurous foreign policy outputs is even more interesting.

To explain these recent developments and provide answers for Rwanda's foreign policy shifts in an African context, we employed neoclassical realist theory. Our research found, however, that the decisions of Rwanda's leadership to deploy the RDF to CAR, Mozambique and, perhaps by late 2022, Benin conform imperfectly to some of the key theoretical suppositions of neoclassical realism. The contemporary international structure for Rwanda, for instance, is relatively permissive, and Kagame made decisions about opportunities and threats under conditions of high clarity. The intervening variables of Kagame's leader image and Rwanda's strategic culture – mutually constitutive with one another – were most pronounced and, indeed, expected given the President and his ruling party's politico-economic supremacy within Rwanda. They affected the dependent variable – Rwanda's shift from multilateral to bilateral deployments of the RDF as a foreign policy tool – and resulted in the outputs and resulting opportunities on display in both CAR and Mozambique. While RDF deployments, in the main, may continue to be largely multilateral, Kagame's policies and actions will certainly affect the mechanisms and institutions created to maintain African peace and security, but will not undermine them. Rather, the RDF's invited engagements seem to support and not supplant multilateral actions in CAR. Kagame's Rwanda can be seen as promoting an African security approach that is complementary, but not necessarily subordinate, to the objectives pursued by African subregional and regional fora.

Notes on contributors

Brendon J. Cannon is Assistant Professor of International Security at Khalifa University, Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates.

Federico Donelli is tenure-track Assistant Professor of International Relations at the University of Trieste, Trieste, Italy. Email: donellifed@gmail.com; Twitter: [@fededonelli](https://twitter.com/fededonelli)

ORCID

Brendon J. Cannon  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1731-9547>

Federico Donelli  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6093-3510>

References

- Acharya, Amitav. 2014. Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds: A New Agenda for International Studies. *International Studies Quarterly* 58 (4): 647–59.
- Africanews with AFP*. 2019. Did Rwanda Govt Execute Kagame's Critic, Patrick Karegeya? 22 January. <https://www.africanews.com/2019/01/22/did-rwanda-govt-execute-kagame-s-critic-patrick-karegeya/>
- Africanews with AFP*. 2021. Rwanda's Kagame Visits Troops in Mozambique, Confirms Mission on Course. 25 September. <https://www.africanews.com/2021/09/25/rwanda-s-kagame-visits-troops-in-mozambique-confirms-mission-on-course/>.
- AI (Africa Intelligence). 2021a. EU Set to Finance Deployment of Rwandan Army in Cabo Delgado. 8 November. <https://www.africaintelligence.com/eastern-africa-and-the-horn/2021/11/08/eu-set-to-finance-deployment-of-rwandan-army-in-cabo-delgado,109703289-art>.
- AI. 2021b. How Kigali Is Exporting Its Military Expertise across Africa. 10 December. <https://www.africaintelligence.com/eastern-africa-and-the-horn/2021/12/10/how-kigali-is-exporting-its-military-expertise-across-africa,109710456-ar2>.

- AI. 2022a. Warming of Kagame-Museveni Relations Raises Hopes for Route to Bujumbura. 31 January. <https://www.africaintelligence.com/central-africa/2022/01/31/warming-of-kagame-museveni-relations-raises-hopes-for-route-to-bujumbura,109730264-art>.
- AI. 2022b. After Security and Gas, Rwanda Sees Graphite Opportunities in Cabo Delgado. 21 September. <https://www.africaintelligence.com/southern-africa-and-islands/2022/09/21/after-security-and-gas-rwanda-sees-graphite-opportunities-in-cabo-delgado,109824642-art>.
- Amao, Olumuyiwa Babatunde. 2019. The Foreign Policy and Intervention Behaviour of Nigeria and South Africa in Africa: A Structural Realist Analysis. *South African Journal of International Affairs* 26 (1): 93–112.
- Ayittey, George B. N. 1994. The Somali Crisis: Time for an African Solution. CATO Institute. 28 March. <https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/somali-crisis-time-african-solution>.
- Bala, Bashir, and Tara, Usman A. 2021. Regional Cooperation in West Africa: Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency. *African Security* 14 (2): 186–207.
- Beloff, Jonathan R. 2020. *Foreign Policy in Post-Genocide Rwanda: Elite Perceptions of Global Engagement*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Berkes, Niyazi. 2013. *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Beswick, Danielle. 2014. The Risks of African Military Capacity Building: Lessons from Rwanda. *African Affairs* 113 (451): 212–31.
- Bischoff, Paul-Henri, Aning, Kwesi, and Acharya, Amitav, eds. 2016. *Africa in Global International Relations. Emerging Approaches to Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge.
- Boussaid, Farid. 2021. Brothers in Arms: Morocco's Military Intervention in Support of Mobutu of Zaire during the 1977 and 1978 Shaba Crises. *The International History Review* 43 (1): 185–202.
- Brounéus, Karen. 2008. Truth-Telling as Talking Cure? Insecurity and Retraumatization in the Rwandan Gacaca Courts. *Security Dialogue* 39 (1): 55–76.
- Brown, William. 2012. A Question of Agency: Africa in International Politics. *Third World Quarterly* 33 (10): 1889–908.
- Cannon, Brendon J. 2020. What's in It for Us? Armed Drone Strikes and the Security of Somalia's Federal Government. *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 31 (4): 773–800.
- Cannon, Brendon J., and Iyekekpolo, Wisdom. 2018. Explaining Transborder Terrorist Attacks: The Cases of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab. *African Security* 11 (4): 370–96.
- Cannon, Brendon J., and Pkalya, Dominic Ruto. 2019. Why Al-Shabaab Attacks Kenya: Questioning the Narrative Paradigm. *Terrorism and Political Violence* 31 (4): 836–52.
- Cannon, Brendon J., and Rossiter, Ash. 2022. Patterns of External Involvement in the Modern Political History of the Horn of Africa States. In Robert Mason and Simon Mabon, eds. *The Gulf States and the Horn of Africa: Interests, Influence and Stability*: 15–35. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Cascais, Antonio. 2021. Rwanda's Military Intervention in Mozambique Raises Eyebrows. DW, 24 August. <https://www.dw.com/en/rwandas-military-intervention-in-mozambique-raises-eyebrows/a-58957275>.
- Chipaike, Ronald, and Knowledge, Matarutse. 2018. The Question of African Agency in International Relations. *Cogent Social Sciences* 4 (1).
- Clapham, Christopher. 1996. *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clark, Phil. 2021. How Big Is the Islamist Threat in Mozambique? And Why Are Rwandan Troops There? *The Conversation*, 19 September. <https://theconversation.com/how-big-is-the-islamist-threat-in-mozambique-and-why-are-rwandan-troops-there-168123>.
- DefenceWeb. 2022. SAMIM Seemingly Going Nowhere. 2 February. <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/samim-seemingly-going-nowhere/>.
- De Wet, Erika. 2014. The Evolving Role of ECOWAS and the SADC in Peace Operations: A Challenge to the Primacy of the United Nations Security Council in Matters of Peace and Security? *Leiden Journal of International Law* 27: 353–69.
- Demuyneck, Méryl, and Weijenbergh, Gijs. 2021. The Upcoming SADC Intervention: A New Way Ahead to Combat Terrorism in Mozambique? International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 22

- July. <https://icct.nl/publication/the-upcoming-sadc-intervention-a-new-way-ahead-to-combat-terrorism-in-mozambique/>.
- Desrosiers, Marie-Eve. 2020. "Making Do" with Soft Authoritarianism in Pre-Genocide Rwanda. *Comparative Politics* 52 (4): 557–79.
- Doerer, Fredrik. 2017. Strategic Culture, Domestic Politics, and Foreign Policy: Finland's Decision to Refrain from Operation Unified Protector. *Foreign Policy Analysis* 13 (3): 741–59.
- Donelli, Federico. 2021. Rwanda's Unilateral Interventionism in African Conflicts: Determinants and Implications. Trends Research & Advisory, 15 December. <https://trendsresearch.org/insight/rwandas-unilateral-interventionism-in-african-conflicts-determinants-and-implications/>.
- Donelli, Federico. 2022. Rwanda's Military Diplomacy. Kigali's Political Use of the Military Means to Increase Prestige and Influence in Africa and Beyond. *Notes de l'IFRI*. Paris: Institut Français des Relations Internationales, April. <https://www.ifri.org/en/publications/notes-de-lifri/rwandas-military-diplomacy-kigalis-political-use-military-means-increase>.
- Donelli, Federico, and Gonzalez-Levaggi, Ariel. 2021. Crossing Roads: The Middle East's Security Engagement in the Horn of Africa. *Global Change, Peace & Security* 33 (1): 45–60.
- Dunn, Kevin C., and Shaw, Timothy M., eds. 2001. *Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory*. London-New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Engel, Ulf, and Gorm, Olsen, eds. 2004. *Africa and the North: Between Globalization and Marginalization*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Firsing, Scott. 2012. South Africa, the United States, and the Fight Against Islamic Extremism. *Democracy and Security* 8 (1): 1–27.
- Foulon, Michiel. 2015. Neoclassical Realism: Challengers and Bridging Identities. *International Studies Review* 17: 635–61.
- Gelot, Linnéa, and Welz, Martin. 2018. Pragmatic Eclecticism, Neoclassical Realism and Post-Structuralism: Reconsidering the African Response to the Libyan Crisis of 2011. *Third World Quarterly* 39 (12): 2334–53.
- Gnanguénon, Amandine. 2021. Chad in Its Regional Environment: Political Alliances and Ad Hoc Military Coalitions. *Policy Brief*. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/fes-pscc/17777.pdf>.
- Götz, Elias. 2021. Neoclassical Realist Theories, Intervening Variables, and Paradigmatic Boundaries. *Foreign Policy Analysis* 7 (2). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/oraa026>.
- Graham, Suzanne. 2017. Drivers of the Foreign Policies of Southern African Small States. *Politikon* 44 (1): 133–55.
- Gras, Romain. 2021. Rwanda: From Mozambique to CAR, Kigali Is Beginning to 'Police' Africa. *The Africa Report*, 17 August. <https://www.theafricareport.com/117716/rwanda-from-mozambique-to-car-the-reasons-for-kigalis-all-out-deployment/>.
- Grimm, Sven, and Hackenesch, Christine. 2019. China and Rwanda – Natural Allies or Uneasy Partners in Regime Stability? In *China's New Role in African Politics. From Non-Intervention towards Stabilization?*: 164–79. London: Routledge.
- Hall, Margaret. 1990. The Mozambican National Resistance Movement (Renamo): A Study in the Destruction of an African Country. *Africa* 60 (1): 39–68.
- Harman, Sophie, and Brown, William. 2013. In from the Margins? The Changing Place of Africa in International Relations. *International Affairs* 89 (1): 69–87.
- Havyarimana, Moses. 2022. Rwanda-Burundi Relations to Improve Further. *The East African*, 14 May. <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/rwanda-burundi-relations-to-improve-further-3814862>.
- Herbst, Jeffrey. 2000. *States and Power in Africa*. Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press.
- Himbara, David. 2021. Kagame's Push to Fight in Mozambique Ran into Roadblock – Southern African Development Community Does Not Want Rwanda's Strongman in the Region. *Medium*, 4 June. https://medium.com/@david.himbara_27884/kagames-hunger-for-fighting-in-mozambique-not-looking-too-good-southern-african-development-a1288bf600d7.
- Jalloh, Abu-Bakarr. 2021. Rwanda: The Mysterious Deaths of Political Opponents. *DW News*, 15 September. <https://www.dw.com/en/rwanda-the-mysterious-deaths-of-political-opponents/a-59182275>.

- Khadiagala, Gilbert M., and Lyons, Terrence, eds. 2001. *African Foreign Policies: Power and Process*. Boulder (CO): Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Kitchen, Nicholas. 2010. Systemic Pressures and Domestic Ideas: A Neoclassical Realist Model of Grand Strategy Formation. *Review of International Studies* 36: 117–43.
- Lantis, Jeffrey S. 2002. Strategic Culture and National Security Policy. *International Studies Review* 4 (3): 87–113.
- Le Cam, Morgane. 2022. Confidential UN Report Provides ‘Solid Evidence’ of Rwanda’s Involvement in the East DRC. *Le Monde*, 5 August. https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2022/08/05/confidential-un-report-provides-solid-evidence-of-rwanda-s-involvement-in-the-east-drc_5992599_4.html.
- Lister, Tim. 2020. Jihadi Insurgency in Mozambique Grows in Sophistication and Reach. *CTC Sentinel* 13 (10): 1–56.
- Lobell, Steven E. 2009. Threat Assessment, the State, and Foreign Policy: A Neoclassical Realist Model. In Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Steven E. Lobell, and Norrin M. Ripsman, eds. *Neoclassical Realism, the State and Foreign Policy*: 42–74. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Loyle, Cyanne E. 2016. Overcoming Research Obstacles in Hybrid Regimes: Lessons from Rwanda. *Social Science Quarterly* 97 (4): 923–35.
- Mann, Laura, and Berry, Marie E. 2016. Understanding the Political Motivations That Shape Rwanda’s Emergent Developmental State. *New Political Economy* 21 (1): 119–44.
- Morier-Genoud, Eric. 2020. The Jihadi Insurgency in Mozambique: Origins, Nature and Beginning. *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 14 (3): 396–412.
- Nkiwane, Tandeka C. 2001. Africa and International Relations: Regional Lessons for a Global Discourse. *International Political Science Review* 22 (3): 279–90.
- Obi, Cyril I. 2008. Nigeria’s Foreign Policy and Transnational Security Challenges in West Africa. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 26 (2): 183–96.
- Pérouse de Montclos, Marc-Antoine. 2020. Boko Haram : Un cas d’école de l’échec de l’islam politique au Nigeria [Boko Haram: A textbook case of the failure of political Islam in Nigeria]. *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines* 54 (2): 229–46.
- Prunier, Gerard. 2017. The Armies of the Great Lakes Countries. *PRISM* 6 (4). <https://cco.ndu.edu/PRISM-6-4/Article/1171864/the-armies-of-the-great-lakes-countries/>.
- Rafti, Marina. 2008. A Perilous Path to Democracy: Political Transition and Authoritarian Consolidation in Rwanda. *IOB Discussion Papers* 2008/3. Antwerpen: Institute of Development Policy and Management. <https://medialibrary.uantwerpen.be/oldcontent/container2143/files/Publications/DP/2008/03-Rafti.pdf>.
- Rathbun, Brian. 2008. A Rose by Any Other Name: Neoclassical Realism as the Logical and Necessary Extension of Structural Realism. *Security Studies* 17 (2): 294–321.
- Reuters. 2022. At Least Six Mozambicans Beheaded, Italian Nun Shot Dead by Insurgents. 7 September. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/least-six-mozambicans-beheaded-italian-nun-shot-dead-by-insurgents-2022-09-07/>.
- Ripsman, Norrin M., Taliaferro, Jeffrey W., and Lobell, Steven E. 2016. *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rusagara, Frank K. 2009. *Resilience of a Nation: A History of the Military in Rwanda*. Kigali: Fountain Publishers.
- Schipani, Andreas. 2021. Rwanda Flexes Muscles in Fight against Terror in Mozambique. *Financial Times*, 3 October. <https://www.ft.com/content/6ab0712b-2bc2-45dc-a681-452c62dff76e>.
- Sguazzin, Antony. 2022. Rwanda May Deploy Troops to Benin to Fight Jihadists, AI Reports. *Bloomberg*, 9 September. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-09-09/rwanda-may-deploy-troops-to-benin-to-fight-jihadists-ai-says>.
- Sixto, David. 2020. Russian Mercenaries: A String of Failures in Africa. *Geopolitical Monitor*, 4 August. <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/russian-mercenaries-a-string-of-failures-in-africa/>.
- Speckhard, Anne, and Shajkovi, Ardian. 2019. The Jihad in Kenya: Understanding Al-Shabaab Recruitment and Terrorist Activity inside Kenya—in Their Own Word. *African Security* 12 (1): 3–61.

- Stroh, Alexander. 2010. Electoral Rules of the Authoritarian Game: Undemocratic Effects of Proportional Representation in Rwanda. *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 4 (1): 1–19.
- Sullivan de Estrada, Kate, and Foot, Rosemary. 2019. China's and India's Search for International Status through the UN System: Competition and Complementarity. *Contemporary Politics* 25 (5): 567–85.
- Taliaferro, Jeffrey W. 2006. State Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State. *Security Studies* 15 (3): 464–95.
- Ukaogo, Victor Okoro, Okonkwo, Uche Uwaezuoke, Orabueze, Florence O., Eze, Virginia O., and Ugwu-Okoye, Stella. 2020. Afro-Centrism as the Centerpiece of Nigeria's Foreign Policy: A Historical Misnomer in the Aftermath of Xenophobic Attacks in South Africa. *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 7 (1). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2020.1846256>.
- Verdeja, Ernesto. 2002. On Genocide: Five Contributing Factors. *Contemporary Politics* 8 (1): 37–54.
- Vhumbunu, Clayton H. 2021. Insurgency in Mozambique: The Role of the Southern African Development Community. *Conflict and Resilience Monitor* 1 (April): 1–15.
- Waldorf, Lars, ed. 2011. *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence*. Madison (WI): University of Wisconsin Press.
- Wilen, Nina. 2012. A Hybrid Peace through Locally Owned and Externally Financed SSR–DDR in Rwanda? *Third World Quarterly* 33 (7): 1323–36.