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Common Ground: Optimising the Malawi-Mozambique Geostrategic Stability

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Abstract

This paper investigates how countries divided by colonial legacy and Cold War antagonism, specifically Malawi and Mozambique, can build mutual trust to enhance geostrategic stability, a critical component for their peace, security, and socioeconomic development. The aim of the paper is to develop a comprehensive framework that elevates trust between these two nations by identifying and addressing the underlying causes of their trust deficit. Utilising a qualitative methodology, the study engages in a systems diagnosis to analyse causal factors contributing to distrust, employing feedback loop analysis to discern pathways for rapprochement. The theoretical framework is grounded in concepts of ideational reconciliation and strategic empathy, positing that fostering an understanding of each other's perspectives can alleviate tensions and promote mutual trust. Key recommendations include establishing regular diplomatic dialogues focused on conflict resolution, implementing joint development projects that benefit both States, and creating platforms for cultural exchange to foster people-to-people connections. By demonstrating that a détente aligns with both countries' best interests, this paper mitigates the perceived risks associated with implementing this strategy. The implications of this research extend to influencing solution-oriented statecraft in bilateral relations, while the typologies developed herein provide a guide for

international partners to assess risks in aligning their strategic goals with support for alliance formation.

Keywords: *Accidental Adversaries, Solution-oriented Statecraft, Strategic Empathy, Trust Deficit*

Introduction

Malawi and Mozambique are neighbouring states in the southern part of Africa. From 1985 to 1995, Malawi hosted over one million refugees fleeing the Mozambican civil war (1977–1992). However, despite this historical context, a lack of trust has overshadowed the stability of their relationship. As recently as 2021, this distrust was evident when Mozambique expressed hesitance regarding Malawi's deployment of troops as part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Standby Force to address terrorist activities in the northern Mozambican province of Cabo Delgado. 1 Although Malawi was expected to contribute troops to the mission, it ultimately deployed only staff officers to Cabo Delgado.2

The two neighbours harbour deep-seated resentments rooted in historical grievances, including territorial disputes and economic competition, which stem from their different colonial backgrounds and were exacerbated by their ideological differences during the Cold War

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1 See Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), "SADC Executive Secretary presents instruments of authority for Standby Force Deployment Mission to Mozambique" (July 17, 2021), https://www.sadc.int/news-events/news/sadc-executive-secretary-presents-instruments-authority-standby-force-deployment-mission-mozambique/ (accessed September 2, 2021).

2 Kizito Sikuka, "Understanding the SADC Standby Force," *South African Research and Documentation Center* SANF 21, no. 9 (April 22, 2021).

that remain unresolved.3 In this way, the two countries are akin to accidental adversaries, where instead of cooperating, each perceives the other as undermining its success. 4 Nonetheless, there are strong affinities between the people of the two countries that go beyond the crafted colonial nation-state. These include cross-border trade, intermarriages, cultural ties, and shared historical narratives from the trans-territory under the Maravi Empire. 5 Understanding these complexities is crucial for fostering dialogue and building trust.

This discussion focuses on a specific question: how can Malawi and Mozambique reconcile their historical differences to optimise their geostrategic stability? The goal is to find effective strategies for fostering mutual trust to improve the geostrategic stability between Malawi and Mozambique. To achieve this goal, this paper engages in a systems diagnosis of the core causes of the trust deficit between the two countries and recommends strategies to reconcile their ideational differences. The paper adopts Parson's typology of explanation to develop a sound causal analysis for the trust deficit between the two countries, as it provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the underlying social and historical factors that contribute to distrust, allowing for a nuanced exploration of the complex interplay between ideology, history, and interpersonal relations.6

The thesis is that resolving differences to build a constructive relationship (ideational reconciliation) and employing strategic empathy to appreciate each other's concerns can produce reinforcing feedback loops that can ease tension and build mutual trust, leading to more strategic cooperation and thereby optimising the geostrategic stability between the two neighbours. This paper has six parts. The first part presents a geographical orientation of Malawi and Mozambique. The second provides the historical background of the two countries. The third part reviews analytical models used in the discussion and proposes a

3 George Roberts, "The assassination of Eduardo Mondlane: FRELIMO, Tanzania, and the politics of exile in Dar es Salaam," *Cold War History* 17, no. 1 (2017): 1–19, 7, https://doi.org/10.10/14682745.2016.1246542.

4 David Peter Stroh, *Systems Thinking for Social Change* (White River Junctions, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2015), 61– 67.

5 Malyn D. Newitt, "The Early History of the Maravi," *The Journal of African History* 23, no. 2 (1982), 145 –162, https://doi.org/10.1080/14682745.2016.1246542.

6 See also Pierre-Marc Daigneault and Daniel Béland, "Taking Explanation Seriously in Political Science, *Political Studies Review* 13 (2015): 384–392, https://doi/10.1111/1478-9302.12055.

working definition of geostrategic stability. It further applies the models, including a systems diagnosis of the root causes of the mistrust and postulates determinants for diagnosing geostrategic stability applicable to Malawi and Mozambique. The fourth part provides recommendations and tests the validity of the determinants for geostrategic strategic stability developed in the preceding section. The fifth part discusses policy implications of the recommendations in this paper. The sixth is a conclusion containing a summary of the analyses and questions for further research.

Geopolitics of Malawi and Mozambique

Malawi is a former British colony, which became independent in 1964.7 Lilongwe is the capital city of Malawi. Mozambique whose capital city is Maputo, reached negotiated independence with Portugal in 1975 following a protracted civil war.8 Malawi is landlocked by Mozambique to the south and east, Zambia to the west, and Tanzania to the north and northeast. Malawi dovetails the northern part of Mozambique, which borders the Indian Ocean to its east.9 Kayuni and others wryly note that the shape of Malawi is like a knife that penetrates Mozambique, symbolising the uneasy relationship between the two countries.10 Figure 1 is a map depicting the geographical position of the two countries.

7 Frank E. Read, *Malawi Land of Promise: A Comprehensive Survey* (Zomba: Malawi Government Information Department, 1966).

8 Malyn D. Newitt, *A Short History of Mozambique* (London: Hurst Publishers, 2017).

9 Both Malawi and Mozambique are Member States of the United Nations Organization (UN), African Union (AU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA), among other international bodies.

10 Happy Kayuni, Dan Banik and Joseph J. Chunga, "The Perils of Megaphone Diplomacy on Malawi's Ambitious Shire- Zambezi Waterway Project," *Africa Review* 13, no. 2 (June 19, 2021): 270 –289, 276, https://doi.org/10.1080/09744053.2021.1943265.

Figure 1. Southern Africa Reference Map11

The two countries depend on each other economically. Malawi relies on Mozambique in trading and transportation of goods. Malawi uses four Indian Ocean ports: Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, Beira and Nacala in Mozambique, and Durban in South Africa. Routes to the first three ports

11 United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), "Southern Africa Reference Map," (Geneva:JJJJJ UNHCR, May 2, 2018), https://data2.unhcr.org/image/documents/big_southern_africa_reference_2018-05-03.pdfthumb.jpg.

pass through corridors across Mozambique. 12 Mozambique receives revenue from Malawi to use its ports. Statistics indicate that Malawi accounts for a substantial portion of Mozambique's port traffic. Approximately 60 percent of all cargo passing through the port of Beira originated for or was destined for Malawi. This underscores the mutually beneficial economic relationship between the two countries where Malawi gains essential trade route routes and Mozambique earns significant revenue for port usage.13

The two countries have adopted a *laissez-faire* approach towards each other. For example, despite frequent border disputes overfishing rights in Lake Malawi, the countries have taken a laissez-faire approach, leading to ongoing tensions and occasional clashes between local fishermen and authorities from both sides. This lack of proactive resolution exacerbates the issue, potentially escalating into broader diplomatic and economic strains.14 This is an undesirable scenario, as a blame game characterizes sporadic disputes between the two countries. The tension can have deleterious effects on both countries if it persists unresolved. For example, by being sidelined to tackle a common problem in Cabo Delgado, Malawi becomes an escape route for retreating terrorists.15 This highlights the potential consequences of lack of coordinated action between Malawi and Mozambique, where security issues can spill over borders and impact regional stability.

12 Kayuni, et al., "Megaphone Diplomacy," 270.

13 Port Authority of Mozambique. 2023. Annual Report on Port Traffic and Cargo Handling. Maputo: Port Authority of Mozambique. Available at: https://360mozambique.com/buisness/logistics/increase-in-port-traffic-of-12-3-to-more-than-63-thousand-tonnes-in-2023.

14 Institute for Security Studies, *Africa's International Borders as Potential Sources of Conflict and Future Threats to Peace and Security,* Paper, no. 233 (May 2012), https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/14511/Paper233.pdf. Endalcachew Bayey, "The Political and Economic Legacy of Colonialism in the Post-Independence African States," *International Journal in Commerce, IT & Social Sciences* 2, no. 2 (February 2015): 89 – 93, ISSN:3394-5702.

15 This may be true if one considers the fact that ancient strategists such as Sun Tzu, Machiavelli, and Kautilya agree that a military general should always give a nearly defeated enemy the hope of escape by never surrounding them. See Roger Boesche, *The First Great Political Realists: Kautilya and His Arthashastra,* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2003), 90. See also Samuel B. Griffith, *Sun Tzu: The Art of War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 109 –110. Niccolò Machiavelli, Peter Bondanella, Maurizio Viroli, *The Prince* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 700.

At first sight, the interconnectedness of their economies and the disposition of their militaries rules out the scenario of war between the two countries. However, if the mistrust continues, the possibility of an escalation resulting in a spiral of conflict cannot be excluded. 16 Therefore, it is a strategic imperative to resolve outstanding disputes to improve the relationship between the two countries to ensure geostrategic stability.17

Historiography of Malawi and Mozambique Relations

It is axiomatic that the relationship between Malawi and Mozambique is tepid because of mistrust, notwithstanding their Joint Permanent Commission of Cooperation on Defence and Security (JPCDS).18 The JPCDS is a diplomatic forum for discussing issues of mutual interest and finding solutions to common problems to promote bilateral cooperation. However, the discussions in this forum are sometimes cosmetic as they tend to gloss over critical issues while leaving historical resentments unresolved. The genesis of the trust deficit is traced from the post-colonial era of the late 20th century, where decolonisation movements and shifting geopolitical alliances reshaped regional dynamics.19

The Impact of the Partition of Africa

The boundary between Malawi and Mozambique was drawn under controversial circumstances compared to the boundaries Malawi shares with Zambia and Tanzania, respectively.20 The 1891 Anglo-Portuguese

16 Political scientists contend that when countries do not trust each other, they are unlikely to believe conciliatory signals from the other side, and no country would want to appear weak hence the spiral model of conflict escalation.

17 Jakkie Cilliers, *The Future of Africa: Challenges and Opportunities* (Pretoria: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 279–305.

18 Signed on December 4, 1986This superseded the General Cooperation Agreement of October 1984. See also David Hedges, "Notes on Malawi–Mozambique Relations, 1961–1987," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 15, no. 4 (October 1989): 617– 644, 642.

19 David Robinson, "RENAMO, Malawi and the Struggle to Succeed Banda: Assessing Theories of Malawi Intervention in the Mozambican Civil War," *Eras,* Edition 11, November 2009. See also Bayey, "The Political and Economic Legacy of Colonialism in the Post-Independence African States," 89 – 93, .

20 John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875 –1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province,* Third Edition (Zomba: Kachere Series, 2008). See also John McCracken, *A History of Malawi, 1859 –1966* (Woodbridge, NY: Suffolk & Rochester, 2012).

Convention produced, among others, the boundary between Mozambique and Malawi.21 The two countries became political states with asymmetrical shapes and arbitrary borders. This resulted in Malawi being landlocked while Mozambique has access to the Indian Ocean.

The principle of *uti possidetis, ita possideatis,* asserts that borders are immutable and sacrosanct.22 Although the colonizers drew the borders without regard for ethnic group boundaries, the African Union (AU) has maintained a principle of border status quo to ensure peace and stability among African states. 23 However, the porous African borders have resulted in the regionalization of instability and conflict, even producing anarchy.24

The Influence of Colonial Legacy

The interests of the colonial powers were different, with Malawi under Britain having a largely planter-based economy while Mozambique under the Portuguese had a settler economy.25 The foreign powers imposed

21 The 1891 Agreement and subsequent treaties gave the British full rights to the Portuguese port of Chinde. It also provided them with navigation rights on the Zambezi-Shire River. Finally, the Agreement provided for a mutually agreed boundary running down the median line of Lake Nyasa while recognizing two islands located within Mozambican waters in this section of the lake as part of the Nyasaland protectorate. See Treaty between Great Britain and Portugal Defining the Spheres of Interest of the Two Countries in Africa, Exchange of Notes Constituting an Agreement Between Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Portuguese Government Providing for Portuguese Participation in the Shire Valley Project, Gr. Brit.–Port., January 21, 1953, 175 UNTS 14, Agreement between the United Kingdom Acting on Its Own Behalf and on Behalf of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and Portugal Regarding Nyasaland–Mozambique Frontier art. 2 1, Gr. Brit.–Por., Nov. 18, 1954, 325 U.N.T.S. 307, 310.

22 This Latin expression means "may you continue to possess such as you possess (lit., "as you possess, thus you possess"). Military Wiki, *"Uti possidetis",* military-history.fandom.com/Uti_possidetis (accessed February 22, 2022). See article 4(b) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, African Union, *Constitutive Act of the African Union* (Lomé, Togo: African Union, July 11, 2000).

23 Saadia Touval, "The Organization of African Unity and African Borders," *International Organization* 21, no.1(Winter 1967):102–127, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020818300013151.

24 Institute for Security Studies, *Africa's International Borders as Potential Sources of Conflict and Future Threats to Peace and Security,* Paper, no. 233 (May 2012), https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/14511/Paper233.pdf.

25 Richard J. Hammond, *Portugal and Africa 1815-1910: A Study in Uneconomic Imperialism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1966).

their languages on the natives. Malawi became Anglophone, whereas Mozambique became Lusophone. Hence, precolonial relatives became post-colonial strangers because of artificial language barriers created by the colonial legacy.26

The language barrier leads to a cultural, psychological, and social disconnect between the two states, making common understanding a challenge. Of note is Article 21 of the Mozambican Constitution, which obliges the government to keep special friendship and cooperation with African countries whose official language is Portuguese and those hosting Mozambican emigrants. 27 This provision underscores the cleavage occasioned by language differences in the relations between the two countries . 28 Colonialists were neither interested in helping a democratic system in Africa flourish nor enabling African states to administer themselves effectively in the post-independence period. 29 This has a lasting effect on the atmosphere of peace and economic discussions between the two countries.30

26 Folarin Sheriff, Folarin Oluwafunke and Olorunyomi Bankole, "Reconciling the Two West Africas: Managing ethnic and Lingual Diversity for Regional Integration," *Ante Portas-Studia and Bezpieczeństwem* 2, no. 5(2015), 179 –193, https://paperity.org/p/97904627/reconciling-the-two-west-africas-managing-ethnic-and-lingual-diversity-for-regional(accessed January 25, 2022).

27 See Government of the Republic of Mozambique, *Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique*, Mozlegal, Lda, https://ecnl.org/sites/default/files/files/2021/MozambiqueConstitution.pdf(accessed January 22, 2022).

28 As above.

29 Endalcachew Bayey, "The Political and Economic Legacy of Colonialism in the Post-Independence African States," *International Journal in Commerce, IT & Social Sciences* 2, no. 2(February 2015): 89 – 93, ISSN:3394-5702.

30 This is also true with Angola and Zambia, neighbouring states colonized by the Portuguese and British, respectively. Until recently, the two countries have had uneasy relations and slow cross-border trade despite bilateral agreements. A former British colony, Zimbabwe does not have noticeably strong ties with Angola despite their common liberation struggle. Nevertheless, Angola and Mozambique, who share a common colonizer and language, have a very cordial relationship. Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Angola – Zimbabwe Relations: A Study in the Search for Regional Alliances," *The Round Table* 99, no. 411(December 14, 2010): 631– 653, https://doi.org/10.1080/00358533.2010.530406.

Effects of the Cold War

The Cold War was a period of geopolitical tension and ideological rivalry between the United States (US) and its allies such as the United Kingdom, representing capitalism and democracy, and the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and its allies like Portugal, representing communism, from the end of World War II in 1947 until the early 1990s.31 The foreign policies of the US and the erstwhile USSR– the protagonists during the Cold War – affected the political culture that evolved in post-colonial Africa. In pursuit of ideological supremacy, these superpowers undermined each other.32 The ripple effects of their bipolar tension shaped the continent's political development.33 While Malawi embraced capitalism, Mozambique adopted socialism, following the inclination of their respective colonial masters.

The context of these ideological differences from the Cold War explains Malawi's attempt to frustrate the new government of Mozambique. The founding president of Malawi, Hastings Kamuzu Banda, openly supported Portugal to resist the independence of Mozambique.34 In the 1960s, Banda began claiming that a large part of Mozambique, including the port of Beira, was part of the ancient Maravi Kingdom that had its headquarters in present-day Malawi.35

As a result of that, Malawi censured Mozambique for allegedly providing a haven for Malawian socialist rebels who opposed Banda's dictatorial

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31 Sue Onslow, "The Cold War in Southern Africa: White Power, Black Nationalism and External Intervention," in Sue Onslow (Ed), *Cold War in Southern Africa: White Power, Black Liberation,* Routledge, 2009, 9-34.

32 Kai He, "Undermining Adversaries: Unipolarity, Threat Perception, and Negative Balancing Strategies after the Cold War," *Security Studies* 21, no.2 (2012): 154 –191, https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2012.679201.

33 For example, the Cold War actors institutionalized a violent political culture in post-colonial Africa by providing military support to opposing forces in African countries. Kenneth Kalu, "The Cold War, and Africa's Political Culture," *Vestnik RUDN International Relations* 20, no. 1(2020):11–21, https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-0660-2020-20-1-11-21.

34 Murray William Kanyama Chiume, *Kwacha: An Autobiography,* Nairobi, 167 quoted in Hedges, "Malawi–Mozambique Relations," 617– 644.

35 Happy Mickson Kayuni, "Cultural or Political Nationalism?: Exploring Trans-Border Chewa Identity
," *APSA 2013 Africa Workshop Paper* (January 23, 2013), C:/User/Downloads/SSRN.id2205423.pdf.

rule. 36 Meanwhile, Mozambique accused Malawi of supporting Mozambican rebels, who were destabilising Maputo and purportedly had capitalistic leanings.37 Those accusations strained relations between the two states and significantly polarised their feelings of each other to the present day. 38

Evolution of Defence and Foreign Policies

The development of the foreign policies by the two states has primarily been influenced by their history, starting from being established as overseas territories. However, both countries are committed to following the Charter of the United Nations (UN) principles and the AU Constitutive Act in their respective constitutions as outlined in section 211 of the Constitution of Malawi and article 18 of the Constitution of Mozambique, respectively.

From Mozambique's standpoint, the tension is caused by the provocative policies of Malawi. Malawi security forces sporadically cross into Mozambique in hot pursuit of suspected criminals without coordination. Malawi openly sided with the racist regimes in South Africa and the then Northern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). This was contrary to the position of other countries in the region, which abhorred apartheid and provided refuge to exiles fighting this regime.39 According to Hedges (1984), that is why Malawi did not join the Front-Line States that were fighting imperialism in Africa.40

36 For example, Attati Mpakati who was later assassinated. Kayuni, "Contemporary African State."

37 RENAMO (from the Portuguese Resistência Nacional Moçambicana, lit. "Mozambican National Resistance"). *The Guardian* 24, no.7(1974) quoted in Hedges, "Notes on Malawi-Mozambique Relations," 635. See also, Happy Kayuni, "The Upsurge of Tension between Renamo and Frelimo in Mozambique: The Contest for Traditional Leadership Support," *Journal of Humanities (Zomba)* 24 (2016):65 – 86.

38 Similarly, Angola accused some Zambians of supporting rebels in its civil war. Their troubled relations worsened when Cuban soldiers helped a socialist-supported group defeat two western-backed liberation groups in their rivalry for power. Anthony Mukwita, "Angola-Zambia: Relations with Zambia Not So Cordial," *Reliefweb* (March 6, 1998), https://reliefweb.int/report/angola/angola-zambia-relations-zambia-no-so-cordial.(accessed January 22, 2022).

39 Malawi supported the Apartheid regime in South Africa and the colonial government in Zimbabwe (then Northern Rhodesia). See Hedges, "Malawi–Mozambique Relations," 617, 625 – 627.

40 Hedges, "Malawi – Mozambique Relations," 637–638.

Their relations worsened with the construction of Malawi's Nsanje World Inland Port ("Inland Port") to open a shipping route for Malawi to the Indian Ocean along the Shire and Zambezi Rivers. The purpose of this construction was to ease transportation challenges. 41 However, Mozambique demanded a second feasibility study to assess the project's viability.42 This is a typical example of a systems archetype of accidental adversaries where one party adopts a solution to improve its situation but is perceived to undermine the other's success, albeit unintentionally.43

From Malawi's perspective, the tension arises from Mozambique's antagonistic policies towards the country. Former Mozambican President Samora Machel's bellicose rhetoric and threats to attack Malawi worsened relations during the Banda era. On October 23, 2010, Mozambican authorities detained Malawi personnel and impounded their vessels sailing on trials to the Inland Port, apparently without Mozambique's consent.44

Another contributing factor is the death of Machel, together with 33 members of his party and crew, in a suspicious plane crash in South African territory on October 19, 1986.45 It is a cause of concern because the accident occurred when the relations between Malawi and Mozambique were tense, and Machel was returning from a meeting of African leaders in Zambia.46

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41 African Development Bank (AfDB), *Feasibility*
Study for the Shire – Zambezi Waterways Development Project: Appraisal Report (African Development
Bank, 2014). See Kayuni et al., "Megaphone Diplomacy," 9. See also Tom Sangala, "10 years of Nsanje Port: A Decade Lost in Dreams," *The Times*
Group, October 26, 2020, https://times.mw/10-years-of-nsanje-port-a-decade-lost-in-dreams/.

42 See UK Essays, "Building Nsanje Port on Shire Zambezi Waterway" (November 2018), https://www.ukessays.com/essays/construction/building-of-nsanje-port-on-shire-zambezi-waterway-construction-essay.php?vref=1(accessed January 23, 2022).

43 Stroh, *Systems Thinking,* 60-64.

44 Kayuni, et al., "Megaphone Diplomacy," 270–289. See also Adrian Frey, "Mozambique and Malawi: A Difficult Relationship," Club of Mozambique, *Voice of America*, March 14, 2016.

45Barry Munslow, "Mozambique and the Death of Machel," *Third World Quarterly* vol 10, no. 1, Succession in South (Jan., 1988), 23-36. See also August Chonchiglia, "The Mysterious Death of Samora Machel," *Le Monde Diplomatique,* November 2017, https://mondediplo.com/2017/11/12machel.

46 A Commission of Inquiry compromising representatives from South Africa, Mozambique, and the former Soviet Union instituted to establish the cause of the crash did not establish the exact cause of the crash by reported reasons ranging from the

Problem-solving: Frameworks of Analysis

This section reviews the analytical tools employed in this paper for a strategic appraisal of the problem to prescribe a remedial strategy.47

A Systems Diagnosis of the Causal Factors of the Tension

Systems thinking is an approach to problem-solving by viewing "problems" as parts of an overall system.48 Systems thinking abhors reacting to a specific part of a problem or events and potentially contributing to further development of unintended consequences. 49 Systems thinking helps understand the complex relationship between Malawi and Mozambique and address those challenges more holistically.50

In this case, the complex challenges in the relationship between the two countries are viewed through the lens of systems archetypes in which patterns of behaviour typical in relationships have predictable consequences and well-understood solutions. 51 The accidental adversaries dynamic is the archetype playing out for understanding the interconnections between Malawi and Mozambique. 52 Since there cannot be a silver bullet for building mutual trust between neighbouring countries, systems thinking assists in analysing interrelationships of the

mechanical fault to bad weather conditions. The new democratic South African government called for fresh investigations to establish the real cause of the crash and death of President Machel and his party. There is no report of progress so far. Author Unknown, "The Death of Samora Machel," *South African History Online*, April 3, 2011 (Updated August 27, 2019), https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/death-samora-machel.

47 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War,* ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 582–594.

48 Steven Metz, "Systems Thinking," *The Science Teacher* 79, no. 7 (October 2012): 6 – 6, https://www.jstor.org/stable/i40141445. See Willie J. Flucker, *Army Senior Leader Diversity: A Systems Analysis,* Strategic Research Project (Carlisle, PA: United States Army War College, 2015), 2.

49 Metz, "Systems Thinking," 6. See also Flucker, *Army Senior Leader Diversity*, 2.

50 See George J. Woods, *Organizing Your Thoughts about Organizations* (Carlisle: United States Army War College, May 2021), 5, 11. See Elinor Ostrom, "The Institutional Analysis and Development Framework and the Commons," *Cornell Law Review* 95, no. 4(2010):807– 816, 807, https://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/clr/vol95/iss4/15.

51 Stroh, *Systems Thinking*, 19 –21.

52 Stroh, *Systems Thinking*, 61– 64.

common contributory factors of mistrust and perceiving patterns to discern determinants that should enhance geostrategic stability.53

Causality as a concept in systems thinking is a framework that helps to decipher the way things influence each other in a system.54 Parson's typology of four causal logics to "map arguments in political science" are: structural, institutional, ideational, and psychological.55 Structural and institutional claims are logics of position, explaining how man-made constraints or incentives channels one to specific actions. Ideational and psychological claims are logics of interpretation, explaining how one reacts by interpreting what is possible or desirable.56

Structural claims explain what people do as a function of their position concerning the exogenous material landscape. Institutional claims explain what people do as a function of their position within a path-dependent process implied by man-made constraints or rules. Ideational claims explain what people do as a function of their cognitive elements. Psychological claims explain what people do as a function of their instincts.57 Parson's causal logical framework has been adapted to explain the dynamics of the trust deficit between Malawi and Mozambique (Figure 2).

53 Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday/Currency, 1990), 68. A fundamental assumption of systems thinking is that for an organization or system to survive, it must consume inputs from the environment, process them within its boundaries and transform them into outputs. Woods, *Organizing Your Thoughts*. See also Ostrom, "The Institutional Analysis," 807.

54Daigneault and Béland, "Taking Explanation Seriously in Political Science, 384–392.

55 Craig Parsons, *How to Map Arguments in Political Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 12. See also Jessica D. Blankshain and Andrew L. Stigler, "Applying Method to Madness: A User's Guide to Causal Inference in Policy Analysis," *Texas National Security Review* 3, no. 3 (Summer 2020), 79–82, http://dx.doi.org/10.26153/tsw/10221.

56 Parsons, *How to Map Arguments in Political Science,* 12.

57 Parsons, *How to Map Arguments in Political Science,* 13.

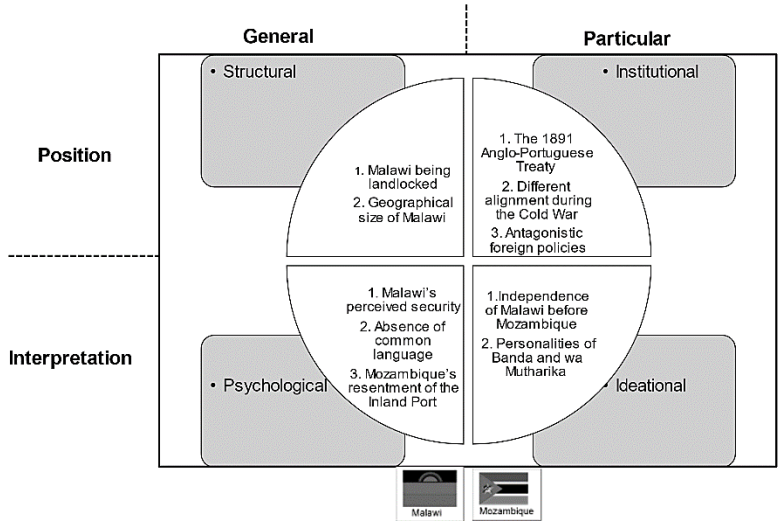

Figure 2. Causal Logics of Trust Deficit between Malawi and Mozambique 58

The four logics explain historical developments and geographical factors that have contributed to the emergence of the two countries as accidental adversaries. Below is the explanatory logic of causality.

(a) Structural Causal Explanation

The structural causal segment is twofold. First, Malawi is landlocked, with no direct access to the Indian Ocean. This explains why Malawi's then-President Bingu wa Mutharika constructed the Inland Port in 2010.59 Structurally, this explains reasons for President Banda to solicit favours from the socialist Portuguese government in the 1960s so that it grants Malawi access to the ocean before the independence of

58 Figure developed by Author from multiple sources.

59 The project sought to reduce transport costs. Currently, Malawi uses Beira and Nacala port in Mozambique, a return distance of about 1700 kilometres (about 1056 miles) from Blantyre. The distance from Blantyre to Nsanje port on a return journey is 238 kilometres (about 148 miles). See also Kayuni, et al., "Megaphone Diplomacy," 9. AfDB, *Feasibility Study.*

Mozambique..60

Second, Malawi is relatively small in geographical size compared to Mozambique.61 This confirms the allegation that Banda's thinking at that time was to "grab [the] northern part of Mozambique."62 Malawi's insecurity might have led to the country seeking an alliance with the apartheid regime in South Africa.

(b) Institutional Causal Explanation

The institutional causal segment is threefold. First, African states whose borders were demarcated by two different colonial powers seem to experience tensions more than two African states that emerged from a common colonial territory. The adoption of the 1891 Anglo-Portuguese Treaty disrupted the peaceful coexistence between Malawi and Mozambique.63 Likewise, the 1890 Anglo-German Treaty created the border on Lake Malawi between Malawi and its northern neighbour, Tanzania, which is disputed to date.64 However, Malawi and Zambia, both colonized by Britain, enjoy cordial relations.65

Second, Malawi and Mozambique had different geopolitical alignments during the Cold War. The third institutional segment is based on the

60 Hedges, "Malawi–Mozambique Relations," 624. See also Kayuni et al., "Megaphone Diplomacy," 6.

61 See, for example, Hedges, "Malawi–Mozambique Relations," 624.

62 Chiume, *Kwacha: An Autobiography,* 167. See also Hedges, "Malawi–Mozambique Relations," 617–644.

63 The Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1891 was an agreement between Great Britain and Portugal that fixed the boundaries between the British Central Africa Protectorate (now Malawi), British Mashonaland and Matabeleland (now parts of Zimbabwe), North-Western Rhodesia (now part of Zambia), and Portuguese Mozambique. The treaty also fixed boundaries between the British North (now in Zambia) and Portuguese Angola.

64 "Anglo-German Treaty [Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty] (July 1, 1890)," *Germany History in Documents and Images,* accessed March 4, 2021, https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document?id+782; Dan Kuwali, "Soil or Oil? – Resolving the Lake Malawi Boundary and Locational Quagmire" in *Illusion of Location Theory: Consequences for Blue Economy in Africa,* Francis Onditi and Doglas Yates, eds., (Wilmington, DE: Vernon Press, 2021), 371–394.

(a) 65 See also Daniel N. Posner, "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 4 (November 2004):529–545.

perceived antagonistic policies of the two countries, which justifies the claim that they are accidental adversaries.66 While Malawi opted for a conservative foreign policy backed by Western support, Mozambique gravitated towards socialism.

(c) Ideational Causal Explanation

The ideational causal segment is due to Malawi attaining independence earlier than Mozambique, allowing Banda to negotiate with the colonial master rather than a non-existent government. Another ideational segment relates to the personalities of Banda and wa Mutharika, who were both criticized for being dictators.67 Their unpredictable whims affected Malawi's defence and foreign policies.

(d) Psychological Causal Explanation

The psychological causal segment is driven by the perception that Malawi is strategically disadvantaged as Mozambique engulfs its southern half. Another causal explanation is the absence of a common language between the two countries.68 Mozambique's resentment towards the

66 Stroh, *Systems Thinking*, 61–64.

67 At the time, Mozambique was led by an equally highly educated and skilled diplomat, Eduardo Mondlane. He was educated in the Anglophone world, in South Africa and the United States. He was a social anthropologist and sociologist with a doctorate from Harvard University. He was assassinated in 1969 but was crucial in the formation of modern Mozambique. George Roberts, "The Assassination of Eduardo Mondlane: Frelimo, Tanzania, and the Politics of Exile in Dar es Salaam," *Cold War History* 17, no. 1(2017):1–19, 18 –19, https://doi.org/10.1080/14682745.2016.1246542. Happy Kayuni and Richard Tambulasi, "The Malawi 1964 Cabinet Crisis and Its Legacy of Perpetual Regression of Trust' Amongst Contemporary Malawian Politicians, Social," *Dynamics: A Journal of African Studies* 36, no. 2 (2010):411– 429, 419, https://doi.org/10.1080/02533952.2010.487996. See also Harri Englund, *A Democracy of Chameleons: Politics and Culture in the New Malawi* (Uppsala: Nordic African Institute, 2002). Kings M. Phiri and Kenneth R. Ross, eds., *Democratization in Malawi: A* Stocktaking (Blantyre: CLAIM,1999).

68 See, for example, John Bart Gerald, "Anglophone vs. Francophone in Cameroon, *Dissent Voice,* January 2, 2020, https://dissentvoice.org/2020/01/anglophone-vs-francophone-in-cameroon/(accessed January 24, 2022). See also Marco Biasioli, "Russophone or Anglophone? The Politics of Identity in Contemporary Russian Indie Music," *Europe-Asia Studies* 73, no. 4(2021):673 – 690, https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2020.1779665.

Inland Port implies a psychological causal logic that led Maputo to believe it would be worse off. Psychological logic also explains why Mozambique suspected Malawi to have sympathized with the rebels during the Mozambican civil war.

Defining Geostrategic Stability

This paper adopts the holistic definition of strategic stability, which James Acton believes "describes a regional or global security environment in which states enjoy peaceful and harmonious relations."69 Walton and Gray also support this approach.70 They find the weapon-oriented view flawed and narrow because many factors contribute to keeping the peace between two states, with the military balance being only one of them.71

Building on the holistic definition of strategic stability and considering the centrality of geography in this discussion, the paper narrows the term to *geostrategic stability*. It proposes the following working definition: an environment in which countries enjoy peaceful and

69 The logic behind the concept of strategic stability, which was coined in the Cold War era, was to stabilize the bipolar confrontation by strengthening retaliatory capabilities, thereby reducing the possibility of a surprise nuclear attack. However, the concept has since evolved from a classic arms control sense to refer to the absence of indicators of potential conflict between two or more countries. Rizwan Asghar, "What is Strategic Stability?" *Daily Times,* Sunday, December 13, 2013, https://dailytimes.com.pk/40569/what-is-strategic-stability/. Thomas Scheber, "Strategic Stability: a Time for a Reality Check," *International Journal* 63, no. 4, (Autumn 2008): 893–915, 893. See also Asghar, "What is Strategic Stability?"The narrow definition of "strategic stability" is "the absence of incentives to use nuclear weapons first (crisis stability) and the absence of incentives to build up a nuclear force (arms race stability)," whereas a broader one is "the absence of armed conflict between nuclear-armed states." This is per Edward Warner, who served as the US Secretary of Defence's representative to the New Strategic Arms Treaty (New START) talks. James M. Acton, "Reclaiming Strategic Stability," in *Strategic Stability: Contending Interpretations* eds. Elbridge A. Colby and Michael S. Gerson (Carlisle: United States Army War College, 2013),117–118.

70 C. Dale Walton and Colin S. Gray, "The Geopolitics of Strategic Stability: Looking Beyond Cold Warriors and Nuclear Weapons" in Colby and Gerson, *Strategic Stability*, 85 –115, 85.

71 Walton and Gray, "The Geopolitics of Strategic Stability," 85.

harmonious relations by creating diplomatic, political, economic, and security conditions to minimize all incentives to tension and conflict.72

In this case, geostrategic stability describes the security environment in which Malawi and Mozambique enjoy peaceful and harmonious relations. 73 Therefore, suboptimal geostrategic stability increases the susceptibility to friction and conflict between countries. 74 To use Galtung's distinction, optimal geostrategic stability can contribute to negative peace (the absence of war and violence) and positive peace by providing conditions that make peace sustainable.75

Kautilya's Mandala theory of foreign policy considers a state's immediate neighbour as an enemy and any state on the other side of a neighbour as an ally. This theory cannot, and should not, hold for Malawi and Mozambique.76 These two countries depend on each other for peace, security, and socioeconomic development. As the term suggests, a model of geostrategic stability cannot focus on issues that perpetuate tension and adversarial relations between countries. Instead, it must focus on building mutual trust and confidence between countries and promoting their respective strategic interests.77

Determinants of Geostrategic Stability

Determinants are factors that decisively affect the nature of geostrategic stability. When one or more determinants are absent or weak, geostrategic stability is compromised. Shankar (2014) has developed

72 Walton and Gray, "The Geopolitics of Strategic Stability," 85. See James M. Acton, *Reclaiming Strategic Stability* (Strategic Studies Institute, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 5, 2013), 138. See also United Nations Development Program (UNDP), *Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security* (New York: Oxford University Press), http://www.hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-1994, iii – iv, 13 – 40.

73 Acton, *Reclaiming Strategic Stability*. See also Colby and Gerson, *Strategic Stability*.

74 See also Vijay Shankar, "The Perils of Strategic Narcissism," The *Strategist* no. 4498 (June 9, 2014), https://ipcs.org/comm_select.php?articleNO+4498(accessed January 23, 2022).

75 Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no.3 (1969):167–191. See also Dan Kuwali, ed., *Palgrave Handbook for Sustainable Peace in Africa* (London: Springer International Publishing, 2022). Cilliers, *The Future of Africa*, 279 – 305.

76 Giuseppe Tucci, *The Theory and Practice of the Mandala: The Theory and Practice of the Mandala,* Dover, 2001. See also Roger Boesche, *The First Great Political Realists: Kautilya and His Arthashastra* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2003), 78.

77 See also Scheber, "Strategic Stability," 902 – 903.

determinants of strategic stability to include: civilisational memory, recent history, geographic context, political proclivity, social structures, economic interests, religious orthodoxy, technological prowess, leadership, and military power.78 However, because these factors were designed with nuclear states in mind, they cannot provide adequate lenses for assessing geostrategic stability.79 Determinants of geostrategic stability should be empirically based; hence this paper adopts abductive rather than deductive reasoning.80

Payne notes that local conditions such as "specific details of time, place, culture, ideology, religion, domestic politics, leadership goals, motivations, health and even personality" are critical determinants of stability.81 On this understanding, determinants of geostrategic stability must include conditions that might contribute to trust between states, such as strategic history and ideological factors.82

Reconciliation in Bilateral Relations

Generally, reconciliation is required where states have conflicting goals that lead them to delegitimize one another and prevent the development of harmonious relations.83 Reconciliation seeks to transform a volatile or hostile relationship by building mutual trust and friendly relations between states.84 Although the reconciliation process is political, it is

78 Shankar, "The Perils of Strategic Narcissism."
79 Shankar, "The Perils of Strategic Narcissism."
80 Scheber, "Strategic Stability," 897.
81 Keith B. Payne, "New Thinking on Deterrence and Strategic Defense," presentation to the American Foreign Policy Council, March 10, 2008, 7 cited in Scheber, "Strategic Stability," 900.
82 Walton and Gray, "The Geopolitics of Strategic Stability," 93, 102.
83 Daniel Bar-Tal and Gemma H. Bennink, "The Nature of Reconciliation as an Outcome and a Process," in *From Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation*, Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, ed., (New York: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 13.
84 Theorists have framed reconciliation using different levels of analysis. Reconciliation is an ongoing process not an end goal and has three stages. The first is *procedural reconciliation*, which refers to mending relations through institutional change. The second is *material reconciliation*, where the wrong-committing party provides economic compensation such as reparations or compensation to the wronged party. Third is *ideational reconciliation*, where parties disclose and discuss their past animus to build constructive relationships. For example, civil and cultural exchanges are used to develop mutual understanding between citizens of two countries. The ideation reconciliation phase is more relevant to this discussion because of the nature of the parties' differences and the end-game of elevating trust between the two countries. Jah-Hyun

inevitable for peaceful coexistence between parties.85 Hence the need for a proactive approach in resolving disputes. Therefore, the process of ideational reconciliation should focus on addressing the root causes to prevent them from resurfacing. Most countries under dispute in Africa rely heavily on foreign intervention, especially by their erstwhile colonial masters, for dispute resolution or reconciliation. However, the leaders in Malawi and Mozambique are better placed to resolve their disputes as they should understand how their history and situation contribute to their trust deficit.86

Chun, "Have Korea and Japan Reconciled? A Focus on the Three Stages of Reconciliation," *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 3 (September 2015): 315–331, 318–324, https://doi/10.1017/s1468.1099.15000213. Anne Phillips, ed., *Feminism and Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 66.David A Crocker, "Reckoning with Past Wrongs: A Normative Framework, *Ethics, and International Affairs,* (13, 1999), 43-64. Ross views reconciliation as the "strong" version where there is a total transformation of relations between two hostile countries and the "weak" version, which describes an end to violence and a start to constructive exchange between two adversaries. Marc Howard Ross, "Ritual and the Politics of Reconciliation," in Yaacov Bar Siman-Tov, ed., *From Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 204), 197–224.

85 Roland Bleiker, "Towards a Culture of Reconciliation in Divided Korea," *Peace Review* 14, no. 3 (2002): 297–302, 301, https://doi/10.1080/1367886022000016???.

86 The dyad of Angola and Zambia present didactic lessons for Malawi and Mozambique. The relationship between Luanda and Lusaka has also been characterised by tension. Like Mozambique, Angola is a coastal country bordering the Atlantic Ocean on the west. Like Mozambique, Angola is a former Portuguese colony and suffered a protracted civil war. During the war, Angola routinely accused Zambia of supporting Angolan rebels, while Lusaka complained that Luanda expanded military activities against the rebels onto Zambian territory. Angola and Zambia have resolved their tension through constant engagement with each other. They have strengthened their relations through strategic partnerships in trade agriculture and planned joint construction of an oil pipeline connecting the two neighbours to ease Zambia's fuel challenges. The success of ideational reconciliation between these west-coast former British and Portuguese colonies promises hope for similar success between Malawi and Mozambique in the east. Patience Munge Sone, "Interstate Border Disputes in Africa: Their Resolution and Implications for Human Rights and Peace," *African Security Review* 26, no. 3(2017): 325–339, https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2017.1294089. Author Unknown, "Zambia, Angola to discuss border issue," *Reliefweb*, November 26, 2001, https://reliefweb.int/report/angola/zambia-angola-dicuss-border-issue(accessed January 24, 2022). Author Unknown, "Zambia and Angola Move to Establish Relations", *New York Times* (Archives), September 24, 1976, https://www.nytimes.com/1976/09/24/24/archives/Zambia-and-angola-move-to-

A Systems Approach to Statecraft

A strategy to address the myriad causal factors for trust deficit requires creative thinking. Such solution-oriented statecraft should involve applying feedback loops designed to ease the tension and build mutual trust to enhance geostrategic stability.[87] In this paper, strategy is a theory of success that involves calculating ways and means directed towards accomplishing ends, balanced against a continuous risk assessment.[88]

For purposes of statecraft, Malawi and Mozambique employ the following instruments of national power: diplomatic, informational, military, economic, and legal (DIMEL).[89] These instruments are employed in an integrated manner. While one instrument may be dominant in a particular situation, the other instruments may still be engaged in different ways to support a state's objectives in a similar situation.[90]

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establish-relations-html.(accessed January 22, 2022). See also Anthony Mukwita, "Angola-Zambia: Relations with Zambia Not So Cordial," March 6, 1998, hhttps://reliefweb.int/report/angola/angola-zambia-relations-zambia-not-so-cordial(accessed January 24, 2022).

87 Statecraft means "the practical conduct of international relations with a focus on tools and implementation." Rebecca Friedman Lissner, "What is Grand Strategy? Sweeping a conceptual Minefield", *Texas National Security Review* 2, no. 1 (November 2018):52–73, 57, http://dx.doi.org/10.26153/tsw/868.

88 This definition has been derived from several sources. See Jeffrey W. Meiser, "Ends + Ways + Means = (Bad) Strategy," *Parameters* 46, no. 4 (2016): 81–91, 86, https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol46/iss4/9. Ronald J. Granieri, "WPNS 17: Introduction to War, Policy, and National Security Part II" in Department of National Security and Strategy (DNSS), *War, Policy, and National Security Part II Course Directive Academic Year 2022,* Ronald Granieri, ed., (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2021), 11–14, 11. See also Jacqueline E. Whitt, "Wrong and Useful: Models and Metaphors for Strategy," *War Room*, August 11, 2017, https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/articles/wrong-useful-models-metaphors-strategy/.

89 Duane Robert Worley, *Orchestrating the Instruments of Power: A Critical Examination of the US National Security System* (Williamsport, MD: Potomac Books, 2015). See also Author Unknown, "The Instruments of National Power," *The Lightning Press*, https://www.thelightningpress.com/theinstruments-of-national-power/(accessed January 20, 2022).

90 Frank L. Jones, "WPNS 28: Introduction to Statecraft: Applying the Instruments of National Power" in DNSS, *War, Policy, and National Security Part II Course Directive*, 54–57, 54.

Reducing tension between the two countries requires a theory of change through solution-oriented employment of DIMEL to shift from a state of trust deficit to one of rapprochement and optimal geostrategic stability. In this process, relevant agencies for both countries should tactfully use statecraft for ideational reconciliation to ease the tension and elevate mutual trust.

Both countries would benefit from improving their bilateral ties and geostrategic stability. Therefore, the two neighbours should introduce reinforcing loops by reconciling their differences given the close historical relations, geographical position, security interconnectedness, political and economic proximity. The countries may also need to develop a credible commitment mechanism to alleviate each other's concerns.91

Building on the literature discussed above, Figure 3 illustrates the cause-and-effect determinants for sustaining the geostrategic stability ("determinants") between Malawi and Mozambique.

91 Thomas Chadefaux, "Bargaining over Power: When Do Shift in Power Lead to War?", *International Theory* 3, no. 2(2011):228–253, 229, https://doi.org.10.1017/S1752971911000084.

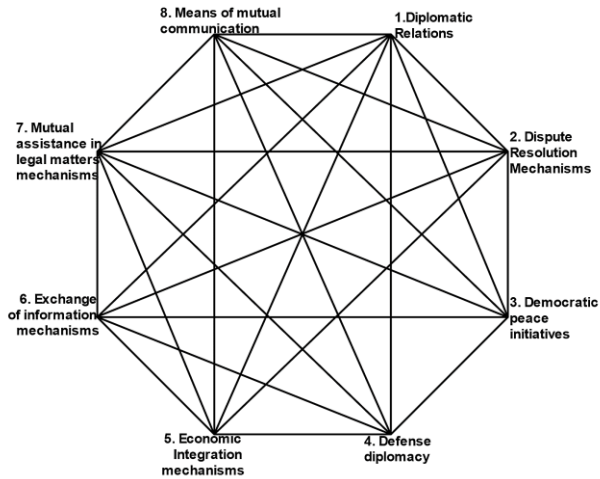

Figure 3. Geostrategic Stability Octagon92

The determinants are couched as categories of courses of action (ways) of statecraft. Both states should deploy appropriate means (resources) within the framework of DIMEL to achieve geostrategic stability, which is the end. The ultimate strategic objective is sustainable peace, security, and development for the two countries. All eight determinants are necessary conditions to building the trust required to optimise geostrategic stability.93

Geostrategic stability is a byproduct of two processes: first, ideational reconciliation to reduce the tension and elevate trust; and second, strategic cooperation, which cannot be implemented without trust.94 As both trust and geostrategic stability are intangible conditions, the number of cooperation agreements, frequency of bilateral meetings, involvement of the private sector, and ease of communication between the people of the two countries are some of the indicators for measuring success.

92 Original drawing by the author. There exists a Value Octagon, which is not related to the present one.

93 Stroh, *Systems Thinking,* 63.

94 See also Walton and Gray, "The Geopolitics of Strategic Stability," 85. See also Acton, "Reclaiming Strategic Stability," 138.

Although dispute resolution is dominant in the Octagon to accommodate ideational reconciliation, all determinants are connected to, and feed into, each other.95 The determinate do not necessarily have to follow a particular sequence or phase and can apply simultaneously. Moving clockwise, beginning with *diplomatic relations* in the upper right corner in Figure 3, a discussion of each determinant follows.96

First, use diplomacy to coordinate strategies for incentivizing ideational reconciliation and disincentivising the tension.97 Diplomatic relations provide a forum for bilateral engagement. Language is a barrier to effective communication between diplomats of the two countries, hence promoting a common means of communication.

Second, promote democratic peace initiatives since the democratic peace theory maintains that democracies do not go to war against each other.98 In addition to membership in the UN and AU, both countries are members of the Commonwealth of Nations, where Mozambique

95 The relationships are non-linear because of the presence of feedback loops. For example, diplomatic relations provide the forum for bilateral engagement; means of mutual communications is the modicum for the bilateral relations; dispute resolution (ideational reconciliation) mechanisms present a foundation for building constructive relationships; exchange of information and intelligence mechanisms promote transparency, especially for security agencies; democratic peace initiatives can contribute to strengthening democracy and the rule of law in the two countries thereby ensuring peace and stability between the two neighbors; defense diplomacy facilitates confidence-building measures between the militaries to ensure peace, security, and development in both countries; economic integration mechanisms foster trade and economic growth, and mutual assistance in legal matters mechanisms enhance law enforcement for law and order in both countries. Robert Powell, "Bargaining Theory and International Conflict," *Annual Review of Political Science* 5 (2002), 1–30, https://doi.org/101146/annurev.polisci.5.092601.141138. Scott L. Baier, Jeffrey H. Bergstrand, and Michael Feng, "Economic Integration Agreements and the Margins of International Trade," *Journal of International Economics* 93, no. 2(2014): 339–350, https://isiarticles.com/bundles/Article/pre/pdf/51306.pdf. See also Muhammad W. Haider and Tahir M. Azad, "The Role of Confidence-building Measures in the Evolution of Relations between Pakistan and India," *World Affairs* 184, no. 3(2021): 294–317, 301–313, https://journals.sagepub.com/toc/waf/184/3.

96 The theory of change advanced here explains how and why ideational reconciliation can lead to confidence-building measures that can enhance trust and promote strategic cooperation to optimise geostrategic stability between the two countries.

97 Powell, "Bargaining Theory and International Conflict," 1–30.

98 Lami Kim, "Theories of International Relations" in DNSS, *War, Policy, and National Security Part II*, 35 –38, 36.

attained exceptional membership to, among others, promote relationships with its Anglophone neighbours. 99 All these three international bodies require their members to respect democracy and its processes. 100 Democratic peace initiatives can strengthen democracy and the rule of law in the two countries, thereby ensuring peace and stability.

Third, employ defence diplomacy to promote confidence-building.101 The two countries have signed a JPCDS.102 However, as discussed earlier, the meetings and activities under the JPCDS are routine. Considering the nature of their relationship, forward-looking defence diplomacy with a clear matrix of collaborative activities can build confidence between the militaries to promote stability in both countries.

Fourth, use dispute resolution mechanisms to achieve ideational reconciliation to build constructive relationship for the benefit of the people of both countries.103 The constitutions of both countries provide a solid premise for reconciliation since they seek to promote friendly relations, peaceful coexistence, and pacific settlement of disputes.104

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99 The Commonwealth, "Member Countries,"
https://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries(accessed January 22, 2022).

100 See, for example, The Commonwealth, *Joining the Commonwealth,* whttps://thecommonwealth.org/about-us/joining-the-commonwealth(accessed January 22, 2022).

Article I. 101 Defence (military) diplomacy refers to the friendly relations of military forces of both countries through confidence-building measures. See also Winger, "The Velvet Gauntlet," 1– 6.

102 See text before footnote 17 above.

103 Benjamin Six, Esther van Zimmeren, Florin Popa and Christine Frison, "Trust and Social Capital in the Design and Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action," *International Journal of the Commons* 9, no. 1 (March 2015): 151–176, C:/Users/use/Downloads/435-4051-3-PB.pdf.

104 From Malawi's perspective, with regards to international relations, section 13 (k) of its Constitution requires the government to respect the rule of law and govern in accordance with international and regional law. Section 13(i) of Malawi's Constitution also requires the country to settle disputes peacefully. From Mozambique's standpoint, Article 11 (j) and Article 17 of the Mozambican Constitution enjoins the country to establish friendly relations and cooperation with other states based on international and regional law principles and reciprocity of benefits. Article 22 of Mozambican Constitution states that Maputo shall pursue a peace policy and support the primacy of negotiated solutions to conflicts, only resorting to force in the case of legitimate self-defence. Such as negotiation, good offices, mediation, conciliation, and arbitration. See Government of the Republic of Malawi, *Constitution of the Republic of Malawi,* (Lilongwe, 2017), https:// constituteproject.org/Constitution/Malawi_2017.pdf?

Fifth, adopt economic integration mechanisms since economic interdependence theory maintains that states do not go to war with trade partners. 105 Economic integration mechanisms foster trade and economic growth. As members of AU and SADC, both countries should leverage existing regional integration mechanisms such as the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) to deepen their economic integration and facilitate cross-border investment.106

Sixth, exchange information and intelligence to promote mutual trust. The Malawi Defence Force and the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces should develop a culture of systematic exchange of information and intelligence to promote transparency between them.107

Seventh, adopt mechanisms for mutual assistance in legal matters to promote law enforcement. 108 Although Malawi and Mozambique cooperate in criminal matters relating to the investigation and extradition of suspects, the requirement to translate legal documents is an obstacle to expedited processes.

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lang+en (accessed January 22, 2022). See also Government of the Republic of Mozambique, *Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique*.

105 Kim, "Theories of International Relations," 36.

106 African Union), *Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)*, (AfCFTA Secretariat, March 21, 2018), https://acfcta.au.int/en (accessed January 25, 2022). See also South African Revenue Service, *Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)*, (Pretoria, December 31, 2020), https://www.sars.gov.za/legal-counsel/international-treaties-agreements/trade-agreements/afcfta/ (accessed January 25, 2022). Note that Mozambique is not yet a member of the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA). See also, The Common Market for East and Southern Africa, *Treaty Establishing the Common Market for East and Southern Africa*, December 8, 1994, https://www.comesa.int/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Comesa-Treaty.pdf.(accessed January 25, 2022). Nicholas Ngepa and Maxwell C. Udegha, "African Regional Trade Agreements and Intra-African Trade," *Journal of Economic Integration* 33, no. 1(March 2018):1176–1199, https://doi.org/10.11130/jei.2018.33.1.1176.

107 The Portuguese of name of Mozambique Defence Armed Forces *is Forças Armadas de Defesa de Moçambique* (FADM). See also Lily Kampani, "Malawi and Zambia to Strengthen Existing Bilateral-Relations," *All Africa,* September 22, 2020, https://allafrica.com?stories?202009230155.html#:~:text+Malawi%20and%Zambia%20to20Strenghen%20Existing%Bilateral-Relations%2022/aspect%20.

108 For example, Article 26 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties is critical to guiding the state practice and cooperation of the two countries. See Robert Kolb, *Good Faith in International Law,* (London: Hart Publishing, 2017). See also Malcolm N. Shaw, ed., *International Law*, Seventh Edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Eighth, establish means of mutual communication as a modicum for fostering cooperation.109 Promoting English and Portuguese in both countries can ease communication between the officials and the people of the two countries, which is a stumbling block in their bilateral relations.

Applying Feedback Loops to Optimise Geostrategic Stability

The relationship between Malawi and Mozambique exists in a complex adaptive system (CAS), where their interaction displays several signals ranging from friendly and cooperative to antagonistic and hostile policies.110 The interconnectedness of the environmental factors and the independence of the actors produce feedback loops causing low levels of trust, which is a symptom of the root causes of the real problem.111 From this perspective, root causes are events starting with chains of cause and effect.

These root causes are loops that keep the system suboptimal, characterised by low trust levels. Systems thinking is relevant because root causes that undermine trust are not individual nodes but result from numerous factors and processes, which defy simple explanations.112 Systems thinking theory recognises the relevance of feedback loops inside a system and the use of feedback to change internal processes.113 A feedback loop is a system structure that eventually causes output from one node to influence input to that same node.114

109 Séverine Autesserre, "International Peacebuilding and Local Sources: Assumptions and Effectiveness," *International Studies Review* (2017): 1–19, 6.

110 Andrew A. Hill, *The Devil You Know: An Introduction to Complex, Adaptive Systems (CAS)* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2018),19.

111 See also Angie Cross, "Five Lessons on Complex Adaptive Systems," *Human Current* (April 10, 2018), blog entry, http://www.human-current.com/blog/2018/4/10/five-lessons-on-complex-adaptive-systems (accessed November 15, 2021).

112 David Peter Stroh, *Systems Thinking for Social Change: A Practical Guide to Solving Complex Problems, Avoiding Unintended Consequences, and Achieving Lasting Results* (White River Junctions, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2015), 1–6. Woods, *"*Organizing Your Thoughts*,"* 5, 11.

113 The point here is that everything is interconnected. Changing one variable in a system can impact other variables and systems.

114 Woods, "Organizing Your Thoughts," 4.

Reinforcing feedback loops move to elevate or reduce the magnitude of the causal structures, which Meadows calls stocks.115 Balancing loops return the situation or stock to the original level.116 Put differently, reinforcing feedback loops amplify an existing condition while balancing feedback loops seek to correct or reverse an existing state by bridging the gap between actual and desired performance.117

In the case of Malawi and Mozambique, reinforcing loops would elevate trust while balancing loops would prevent the trust from growing. In this case, balancing loops are barriers to addressing the trust deficit. The situation may be less tense now because the tipping point for escalation into conflict has not been reached due to balancing loops. Where the tension produces reinforcing loops, each country would see one's defensive posture as escalatory, thereby exacerbating the tension.118 This antagonism justifies the claim that the two countries are accidental adversaries where independently chosen solutions are inadvertently perceived as obstructing each other's policies.119

System thinking has two corresponding core theories of change. The first seeks to amply success (success amplification theory of change) and the second seeks to correct a shortcoming and achieve a goal (goal achievement theory of change).120 Based on the causal factors of the trust deficit, the Malawi– Mozambique relationship should adopt the success amplification theory of change, capitalizing on their mutual

115 See Donella H Meadows, *Thinking in Systems: A Primer* (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2008). See also Andrew Hening, "Systems Thinking Part 2-Stocks, Flows, and Feedback-loops," August 2, 2018, https://medium.com?better-systems/systems-thinking-part2-stocks-flows-and-feedback-loops-b27eadfc200(accessed January 25, 2022).

116 An alternative explanation is that positive feedback loops effectively create change but may result in unintended consequences if not moderated by negative feedback loops. Negative feedback loops are generally effective at resisting change. Woods, "Organizing Your Thoughts about Organizations," 4.

117 Stroh, *Systems Thinking*, 46–52. See also Meadows, *Thinking in Systems*.

118 Jason Healey and Robert Jervis, "The Escalation Inversion and Other Oddities of Situational Cyber stability" *Texas National Security Review* 3, no. 4 (Fall 2020): 31– 53, 44, ISSN 2576–1153. Jay Ogilvy and Peter Schwartz, "Plotting Your Scenarios" (GBN Global Business Network) 1, http://meadow/ark.co/plotting_your_scenarios.pdf (accessed November 20, 2021), 17.

119 Stroh, *Systems Thinking,* 62-63.

120 Stroh, *Systems Thinking*, 170–171.

interest in optimizing geostrategic stability as enshrined in their respective constitutions.121

By applying the eight determinants in the Octagon (Figure 3), Figure 4 presents a strategic roadmap for optimising geostrategic stability between the two countries.122

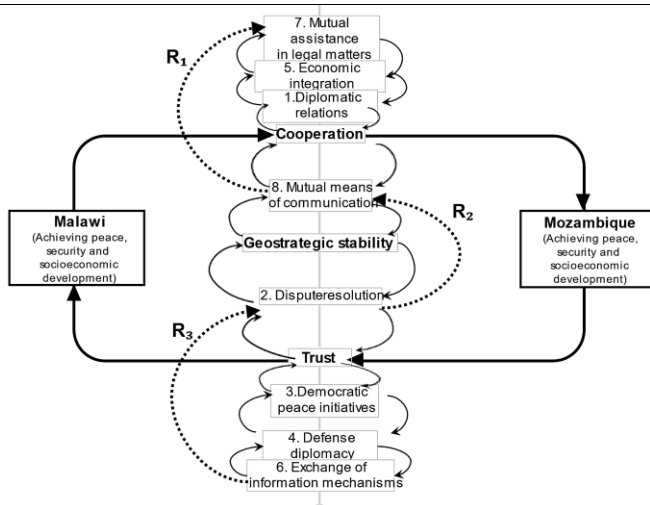

Figure 4. Roadmap for Optimizing Geostrategic Stability123

The Roadmap (Figure 4) has two stages: the first seeks to build trust, and the second promotes cooperation. The logic is that ideational reconciliation can elevate trust, leading to closer cooperation between the two countries.124 The determinants and the concomitant courses of action are interconnected and apply equally to both parties because of the principle of reciprocity in bilateral relations.

Determinant 2 for dispute resolution mechanisms has been placed inside the lager loop because it is key to helping ideation reconciliation. Similarly, determinant 8 on mutual means of communication falls inside

121 UNDP, *Human Development Report 1994*, iii iv, 13 40.

122 Stroh, *Systems Thinking,* 63. See also Flucker, "Army Senior Leader Diversity," 2.

123 Original drawing created by Author.

124 This strategy augurs well with the Portuguese tradition of *padrinho na cozinha,* translated as "one needs a Godfather in the kitchen to eat." The meaning is that in Portuguese culture, relations matter more than business.

the larger loop because it is the medium for accommodating the other determinants that seek to bolster cooperation.

As shown in Figure 4, the central reinforcing loop (R_1) broadly shows how geostrategic stability benefits the two countries' achievement of peace, security, and socioeconomic development. The upper reinforcing loop (R_2) fosters cooperation between the two countries. The lower reinforcing loop (R_3) emphasizes elevating the level of trust between the two countries.

The following section is devoted to aligning ends, ways, and means while accounting for risks in solution-oriented statecraft to foster trust and optimise geostrategic stability between Malawi and Mozambique.

Common Ground: Recommendations for Optimising Geostrategic Stability

The geostrategic stability between the two countries is at a suboptimal equilibrium. Introducing positive reinforcing loops can overcome balancing loops that nurture the tension, which obstruct trust and confidence-building mechanisms.

Solution-oriented Statecraft

The key to strengthening the cooperation of accidental adversaries is strategic empathy to understand the perspectives of others and find common ground by establishing shared strategic objectives and collaborative action.125 In agreement, Thucydides, noted that "[i]dentity of interests is the surest of bonds whether between states or individuals."126 Therefore, both countries should the potential benefit of cooperation and understand that the antagonism has been unintentional. Overcoming this challenge requires solution-oriented

125 Strategic empathy is the skill of stepping out of one's own head and into the minds of others to pinpoint what truly drives and constrains them. See generally, Zachary Shore, *A Sense of Enemy: The High Stakes of History of Reading your Rival's Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). See also, Zachary Shore, "A Sense of Enemy: The High Stakes of History of Reading Your Rival's Mind," *Zachary Shore,* https://www.zacharyshore.com/a-sense-of-the-enemy.html(accessed March 6, 2022).
126 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War,* Richard Crawley, ed., (Virginia: Compass Circle, 2019).

statecraft to develop remedial strategies that do not undermine each other's policies.127

Comparable countries, Angola and Zambia, have strengthened their trade relations through public-private sector collaboration for mutual benefit. 128 These countries have also agreed to work together to improve agriculture in both countries.129 Emulating the Angola–Zambia example, Malawi and Mozambique should review each other's national development plans and collaborate on developmental goals of mutual interest.130

As reconciliation is a two-way process affected by domestic politics, both countries must clearly signal a willingness to reconcile. Given their constitutional responsibilities, the leadership of both countries should initiate ideational reconciliation by pursuing activities in the Roadmap (Figure 4) to elevate trust and promote cooperation between the two countries.

In pursuing ideational reconciliation, strategic leaders in statecraft in both countries should employ systems thinking by adopting a holistic approach as opposed to addressing problems in silos.131 To do this, strategic leaders should create reinforcing feedback loops, such as the exchange of information in determinant 6 (Figure 3), and correct problems that create balancing feedback loops using the relevant means

127 Stroh, *Systems Thinking,* 63.

128 Author Unknown, "Zambia, Angola Strengthen Trade Relations through Public-Private Sector Collaboration," *Food Business Africa, March* 16, 2021, https://www.foodbusinessafrica.com/zambia-angola-strenghen-trade-relations-through-private-public-sector-collaboration/(accessed January 22, 2022).

129 Joshua Jere, "Zambia, Angola Strengthen Relations," *Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation,* March 11, 2021, https://www.znbc.co.zm?news/Zambia-angola-strengthen-relations/(accessed January 22, 2022).

130 See the National Planning Commission, *Malawi Vision 2063: An Inclusively Wealthy and Self-reliant Nation*(Lilongwe, 2021), https://malawi.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/MW2063-%20Malawi%20vision%202063%20doc.pdf9accessed January 21, 2022). See also Commonwealth Governance, *National Development Plan of Mozambique: Agenda 2025* (Mozambique, November 2003), https://commonwealthgobvernance.org/countries/africa/mozambique/national-development-plan/.(accessed January 21, 2022).

131 Sipos and Hosie note that the systems of systems that constitute the national security environment are complex adaptive systems (CAS) yet strategic leaders' thinking tends to be linear, anthropomorphic, mechanistic, or overly ordered (LAMO) and misaligned with reality. Maurice Sipos and Michael Hosie, "Systems Thinking," in Department of Command, Leadership, and Management (DCLM), *Strategic Leadership Course Directive Academic Year 2022,* Maurice Sipos, ed., (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2021), 19–23, 11.

of statecraft.132 Malawi's construction of the Inland Port to ease its logistical impediments is an example of a balancing loop. Mozambique's resentment towards the project is another balancing loop undermining the trust between the two countries.

Using the Roadmap in Figure 4, the two countries should establish a joint planning commission as a forum for discussing their respective plans to develop a shared understanding of each other's priorities, find mutual interests, and design collaborative actions. If Malawi initiates the establishment of such a vehicle for collaboration, the two countries can discuss the desirability, feasibility, and mutual benefits of the Inland Port within the context of geostrategic stability. The iterative strategic collaboration can create reinforcing loops elevating trust and promoting constructive collaboration toward optimal geostrategic stability.133

Strategies to Reconcile Accidental Adversaries

Both countries require strategic empathy to understand each other's perspectives, motives, and constraints. 134 Malawi should take the initiative to implement the recommendations in this paper, considering that it is the main culprit on the wrong side of history.135 Malawi has the burden to persuade Mozambique to the discussion table.

Firstly, the two countries should negotiate reasonable terms for Malawi to have unhindered access to Mozambique's Nacala and Beira ports. As for the Inland Port, Malawi should agree to a second feasibility study demanded by Mozambique. Should it prove not workable, the focus should be on taking remedial measures on a mutually agreed way forward.

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132 Daigneault and Béland, "*Taking Explanation Seriously,*" 388 – 391.
Article II. 133 Defense (military) diplomacy refers to the friendly relations of military forces of both countries through confidence-building measures. See also Gregory Winger, "The Velvet Gauntlet: A Theory of Defense Diplomacy," in *What Do Ideas.*
Article III. *Do?* eds. Agata Lisiak and Natalie Smolenski (Vienna: IWM Junior Visiting Fellows' Conferences, 2014), 1–6, https:///www.scribd.com/document/449599663/iwm_at-The-Velvet-Gauntlet-A-They-of-Defense-Diplomacy-Gregory-Winger.
134 Shore, *A Sense of Enemy.*
135 See Figure 2 and the explanation that follows it.

Secondly, Malawi should provide assurances that the Inland Port is for the mutual benefit of both countries to address Mozambique's fear of loss of revenue through an income-sharing mechanism. By following the constitutional principles and national policy guidelines, Malawi can overcome the challenge of leaders' personalities affecting state practice.136 National policies should serve the interests of the people of the respective countries and not the self-serving interests of incumbents, as was the case with the Banda and wa Mutharika regimes.137

Thirdly, both countries should promote economic integration by unifying their trade policies by reducing or eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade. 138 In addition, they should promote joint venture business initiatives by entrepreneurs from both countries to improve economic integration.139 Taking the example of Angola and Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique should reinforce their collaborative partnerships on development initiatives of mutual interest, such as the ongoing Mozambique-Malawi power transmission interconnection project to strengthen their bond. 140 The joint railway rehabilitation project by the two countries to connect Malawi to the Mozambican Sena Line is an example of this approach. 141 The two countries should explore more possible areas of cooperation within the framework of the Octagon of Determinants to optimise geostrategic stability to run the projects efficiently. An example of such cooperation are agricultural projects where both countries can complement each other's supply chains in implementing the AfCFTA.

Fourth, under the defunct Maravi Kingdom, Malawians and Mozambicans shared similarities in languages, cultures, and communal life of cooperation until the arrival of the colonialists who established

136 See Government of the Republic of Malawi, *Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique* and Government of the Republic of Mozambique, *Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique.*

137 See, for example, sections 7 and 13 of the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi.

138 The reason is that deeper Economic Integration Agreements (EIAs) have more significant aggregate trade, intensive margin, and extensive margin effect. Baier, et al., "Economic Integration," 339 – 350.

139 Bleiker, "Reconciliation in Divided Korea," 297– 301.

140 Klomegah, "Presidents Chakwera and Nyusi toast."

Joshua Jere, "Zambia, Angola Strengthen Relations," *Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation,* March 11, 2021, https://www.znbc.co.zm?news/Zambia-angola-strengthen-relations/(accessed January 22, 2022).

141 Klomegah, "Presidents Chakwera and Nyusi toast."

barriers and divisions along the lines of the European lingua franca.142 The two countries have a common regional heritage where the Chewa (Nyanja) language is prevalent and transcends their colonial boundaries. The two countries should consider developing an exchange program for youths to promote mutual understanding, the learning of both English and Portuguese, broaden their cultural perspectives and cultivate a spirit of good neighbourliness. 143 Co-establishing a school of diplomacy offering language training can demystify and dismantle the artificial linguistic barriers and ideological differences between the two neighbours while simultaneously increasing interaction and understanding between the citizens of the two countries. 144 Coincidentally, Tanzania and Mozambique co-established a Centre for Foreign Relations (CFR). Since Malawi may also need to build bridges with Tanzania, acceding to the agreement between Mozambique and Tanzania to join the CFR can be extremely beneficial.145 These acts can strengthen the bilateral nodes and bind the people of the two countries together, thereby promoting trust and cooperation.146

Fifth, the two countries should consider establishing a joint planning commission as a vehicle to oversee the design and implementation of the initiatives, address unintended consequences of implementing actions and recommend ways to maximize the benefits of their collaboration.147 The proposed commission can resolve the outstanding issue of the Inland Port.

Article IV. 142 Folarin Sheriff, Folarin Oluwafunke and Olorunyomi Bankole, "Reconciling the Two West Africas: Managing Ethnic and Lingual Diversity for Regional Integration," *Ante Portas-Studia and Bezpieczeństwem*, 2, no. 5 (2015):179 –193. To understand the dynamics of restorative justice, see Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness: A Personal Overview of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (London: Rider, 2000). See also Claire Moon, *Narrating Political Reconciliation: South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Plymouth, England: Lexington Books, 2007).

143 For example, two countries can emulate the Elysée Treaty, which France and Germany signed to promote ideational reconciliation.

144 Sheriff et al., "Reconciling the Two West Africas," 179 –193.

145 The Centre for Foreign Relations was established in 1978. See Centre for Foreign Relations, available at: https://www.foreign.go.tz/resources/links/centre-for-foreign-relation-Tanzania-cfr.

146 Chun, "Have Korea and Japan Reconciled?" 318–320.

147 Stroh, *Systems Thinking*, 20.

Strategic Analysis

The suitability, acceptability, feasibility, and risk (SAF-R) test is used to evaluate the likelihood of success for a strategy.[148] The proposed strategy for ideational reconciliation and strategic collaboration passes the SAF-R test as explained below.

By contributing to the achievement of geostrategic stability, the strategy is deemed suitable.[149]

The strategy is acceptable since the constitutions of both countries promote good neighbourliness, peace, stability, and development, which are outcomes of geostrategic stability. The strategy is feasible because its execution does not require additional resources but rather solution-oriented employment of existing means of statecraft.[150]

In executing this strategy, it is imperative to also account for risks.[151] The risk, in this case, is threefold. First, both countries may deny mistrust or tension between them. However, this denial is challenged by scholarly evidence.[152] Officials from both countries also admit without hesitation that the relationship between the two countries is not cordial.[153]

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148 Edward Kaplan, "Introduction: War, Strategy and Policy, Part I," in US Army War College, *War, Policy, and National Security Part II Course Directive Academic Year 2022*, Paul Kan and Heather Gregg, eds., (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, Department of National Security and Strategy, 2021), 9–16, 10.

149 Walton and Gray, *The Geopolitics of Strategic Stability*, 92, 101. See also Scheber, "Strategic Stability," 914. This paper does not intend to provide an exhaustive matrix of activities to build mutual trust and promote strategic cooperation between the two countries but rather to analyse critical factors that can address the root causes of the trust deficit and promote strategic cooperation, which are key to improving their geostrategic stability. The proposed systems approach to statecraft can catalyse collaboration between the two countries around a common theory of success. The systems approach can lead to more solution-oriented statecraft in being diagnostic and prescriptive to ensure optimal geostrategic stability between the two neighbours. The frameworks developed in this paper offer new heuristics for approaching international relations based on cooperation between states.

150 See section 13, *Constitution of the Republic of Malawi,* and Articles 11(j), 17 and 22, Constitution *of the Republic of Mozambique*.

151 Griffith, *Sun Tzu*, 63 –71. See also Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 17–26.

152 Kayuni, et al., "Megaphone Diplomacy," Frey, "Mozambique and Malawi," and Hedges, "Malawi-Mozambique Relations."

153 In conversations with the author.

The second risk is a counterargument that the two countries already have a strategic partnership, especially integrating their infrastructure.154 While this is correct, collaboration without sufficiently understanding the objective and addressing underlying tension leads to a vicious circle of challenges.155 The third risk is that attempting reconciliation at this point is akin to reopening old wounds. While this is a genuine concern, it is the risk aversion of ignoring problems that have led to the simmering tension.156 A détente is a strong incentive for both countries to mitigate the risk of finding common ground to optimise geostrategic stability 157

Conclusion

This paper has addressed the question of bolstering geostrategic stability between Malawi and Mozambique, countries divided by the colonial legacy and Cold War antagonism. Following Parson's logical framework, a systems analysis of the root causal factors of bilateral trust deficit pointed toward a holistic strategy to elevate trust and promote strategic

154 Kester Kenn Klomegah, "Presidents Chakwera and Nyusi toast for a laudable Malawi-Mozambican relations, *Modern Diplomacy,* November 27, 2021, https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2021/11/27/presidents-chakwera-and-nyusi-toast-for-laudable-malawi-mozambican-relations/.

155 Stroh, *Systems Thinking,* 21–22.

156 This is also called the "Ostrich effect," which refers to the tendency to ignore dangerous or negative information by "burying" one's head in the sand, like an ostrich.

157 The Octagon of Determinants (Figure 4) for geostrategic stability is subjective and lacking mathematical precision. Practically, ideal geostrategic stability cannot exist. This is why geostrategic stability should be viewed as a "continuum" that ranges from a condition of conflict to optimum stability. This implies that achieving perfect geostrategic stability is only an aspiration at best but inherently unattainable as a policy goal. This does not imply strategic nihilism, but it should inspire strategic leaders in both countries to engage in solution-oriented statecraft to optimise the compromised geostrategic stability. Achieving ideational reconciliation is a desirable and strategically efficacious process to elevate mutual trust and promote cooperation, thereby optimising geostrategic stability. Optimal geostrategic stability is necessary for the peace, security, and socioeconomic development of the two countries. As such, this typology can only provide general guidance for creating a more stable geopolitical relationship between Malawi and Mozambique. Further, efforts to foster geostrategic stability may fail not because of miscalculation of the determinants but due to unforeseen political circumstances since it is impossible to accurately predict human behaviour or state practice in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world. Walton and Gray, *The Geopolitics of Strategic Stability*, 93. Cilliers, *The Future of Africa*, 279–305.

cooperation between the two countries to enhance their geostrategic stability.158

Notably, in line with Stroh's systems archetypes, the two countries are accidental adversaries whose respective policies unintentionally undermine each other.159 Therefore, both countries require strategic empathy to creatively employ multiple means of statecraft to introduce, strengthen and leverage positive reinforcing feedback loops designed to achieve ideational reconciliation and strategic collaboration.

Based on the feedback loop theory in systems thinking, the thesis is that ideational reconciliation and employment of strategic empathy to understand each other's perspectives can build mutual trust between Malawi and Mozambique, leading to more confidence-building measures and strategic cooperation to achieve optimal geostrategic stability.

This strategy risks worsening the tension by bringing old unresolved disputes to the table that the parties have opted to ignore. However, it is also true that leaving the resentments unresolved has led to simmering tension. Both countries' best interests would be served to resolve this protracted trust deficit. Hence the need for both countries to find common ground through ideational reconciliation to ease rapprochement.

The strategy is suitable for achieving geostrategic stability. The strategy is acceptable and compatible with the constitutions of both countries, which promote geostrategic stability. Execution of this strategy is feasible since it does not require additional resources but systems thinking.160 Thus, the strategy of ideational reconciliation and strategic collaboration passes the SAF-R test.161 The paper proposes a Roadmap (Figure 4) where ideational reconciliation can elevate the trust between the two countries, leading to their closer and strategic cooperation. The resulting rapprochement could contribute to optimal geostrategic stability, critical to achieving the two countries' strategic objectives of peace, security, and socioeconomic development.162

158 Parsons, *How to Map Arguments in Political Science,* 12–13.

159 Stroh, *Systems Thinking*, 63–65.

160 Section 13, *Constitution of the Republic of Malawi,* and Articles 11(j), 17 and 22, *Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique*.

161 Kaplan, "Introduction: War, Strategy, and Policy," 10.

162 Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. FitzGerald, *The Craft of Research,* Fourth Edition (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2016), 11.

Therefore, both countries should adopt strategies that aim at developing mutual understanding to build constructive relationships, improve cooperation, and undertake confidence-building measures such as defence diplomacy, youth exchange programs, joint business ventures, and promotion of the common language. Establishing strategic partnerships on development projects of mutual interest and co-establishing a bilingual school for diplomacy including conflict prevention and management can enhance their bilateral relationship. To this end, it is in Malawi's best interest to join the Centre for Foreign Relations that Mozambique established with Tanzania. The two countries should consider establishing a joint planning commission as forum to oversee the implementation of the various initiatives under this strategy and address any unintended consequences to maximize the benefits of their cooperation. This forum can also resolve the issue of the Inland Port.

In terms of implications, the proposed strategy can assist Malawi and Mozambique to improve the conduct of their statecraft to be more solution oriented. The new heuristics for approaching bilateral relations may also assist diplomats in calculating risks when devising strategies for international support and partnerships. Future research could examine whether the approach presented in this paper can be applied to other countries with varied colonial histories or different methods of acquiring independence.

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