

EDITOR'S NOTE

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The BJAS (Brazilian Journal of African Studies), in its sixth issue, addresses the political, socioeconomic and securitarian challenges in different African countries. However, it also presents a relevant discussion on the so-called “new themes of International Relations”. Without incorporating the debate of Euro-American postmodern agendas, the researchers analyze “racial”, gender and migration issues, for example, from an approach that considers the major structural problems involving these matters.

The legacy of Africa's incorporation to the global economy during colonial times and the ensuing economic dependency continued to be a relevant factor to the political and economical evolution of new African states. Nowadays, control over resources, access to markets and investment opportunities are a substantial part of these states' external calculations. The economic fragility of some countries is one of the main reasons for the fact that African elites still seek the support of extra-African powers. However, this situation tends to change with the emergence of stronger states that have taken up the role of regional leaderships on the continent.

Africa, besides being an important arena in contemporary world politics, is also a focus on the search for economic projection zones by great powers. In this sense, although there has been a decline in its strategic value with the end of the Cold War, Africa begins to be seen as the “continent of oil and strategic minerals”, implying the confluence of interests of external actors in the producing regions. The emergence of a race for African oil and ores, emphasizing countries such as the United States and China, could lead to the militarization of the South Atlantic region, the Gulf of Guinea, for instance, and also produce events of instability on the continent.

On the other hand, Africans have found in the United Nations system a very convenient framework for diplomacy. However, the UN still mirrors the power relations that have made Africa vulnerable to intervention and

economic dependence. African states, in this sense, still have little choice in defining qualification strategies. The ideals of African unity, institutionalized in the Organization of African Unity (OAU), later transformed into African Union (AU), as well as Third World solidarity, embodied in a new type of South-South Cooperation, express a vision of power that, through collective diplomacy, can lead to a new configuration of power. The very diversity and heterogeneity of African regimes is yet another constraint on African decision-making. But in Europe it is no different.

In this perspective, taking a broader and more collective stance becomes an important goal for the regional group. African leaders are forced to strive towards it. For this reason, African states have been engaged in promoting economic development sustained by their own political actions: the African Union (AU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) are clear examples of the will to overcome historical problems. Moreover, the goals are defined by Africans themselves, who undertake all the hardships inherent to such projects.

In its sixth issue, the BJAS brings relevant analysis on the crisis in the Central African Republic and the case of South Sudan, as well as the Foreign Policy of Mozambique towards the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Regarding Nigeria, topics related to Chinese investments in the country, the role of multinational oil corporations and the land problem are addressed. Economic migrations in Cameroon, African feminist thinking and the Afro-descendant affair in Cuba complete the issue along with a historical article on Brazil's relations with Africa. Finally, the BJAS presents the review of the work *África Occidental: crisis vs estabilidad política*, published in the African Series (CEBRAFRICA/UFRGS).

The BJAS publishes a bilingual electronic and printed version (Portuguese and English). Thus, we expect the contribution of colleagues from Brazil and abroad, with whom we intend to establish links for the deepening of knowledge and the construction of a vision of the South on the African continent and relations with them.

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