

EDITOR'S NOTE

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BJAS, in its ninth issue, is launched in the midst of a global health crisis. Much is being said about its impacts on large developed centers, but little about the African situation in this context. In regional settings, there is little articulation between states within their organizations. In Africa, on the contrary, the African Union's role in the health crisis triggered by COVID-19 is being articulated by the African Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), responsible for preparing technical-scientific reports, providing information and recommendations for countries of the continent, training scientists, communicators and health professionals, as well as the aggregation of new scientific discoveries related to the virus. All of these activities are being recorded in weekly reports, available in full on the CDC website (<https://africacdc.org/>). In addition to the reports, the organization also makes available a series of other documents, the purpose of which is to assist African countries in fighting the pandemic. These documents include strategies for identifying, testing and monitoring the evolution of the virus in the specific case of Africa.

By pointing out the bottlenecks in basic sanitation, urban infrastructure and the capacity of health systems, the CDC draws attention to the fact that African countries will have to develop measures appropriate to their reality to deal with the crisis. While countries like South Africa show rapid action by the government, which has announced intensive isolation measures and a large number of tests implemented with the aid of the army, other African countries do not have the same resources. Even at the domestic level, inequalities continue, with poor regions of high population density being physically unable to implement intensive social isolation. According to a World Bank report, Sub-Saharan Africa will face its first recession in almost two decades, with the expectation of shrinking between -2.1% to -5.1% and a loss that can reach 79 billion dollars. At the continental level, the African Union predicts

a shrinkage of -0.8%, with the sum of losses from all governments reaching 270 billion dollars. By way of comparison, Egypt's 2019 GDP, one of the continent's largest economies, was 250 billion dollars. This decline is the result of a series of factors, including disruption of global value chains, with a severe impact on the export of primary products, reduced capital flows, reduced tourism, reduced foreign direct investment and reduced domestic economic activity because of social isolation measures.

The AU diagnosis emphasizes the central role of the state in combating the pandemic, both in the health and economic spheres. According to the organization, about 130 billion dollars would be needed to apply to emergency public policies aimed at preserving Africans' income and jobs. In countries like Uganda, where more than 50% of the employed population works in the informal sector, taking such measures are imperative. The African Development Bank announced in the first week of April a \$ 10 billion fund for governments and businesses on the continent. The CDC report of February 11, 2020, stated that 16 African countries had suspected cases, but without confirmation. The agency took the following measures at that time: activation of the Emergency Operations Center; training of 16 specialized laboratories for virus testing; recruitment of epidemiology professionals to monitor the progress of the virus; weekly meetings with health ministers from AU member countries; gathering information on the main measures taken by African countries with regard to social distancing and the closing of borders. The measures taken by the AU and the establishment of communication and interaction with African governments were precocious. This fact, largely, explains the relative success of Africans in containing the pandemic.

In the fifth year of BJAS, the discussion on central issues for the analysis of the African reality is evident. In the article "Brazil-Africa relations: from the slavery nexus to the construction of strategic partnerships", Analúcia Danilevicz Pereira resumes the debate on the secular partnership between Brazil and African states, which began in the formation of the modern world system, in the 16th to the 18th centuries, going through the times of imperialism and independence in the 19th to the 20th centuries, reaching more recent years. Precisely from the 2000s, the author demonstrates, Brazil-Africa relations become more intense and bear fruit for both sides of the Atlantic, especially among the member countries of the Portuguese-speaking community (CPLP). Paulo Gilberto Fagundes Visentini, in his article

“African marxist military regimes, rise and fall: internal conditioners and international dimensions”, argues that alongside the Revolutions resulting from long anti-colonial wars such as Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Zimbabwe, it developed an innovative element, the Military Coup of a new type, which introduced revolutionary regimes called Marxist-Leninists.

Terrorism as one of the main security challenges in Africa is discussed by Yoslán Silverio González in the text “Main trends of terrorism in Africa towards 2025”, and by Osiomheyalo O. Idaewor in the article entitled “The dominance of terrorism: aspects of socio-political challenges in post independence West Africa: Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Mali”. For the authors, the Sahel-Saharan region, corresponding to West and Central Africa, remained at the center of terrorist activism in Sub-Saharan Africa. With an emphasis on political processes, Cícero Ricci Cavini, in “The influence of diplomacy on controversies: a comparative study between diplomatic mediation and armed conflict”, assesses that diplomacy, mediation and armed conflict are choices of the political system in which we are inserted. They are tools to obtain power, influence and money in a geopolitical space where states face or cooperate with each other for a specific purpose. In the article by Kátia Sara Henriques Xavier Zeca, “Trust in political power and government institutions in Mozambique: 2014-2018”, the confidence of voters in the institutions of political power in Mozambique is analyzed. In the text “Elections and democratic deficits in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic: a commentary”, Al-Chukwuma Okoli, Chigozie Joseph Nebeife and Markus Arum Izang discuss the phenomenon of democratic deficits in the Fourth Republic of Nigeria.

In a recent historical approach, Luiza Bizzo Affonso and Vitor Ferreira Lengruber discuss how Thabo Mbeki, former president of South Africa popularized the concept of African Renaissance, whose proposal offered solutions, in the political and economic sphere, to face political and socio-economic adversities at that time in “African Union: Mbeki’s South Africa policy for Africa”. In the article “Socio-spatial and ethnic-racial segregation in megacities, large cities and global cities in Africa”, Fabio Macedo Velame and Thiago Augusto Ferreira da Costa analyze the structural phenomena that culminated in socio-spatial and ethnic-racial segregation, which currently occurs in megacities, large cities and global cities in Africa. Finally, Carolina Bezerra Machado, in the article “Representations of power in Mayombe: ‘men will be prisoners of the structures they will have created’, presents an analysis of the novel *Mayombe* (1980), by Angolan writer Pepetela, to analyze the political process in Angola in its contemporaneity. For the author, the power structures that existed in Angola after independence appear already drawn in this novel, still woven in the guerrillas.

In this edition, BJAS publishes two book reviews. The first, by Ermelinda Liberato, presents the work “Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization”, by Achille Mbembe, and the second, by Carla Pereira Silva, presents the work “Decoloniality and afro-diasporic thinking” by Joaze Bernardino-Costa, Nelson Maldonado-Torres and Ramón Grosfoguel. BJAS publishes electronic and printed bilingual versions (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 of relations with them.

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