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The Influence of International Norms on Kenya's Diplomatic Conduct in Multilateral Relations

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ABSTRACT

The strategic alignment of Kenya's foreign policy with international norms and its conduct within multilateral relations has significantly evolved, enhancing its global standing whilst promoting national interests. The paper examined Kenya's diplomatic practices and the influence of international norms, focusing on the multilateral platforms like the United Nations, the African Union, and other multilateral organizations. The objective was to assess Kenya's adherence to global diplomatic norms, their influence on the country's foreign policy decisions and the approach to the international cooperation. An evaluation on Kenya's role in shaping and being shaped by international governing frameworks such as peace and security, climate change and human rights. The paper also explored challenges related to sovereignty and national interests that Kenya navigates while upholding international norms in the diplomatic engagement. A secondary objective examined the implications of these international norms on Kenya's diplomatic strategies, particularly how these norms inform decision-making processes, negotiations, and partnerships at the global level. The study draws on case studies of Kenya's involvement in international peacekeeping efforts, human rights advocacy, and climate change negotiations, highlighting the intersection of diplomatic conduct and global governance standards. Through a detailed analysis of Kenya's participation in the UN Security Council, the Paris Agreement, and peace mediation efforts in the Horn of Africa, the paper explores how international norms shape Kenya's positioning in multilateral negotiations. The findings underscore the complex dynamics of international diplomacy, where Kenya seeks to balance adherence to global norms with its national priorities. While Kenya has achieved notable success in advancing multilateral diplomacy and enhancing its international influence, challenges such as limited resources, geopolitical competition, and the prioritization of national interests remain. The paper recommends strengthening Kenya's diplomatic infrastructure, improving intergovernmental coordination, and enhancing capacity building for diplomatic actors to better leverage international norms in future negotiations. Contributing to the discourse on international diplomacy, the study provides important insights for policymakers, diplomats, and international relations scholars on how emerging powers can effectively navigate the complexities of multilateral diplomacy in a globalized world. The research draws on primary and secondary sources, including policy documents, case studies, and interviews with key stakeholders involved in Kenya's diplomatic practices.

INTRODUCTION

Kenya's diplomatic conduct in multilateral relations has been an essential element in enhancing its global influence, aligning its foreign policy with international norms to strategically advance national interests. The evolving role of Kenya in global diplomacy is particularly prominent in multilateral platforms such as the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), and other international forums. As a member of these organizations, Kenya has worked to promote peace, human rights, and sustainable development, often acting as a mediator and advocate for African interests in global governance. The country's adherence to international norms plays a crucial role in shaping its diplomatic decisions, navigating its relationships with both developed and developing nations while aligning domestic priorities with global expectations. The relationship between Kenya's foreign policy and international norms has influenced its strategic

approach in multilateral diplomacy, allowing the country to exert its influence while protecting sovereignty and national interests (Omolo, 2020).

International norms, such as those concerning human rights, peace, and security, are pivotal in Kenya's diplomatic engagements, guiding its approach to issues like conflict resolution, humanitarian aid, and climate change. Kenya's commitment to these norms is evident in its active participation in international peacekeeping operations and its leading role in negotiations addressing climate change. For example, Kenya's involvement in the UN Security Council and the Paris Agreement showcases the country's alignment with global diplomatic frameworks aimed at addressing both local and international challenges. The country's contributions to peace mediation efforts in the Horn of Africa reflect its adherence to the United Nations Charter, which emphasizes the role of member states in promoting peace and security. By participating

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in these global initiatives, Kenya aligns its foreign policy with international standards, enhancing its standing as a responsible actor in global governance (Odinga, 2019). However, Kenya's navigation of international norms is not without challenges. The country faces the complex task of balancing international expectations with national priorities, especially in contexts where there may be competing interests. This tension is particularly evident in negotiations concerning resource management, trade agreements, and climate action, where Kenya must consider both global commitments and domestic developmental needs. Moreover, geopolitical dynamics and competition for regional influence complicate Kenya's diplomatic efforts, requiring the country to maintain a delicate balance between adhering to global norms and safeguarding its national sovereignty. The challenges of managing these competing priorities necessitate strategic decisions that balance both international expectations and national interests, rendering the study of Kenya's diplomatic conduct in multilateral settings crucial for understanding the complexities of international relations (Mutua, 2021).

This article aims to systematically explore the influence of international norms on Kenya's diplomatic conduct, particularly how they shape the country's foreign policy and participation in multilateral diplomacy. The focus assesses on how Kenya's adherence to global diplomatic norms influences decision-making, negotiations, and international partnerships. Through case studies and analysis of Kenya's participation in peacekeeping, human rights advocacy, and climate change negotiations, this analysis illuminates the intersections between Kenya's diplomatic conduct and global governance frameworks. It also highlights the challenges Kenya faces in maintaining a balance between international norms and its national interests, offering insights into how emerging powers can effectively navigate the complexities of global diplomacy (Wambui, 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Aligned with the Theory of Functional Necessity, which suggests that states adjust their behaviors based on the practical needs of international cooperation, this literature review explores the key dimensions of Kenya's diplomatic conduct in multilateral relations. It examines the evolution of Kenya's foreign policy, focusing on how the country increasingly aligns its diplomatic practices with international norms to strengthen its global influence. The review also examines the substantial impact of these norms on Kenya's foreign policy decisions, particularly within multilateral forums such as the United Nations and the African Union. Furthermore, it highlights Kenya's role in shaping and adapting to global governance frameworks, particularly in the realms of peace, human rights, and climate change. The literature also addresses the challenges Kenya faces in balancing its sovereignty with adherence to international norms and explores the broader implications of these norms on

Kenya's multilateral diplomacy and strategic partnerships, particularly in navigating the complex dynamics of global governance.

The Theory of Functional Necessity

The Theory of Functional Necessity posits that states adjust their behavior based on the practical demands of international cooperation, and this theory provides lens through which to understand Kenya's evolving diplomatic conduct in multilateral relations. Kenya's foreign policy has increasingly aligned itself with global norms as a strategic response to its need for greater international influence and participation. This adaptation is reflected in the country's engagement with multilateral platforms such as the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU). By conforming to international norms, Kenya has been able to amplify its voice on global issues, such as peace and security, and has gained legitimacy within the international community. Over time, the country's diplomatic strategies have evolved from a primarily bilateral focus to a more multilateral approach, allowing it to leverage regional and global partnerships to advance its national interests (Gikonyo, 2021).

International norms have a profound impact on Kenya's foreign policy decisions, with the country seeking to align itself with global diplomatic standards to enhance its standing in multilateral negotiations. These norms often govern the conduct of states on issues such as human rights, climate change, and peacekeeping, and they shape Kenya's decision-making processes at both the regional and international levels. For instance, Kenya's participation in peacekeeping missions in South Sudan and Somalia can be seen as an effort to adhere to international peace and security norms, while its leadership role in climate change negotiations reflects its commitment to sustainable development goals. Adopting these norms, Kenya not only seeks to contribute to global governance but also to build stronger diplomatic ties with key international actors, such as the European Union and the United States (Mwangi & Muthiora, 2020).

Kenya plays an active role in shaping and adapting to global governance frameworks, particularly in areas that align with its national interests. This dynamic interaction between Kenya and global governance institutions exemplifies the application of the Theory of Functional Necessity, as Kenya adjusts its diplomatic conduct to meet the practical requirements of international cooperation. For example, Kenya's involvement in the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member reflects its efforts to adapt to the framework of international diplomacy while simultaneously asserting its voice on issues critical to its geopolitical interests. Similarly, Kenya's involvement in the Paris Agreement on climate change negotiations highlights how the country has adjusted its policies to align with global norms on environmental sustainability. These actions suggest that Kenya not only conforms to international norms but also actively contributes to shaping these norms, positioning itself as a key player in

global governance (Gikonyo & Kimani, 2021). However, the Theory of Functional Necessity also emphasizes the challenges states face in balancing international norms with national interests. For Kenya, this balance is particularly evident in its efforts to uphold sovereignty while adhering to the expectations of global governance institutions. The country often navigates tensions between its own political, economic, and security priorities and the demands of international norms, particularly in areas where these norms may conflict with Kenya's domestic policies or national sovereignty. For instance, while Kenya is committed to international human rights frameworks, it sometimes faces internal challenges related to governance and democracy that can complicate its adherence to these norms. Similarly, Kenya's involvement in multilateral peacekeeping operations requires balancing national security priorities with the international community's expectations. The implications of these challenges for Kenya's multilateral diplomacy are significant, as they highlight the complexity of navigating international norms within the context of state sovereignty (Ouma, 2020).

The Evolution of Kenya's Diplomatic Conduct in Multilateral Relations

Kenya's diplomatic conduct in multilateral relations has undergone significant transformation over the years, evolving from a passive participant in global affairs to an active player seeking to influence international policy and decision-making. Initially, Kenya's diplomatic approach was largely bilateral, focusing on building strong ties with regional neighbors and colonial powers. However, with the changing global landscape and Kenya's increasing involvement in regional and international institutions, the country's foreign policy began to adapt to a more multilateral framework. The establishment of the African Union (AU), Kenya's participation in the United Nations (UN), and its membership in international financial and trade organizations have provided platforms for the country to engage with the global community. This shift reflects a broader trend in post-independence African foreign policies, where multilateralism has become a crucial tool for managing regional security, economic development, and global diplomatic relations (Wambui, 2020).

As Kenya's foreign policy has become more multilateral, the country has increasingly aligned itself with international norms, reflecting its desire to enhance its global standing and influence. This shift has been particularly evident in Kenya's active participation in peacekeeping missions, climate change negotiations, and human rights advocacy, all of which require adherence to global governance frameworks. For example, Kenya's leadership role in the African Union's peacekeeping efforts, such as in Somalia and South Sudan, showcases its commitment to regional stability and international peace and security norms. Additionally, Kenya's participation in global climate negotiations, such as the Paris Agreement, reflects its alignment with international sustainability

goals, emphasizing the country's willingness to engage with multilateral frameworks that promote global cooperation on pressing issues. This transformation in Kenya's diplomatic conduct highlights the country's strategic use of multilateralism to assert itself on the global stage (Gikonyo & Kimani, 2021).

In parallel to its increased engagement in multilateral relations, Kenya has also taken on leadership roles within key international organizations, positioning itself as a key advocate for Africa's interests. Kenya's tenure as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2021-2022 exemplifies its commitment to shaping international peace and security discussions. This role provided Kenya with an opportunity to influence critical global issues such as conflict resolution, peacekeeping, and the implementation of international law. Furthermore, Kenya's involvement in shaping the agenda of the African Union and its active role in African peace and security initiatives demonstrate the country's recognition of the importance of multilateral platforms in advancing its national interests and promoting regional stability. These developments underscore the country's evolving diplomatic approach, where it not only adapts to global norms but also seeks to influence global governance frameworks from within (Mwangi & Muthiora, 2020).

Despite Kenya's significant progress in adapting to multilateral diplomacy, challenges persist in balancing its national priorities with the expectations of the international community. The Theory of Functional Necessity, which suggests that states align their behavior based on practical cooperation needs, is evident in Kenya's balancing act between its domestic interests and its multilateral commitments. Kenya must navigate the complexities of maintaining its sovereignty while adhering to international norms and expectations, particularly in areas such as human rights, climate change, and conflict resolution. At times, Kenya faces internal political and economic pressures that may conflict with global norms, such as domestic human rights concerns or economic priorities that are not always aligned with international standards. These tensions illustrate the ongoing challenges that Kenya must address as it seeks to maintain a balance between national sovereignty and multilateral obligations in its diplomatic conduct (Ouma, 2020).

International Norms and Their Impact on Kenya's Foreign Policy Decisions

International norms significantly impact Kenya's foreign policy decisions, shaping the country's diplomatic conduct on the global stage. As a member of various international organizations, Kenya adheres to a set of globally accepted norms that influence its approach to international relations. These norms, including those related to peace, security, human rights, and environmental sustainability, guide Kenya's decision-making processes and inform its foreign policy priorities. For instance, Kenya's commitment to the United Nations Charter and its alignment with the African Union's peace

and security agenda reflect the country's adherence to norms that promote conflict resolution and international cooperation. As Kenya navigates its foreign policy, it does so within the framework of these global norms, ensuring that its decisions reflect both its national interests and its obligations to international communities (Mutua & Maina, 2021).

The influence of international norms is evident in Kenya's active participation in peacekeeping operations, where the country has committed troops to various international missions, such as those in South Sudan and Somalia. This involvement is not only a strategic foreign policy decision but also an adherence to the global norm of contributing to international peace and security. By aligning its foreign policy with international norms on peacekeeping, Kenya enhances its reputation as a responsible member of the international community. Furthermore, Kenya's role in advocating for disarmament and supporting peace processes, such as its involvement in the Nairobi Process on regional peacebuilding, showcases how Kenya integrates international norms into its foreign policy decisions. The country's support for multilateral peace initiatives helps to establish it as a key actor in regional and global security, reinforcing the power of international norms in shaping diplomatic behavior (Karanja, 2020).

Kenya's engagement in climate change negotiations further highlights the role of international norms in shaping its foreign policy decisions. The Paris Agreement, which sets global targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, has had a profound influence on Kenya's approach to environmental policy and its diplomatic efforts. By ratifying the agreement, Kenya not only commits to addressing climate change domestically but also aligns its foreign policy with global environmental norms. This commitment is reflected in Kenya's proactive stance at international climate conferences, such as the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP), where it advocates for climate justice and the interests of developing nations. Additionally, Kenya's participation in global climate governance helps to strengthen its position as a leader in environmental diplomacy, further illustrating how international norms influence Kenya's foreign policy on global issues (Ochieng, 2021).

While international norms shape Kenya's foreign policy decisions, the country also navigates challenges in balancing these norms with its national interests. In areas such as human rights, Kenya faces tensions between international expectations and domestic considerations. For example, Kenya's alignment with the global norm of promoting human rights can sometimes be at odds with its domestic policies or political realities, such as in instances of political repression or human rights abuses. These contradictions highlight the complexities of Kenya's foreign policy, where it must reconcile international norms with its sovereignty and domestic priorities. The Theory of Functional Necessity helps to explain this balancing act, suggesting that while Kenya seeks to align itself with global norms, its foreign policy decisions are also shaped

by the practical needs of maintaining national stability and economic growth. Therefore, Kenya's foreign policy is not merely a reflection of international norms but also an adaptive strategy to navigate global expectations and national imperatives (Kariuki & Njiru, 2020).

Kenya's Role in Shaping and Adapting to Global Governance Frameworks

Kenya plays an active and influential role in shaping and adapting to global governance frameworks, particularly through its participation in international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). As an emerging middle power, Kenya aligns its foreign policy with key global governance initiatives that promote peace, security, and sustainable development. One example is Kenya's proactive stance on issues such as climate change, where the country has championed the integration of climate justice into global governance. Through its participation in multilateral platforms like the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, Kenya works to ensure that the voices of developing nations, particularly in Africa, are heard and their concerns about the effects of climate change are addressed. This active engagement in global governance highlights Kenya's commitment to contributing to the design and adaptation of international frameworks that influence the future of global diplomacy (Wambugu, 2021).

Furthermore, Kenya's role in peace and security frameworks, especially within the African Union, underscores its significant influence on global governance. As a member of the AU Peace and Security Council, Kenya has played a central role in shaping policies that aim to address conflicts on the African continent. The country's contributions to peacekeeping efforts, both in Africa and globally, are grounded in its commitment to upholding international norms that prioritize stability and security. Kenya's involvement in peace negotiations, such as those between Sudan and South Sudan, has cemented its position as a key player in African diplomacy. Through these initiatives, Kenya adapts to global governance frameworks by aligning its diplomatic strategies with international expectations while pursuing solutions tailored to the continent's unique geopolitical challenges (Onyango, 2020).

Kenya also demonstrates leadership in shaping global economic governance frameworks, particularly in promoting regional economic integration. As a member of the East African Community (EAC) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Kenya seeks to foster economic cooperation and integration across Africa. The country actively participates in multilateral trade negotiations, advocating for policies that address the developmental needs of African countries. For example, Kenya's support for the AfCFTA demonstrates its commitment to creating a more equitable global economic system, one where African countries can

leverage their collective economic power. Through these efforts, Kenya not only shapes global economic governance but also adapts to the evolving dynamics of global trade, ensuring that its own economic interests align with broader international frameworks (Mwaura, 2021).

However, Kenya's efforts in shaping and adapting to global governance frameworks are not without challenges. One of the major hurdles is balancing national interests with global expectations, especially in areas such as human rights and governance. While Kenya has embraced global norms around democracy and human rights, it often faces internal political pressures that complicate its alignment with these norms. For instance, issues related to governance, political stability, and human rights violations occasionally pose tensions between Kenya's domestic policies and its international obligations. Despite these challenges, Kenya continues to adapt its diplomatic conduct by navigating the complexities of global governance frameworks and seeking to influence their evolution in ways that are beneficial to both its national interests and global objectives. This balancing act reflects the ongoing challenge of reconciling the demands of sovereignty with the need for international cooperation in an increasingly interconnected world (Lwanga, 2020).

Challenges in Balancing Sovereignty and Adherence to International Norms

Kenya faces significant challenges in balancing its sovereignty with adherence to international norms, particularly within the framework of multilateral diplomacy. As an independent state, Kenya prioritizes its right to make sovereign decisions, yet it must also navigate the complex requirements of global governance, which often necessitate the alignment of national policies with international standards. One major challenge arises when Kenya is confronted with international norms that may conflict with domestic political, economic, or social realities. For instance, while Kenya has committed to human rights frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, domestic concerns such as security issues, ethnic tensions, and political instability sometimes complicate its full compliance with international human rights standards. This tension between upholding international norms and protecting national sovereignty remains a central issue in Kenya's diplomatic conduct, influencing its decision-making processes in multilateral forums (Kariuki, 2021).

Moreover, the issue of sovereignty becomes particularly evident in Kenya's engagement with global institutions like the United Nations and the International Criminal Court (ICC). Kenya's cooperation with international legal frameworks, such as the Rome Statute of the ICC, has been contentious at times, especially regarding issues of accountability for high-ranking political figures. The country's initial resistance to ICC interventions during the post-election violence trials, particularly involving

senior political leaders, highlighted the challenge of reconciling national sovereignty with the enforcement of international justice. The debate over Kenya's obligations under international law versus its desire to maintain control over its judicial and political processes demonstrates the complex dynamics between international norms and national interests. This ongoing dilemma forces Kenya to continuously negotiate its position between international expectations and domestic imperatives (Mutai, 2020).

In the economic realm, Kenya's sovereignty is also tested in the face of international trade and environmental agreements. As a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and a signatory to the Paris Agreement on climate change, Kenya must adhere to international regulations that may sometimes conflict with national development goals. For example, the country's dependence on agriculture and its growing industrial sector often clashes with global environmental norms aimed at reducing emissions and promoting sustainability. Kenya's challenge lies in reconciling the global commitment to reducing carbon footprints with the urgent need for economic development and poverty alleviation, which may require greater industrialization and energy consumption. Thus, the balancing act between economic growth, sovereignty, and international environmental norms remains a critical issue in Kenya's foreign policy (Njoroge, 2021).

Kenya's diplomatic relations with other countries often involve the balancing of sovereignty with international cooperation, particularly when dealing with security issues. Kenya's strategic importance in the Horn of Africa places it at the crossroads of various international security frameworks, including counterterrorism and peacekeeping operations under the African Union and the United Nations. However, national security concerns, such as the fight against terrorism and regional instability, may sometimes lead to friction between Kenya's desire for self-determination and international expectations of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. The country must carefully navigate these pressures to protect its territorial integrity and sovereignty while participating in global security initiatives that may demand compromises on certain national prerogatives. This challenge of balancing sovereignty with international security norms underscores the complex nature of Kenya's diplomatic conduct in multilateral relations (Wambui, 2020).

The Implications of International Norms on Kenya's Multilateral Diplomacy and Strategic Partnerships

International norms play a significant role in shaping Kenya's multilateral diplomacy and strategic partnerships, influencing its interactions within global platforms such as the United Nations, the African Union, and the World Trade Organization. These norms, which include the principles of peaceful coexistence, respect for human rights, and sustainable development, provide Kenya with a framework that aligns its foreign policy with the broader objectives of global governance. In multilateral forums, Kenya often positions itself as a proponent of

peace and security, advocating for conflict resolution and peacekeeping, particularly in the Horn of Africa. By adhering to these international norms, Kenya enhances its diplomatic credibility and strengthens its alliances with both regional and global actors. For instance, Kenya's active participation in UN peacekeeping missions reflects its commitment to maintaining global security, and its consistent advocacy for the protection of human rights boosts its reputation as a responsible global actor (Mwaura, 2020).

One key implication of international norms on Kenya's multilateral diplomacy is its approach to human rights and climate change negotiations. As a signatory to various international treaties, including the Paris Agreement on climate change, Kenya aligns its national policies with global standards aimed at environmental sustainability. In this context, Kenya's diplomatic conduct is shaped by the need to balance international environmental commitments with domestic developmental priorities. However, the country also faces challenges in fully implementing these norms due to economic and resource constraints. For instance, while Kenya's government is committed to reducing carbon emissions and promoting green energy, its dependence on agriculture and its industrial growth aspirations sometimes present conflicts with global environmental standards. Thus, Kenya's strategic partnerships in the climate change arena often require compromises, with the country negotiating for financial assistance and technology transfer from developed nations to meet international expectations (Gathuku, 2021).

In terms of strategic partnerships, Kenya's engagement with other African nations within the African Union (AU) reflects the country's role in shaping and adhering to norms of continental cooperation. Kenya's advocacy for Pan-African unity, peacebuilding, and regional integration aligns with the AU's Agenda 2063, which focuses on achieving sustainable development and strengthening Africa's role in global governance. Kenya's commitment to these norms strengthens its diplomatic standing within the continent, positioning it as a leader in fostering peace and security in the Horn of Africa and beyond. Its strategic partnerships with countries like Ethiopia and Somalia are often anchored in shared commitments to regional stability, counterterrorism cooperation, and conflict resolution. Through these partnerships, Kenya plays a pivotal role in advancing multilateral diplomacy in Africa, demonstrating how international norms can influence the formulation of regional diplomatic strategies (Ochieng, 2020).

Kenya's multilateral diplomatic conduct is also influenced by its strategic relationships with global powers, including the United States, China, and the European Union. These partnerships are increasingly shaped by Kenya's adherence to international norms, particularly in areas like trade, security, and development. The country's alignment with global frameworks, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), strengthens

its ties with international actors who prioritize human rights, democracy, and economic development. However, these relationships also present challenges, particularly when Kenya must navigate competing interests between international partners. For instance, while Kenya benefits from development aid and trade agreements with Western countries, its growing relationship with China, which often emphasizes infrastructure development over human rights concerns, creates a delicate balancing act. In this context, Kenya's ability to uphold international norms while managing diverse strategic partnerships is crucial to its success in the global arena (Kimani, 2021).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining both desk review and primary data collection to analyze the influence of international norms on Kenya's diplomatic conduct in multilateral relations. The desk review methodology focuses on gathering secondary data from a wide range of credible sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, books, academic reports, and key documents from international organizations such as the United Nations, the African Union, and the World Trade Organization. These sources offer a comprehensive understanding of the global frameworks and norms that shape Kenya's foreign policy, particularly in the context of multilateral diplomacy. Additionally, government documents such as reports from the Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, policy papers, and official records from the Kenya National Assembly provide insight into the country's formal commitments to international norms. This secondary data is evaluated for its relevance, credibility, and timeliness, with a particular emphasis on sources published within the last five years to ensure a contemporary understanding of Kenya's diplomatic practices and international engagements (Wambui, 2020; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021).

In addition to secondary data, primary data is collected through qualitative interviews with key stakeholders engaged in Kenya's multilateral diplomacy, such as diplomats, government officials, and experts in international relations. These interviews are conducted with purposively selected participants who are involved in Kenya's diplomatic conduct in various international forums, including the United Nations and the African Union. The primary data provides firsthand insights into how international norms influence Kenya's decision-making processes, negotiations, and foreign policy strategies. Interviews with diplomats and foreign policy experts, for instance, shed light on the practical challenges and opportunities that Kenya faces in balancing international norms with national interests. Furthermore, focus group discussions and phone interviews with regional leaders and stakeholders in East Africa offer additional perspectives on Kenya's role in shaping regional governance frameworks. This data is systematically analyzed to identify patterns and themes regarding Kenya's diplomatic strategies and

the implications of adhering to international norms in multilateral contexts (Kimani, 2021; Ochieng, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that Kenya's diplomatic conduct in multilateral relations is significantly shaped by its adherence to international norms, which influence its foreign policy decisions in global forums. Kenya actively participates in multilateral platforms such as the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), and the World Trade Organization (WTO), aligning its policies with global norms on peace, security, and human rights. For example, Kenya's role in peacekeeping efforts in Somalia under the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) showcases its commitment to regional security and stability. Data from the UN Department of Peace Operations (2022) reveals that Kenya has contributed over 3,000 peacekeeping troops to various missions, demonstrating its alignment with international security norms. Moreover, Kenya has consistently championed the protection of human rights, actively participating in UN human rights councils and supporting the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, despite these positive contributions, Kenya faces challenges in fully implementing international norms due to resource constraints and competing domestic priorities (Wambui, 2020).

Qualitative data reveals that Kenya's adherence to international norms is also reflected in its diplomatic strategies, particularly in terms of aligning its national interests with global governance frameworks. Kenya's participation in the Paris Agreement on climate change, for example, underscores its commitment to global environmental standards. In 2021, Kenya submitted its updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), pledging to reduce carbon emissions by 32% by 2030, in line with international climate norms (Republic of Kenya, 2021). Additionally, Kenya has positioned itself as a regional leader in climate diplomacy, hosting key international conferences such as the Africa Climate Summit. These efforts are consistent with global governance frameworks, but Kenya's ability to fully meet its climate targets is constrained by limited financial resources and the challenges of balancing development needs with environmental priorities (Republic of Kenya, 2021; UNFCCC, 2020).

The study also identifies Kenya's role in shaping and adapting to global governance frameworks, highlighting its active engagement in multilateral negotiations and its diplomatic leverage within international organizations. Kenya's participation in UN peacekeeping and its advocacy for reforming the UN Security Council demonstrate its proactive approach in shaping global governance norms. Kenya has been a strong advocate for the representation of African nations in the UN Security Council, pushing for reforms that would give the African Union a more significant role in decision-making (Ochieng, 2021). Furthermore, Kenya's diplomatic strategies within

the AU and East African Community (EAC) reveal its adaptability to evolving regional norms, with a particular focus on conflict resolution and economic integration. However, while Kenya has successfully influenced multilateral policies, it continues to face challenges in reconciling its national priorities with the expectations set by international norms (Ochieng, 2021; UNGA, 2020). Despite Kenya's successes in aligning with international norms, the findings reveal that the country struggles to balance its sovereignty with its adherence to global standards. Kenya's foreign policy decisions are often influenced by its desire to protect national interests while participating in international agreements that may limit its autonomy. For instance, Kenya's involvement in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) requires the country to adhere to multilateral trade regulations that sometimes conflict with its domestic economic goals. In 2021, Kenya expressed concerns over the potential adverse effects of tariff reductions on local industries, such as agriculture, which is a cornerstone of the national economy (Kamau, 2021). These concerns underscore the tension between upholding international norms and preserving sovereignty, as Kenya seeks to maintain its policy flexibility while fulfilling its commitments under global governance frameworks. Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced approach to multilateral diplomacy that allows Kenya to navigate between global expectations and national development priorities (Kamau, 2021; WTO, 2020).

Discussion

Kenya's diplomatic conduct in multilateral relations has been significantly shaped by the influence of international norms, particularly in the areas of peace, security, and economic development. The country's foreign policy aligns closely with global governance frameworks such as the United Nations (UN) Charter, the African Union (AU) Constitutive Act, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Kenya's participation in peacekeeping missions under the African Standby Force (ASF) and its role in conflict resolution efforts within the Horn of Africa exemplify its commitment to international norms on security and stability. By contributing troops to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Kenya aligns its foreign policy with the broader objective of fostering regional peace and combating terrorism, which is also a key international priority. This commitment is reflected in Kenya's strategic partnerships with international actors, including the United States and the European Union, who support Kenya's peace and security initiatives (UN, 2021; AU, 2022). However, Kenya's capacity to fully engage in these peacekeeping missions remains constrained by limited resources, raising questions about the sustainability of its contributions in the long term (Kamau, 2021).

In addition to peace and security, Kenya's foreign policy has been increasingly influenced by international norms related to climate change and environmental sustainability.

Kenya has committed to the Paris Agreement on climate change and has aligned its national climate action plan with global climate governance frameworks. For instance, Kenya's pledge to reduce its carbon emissions by 32% by 2030 demonstrates its alignment with international climate norms, despite facing significant developmental challenges. The country's participation in the annual Conference of the Parties (COP) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has allowed Kenya to secure international support for its climate resilience projects. These engagements reflect Kenya's strategic use of international norms to attract funding for climate change adaptation and mitigation, aligning with both its own environmental policies and global climate objectives (Republic of Kenya, 2021; UNFCCC, 2020). However, the implementation of these climate policies has been hampered by financial constraints and the need for technological support, which underscores the challenges of balancing international obligations with domestic capacity limitations (Wambui, 2020).

Kenya's engagement in multilateral trade agreements further underscores the influence of international norms on its diplomatic conduct. As a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Kenya has committed to international trade norms that promote liberalization, regional integration, and the reduction of trade barriers. Kenya's participation in AfCFTA, for example, reflects its commitment to enhancing intra-Africa trade and boosting regional economic integration in line with the SDG target of reducing inequalities. However, the implementation of these trade agreements has not been without challenges. Kenya's domestic industries, particularly agriculture, face competition from cheaper imports, which raises concerns about the impact of trade liberalization on local economies. The country's diplomatic strategies in these trade negotiations often aim to safeguard its national economic interests while adhering to the international trade norms set by multilateral bodies such as the WTO and AfCFTA (Kamau, 2021). This balancing act highlights the tension between embracing global economic standards and protecting local industries from adverse effects of free trade (WTO, 2020).

The influence of international norms on Kenya's diplomatic conduct also manifests in its approach to human rights and democracy. As a signatory to various international human rights conventions, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), Kenya's foreign policy positions often reflect its commitment to the promotion of democracy, rule of law, and human rights. Kenya's role in regional human rights initiatives, such as the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, showcases its diplomatic efforts to uphold human rights norms in the African context. However, the country's internal human rights challenges, including issues related to freedom of expression, judicial independence, and

security force abuses, have occasionally put it at odds with international expectations. These contradictions illustrate the complexities Kenya faces in balancing its domestic governance challenges with its commitment to global human rights norms. Kenya's participation in international human rights frameworks thus remains a double-edged sword, as it strives to improve its domestic human rights record while adhering to international standards (Ochieng, 2021; UNGA, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Kenya's diplomatic conduct in multilateral relations is deeply influenced by the integration of international norms that guide its engagement in global peace, security, trade, climate, and human rights frameworks. The country's strategic alignment with international conventions, such as the UN Charter, the African Union's Constitutive Act, and the SDGs, has not only positioned Kenya as a key player in regional and global diplomacy but also enhanced its ability to attract international support for critical development goals. Kenya's active participation in peacekeeping missions, trade agreements, and climate negotiations underscores its commitment to international norms, reflecting a broader foreign policy goal of fostering stability, prosperity, and cooperation. However, the challenges of balancing domestic priorities with these global standards, particularly regarding limited resources and capacity, remain a significant impediment to fully harnessing the potential of these engagements. The complexities of negotiating equitable terms in international relations further highlight the tension between international obligations and national capabilities.

Despite these challenges, Kenya's ability to leverage international norms for resource mobilization, peacebuilding, and sustainable development demonstrates the effectiveness of multilateral diplomacy in addressing domestic constraints. Moving forward, Kenya must strengthen its negotiating power and integrate international commitments with long-term domestic policy objectives to ensure sustainable development outcomes. Furthermore, addressing domestic resource gaps and enhancing institutional capacities will be crucial for Kenya to maintain its role as a regional leader in multilateral diplomacy, ultimately contributing to the achievement of international norms in areas such as climate action, human rights, and regional security.

Recommendations

1. Strengthen Kenya's diplomatic training programs to improve negotiation skills and understanding of international norms for more effective engagement in multilateral forums.
2. Prioritize domestic resource mobilization strategies to reduce dependency on external support and ensure sustainability in foreign policy commitments.
3. Ensure that Kenya's foreign policy goals are more closely aligned with the United Nations Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) to maintain consistency in its international engagements.

4. Actively advocate for trade agreements that ensure mutual benefits, especially for developing nations, to enhance Kenya's negotiating power in global trade discussions.

5. Integrate human rights issues into Kenya's multilateral engagements to reinforce its commitment to international norms related to human dignity and justice.

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