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RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS AFRICA: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND FUTURE PROSPECTS¹

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to give a thorough analysis of Russian foreign policy toward Africa by investigating the historical context and future possibilities of this engagement. It will examine the origins of Russian participation in Africa, the causes that have led to its revival, the attitude of Western nations, and the current state of Russian-African relations. The research will also analyze the constraints of Russian participation in Africa, as well as prospects for further cooperation and collaboration on mutually beneficial subjects. The research will help us comprehend world politics and international relations in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Russia, Africa, Russian Foreign Policy, Competition for Africa, International System.

RUSYA 'NIN AFRİKA 'YA YÖNELİK DIŞ POLİTİKASI: TARİHSEL GEÇMİŞ VE GELECEK BEKLENTİLERİ

ÖZET

Bu araştırmanın temel amacı, Rusya'nın Afrika'ya yönelik dış politikasının tarihsel bağlamını ve gelecekteki olasılıklarını araştırarak kapsamlı bir analiz sunmaktır. Araştırma, Rusya'nın Afrika'daki katılımının kökenlerini, canlanmasına yol açan nedenleri, Batılı ulusların tutumunu ve Rusya-Afrika ilişkilerinin mevcut durumunu inceleyecektir. Ayrıca, Rusya'nın Afrika'daki katılımının karşılaştığı kısıtlamaları analiz etmek ve karşılıklı çıkar konularında daha fazla işbirliği ve işbirliği olanaklarını belirlemek de dahil olmak üzere ileriye dönük işbirliği olanaklarını değerlendirecektir. Bu araştırma, yirmi birinci yüzyılın dinamik dünya siyaseti ve uluslararası ilişkileri anlamamıza katkı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeleri: Rusya, Afrika, Rusya'nın Dış Politikası, Afrika'da Rekabet, Uluslararası Sistem.

1. INTRODUCTION

We will examine the reasons for Russia's involvement in Africa, its historical background, and future prospects. As we know, Russia aims to maintain its global position by implementing long-term development initiatives, by taking advantage of Africa's large population, huge natural resources, and

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energy supplies. Therefore, understanding Russia's foreign policy towards Africa is crucial for effective decision-making and policies. This article is an attempt to discover Russian foreign policy towards Africa. An examination of the historical foundations of Russia, with an emphasis on long-term cooperation and economic goals in Africa. And on access to natural resources and new markets, with a particular focus on the energy sector. In addition to the reactions of other global powers, this research also explores current opportunities, challenges, and initiatives. And potential risks. Bearing in mind the growing economic and geopolitical importance of the continent.

2.HISTORY OF RUSSIA-AFRICA RELATIONS

2.1. Pre-Cold War Period

Russian interests in Africa have evolved since the tsarist era, which originated in the Middle Ages, when Orthodox pilgrims and Russian Christians met in the Holy Land, and Russian and African Muslims met in Islamic holy places (Shubin, 2013). Russian explorers also visited African countries, established consulates in Egypt and Alexandria, and established diplomatic relations with Ethiopia and South Africa in 1898 (Davidson & Filatova, 1998). Before 1953, contacts between the Soviet Union and Africa have been limited due to the capitalist status of the countries under colonial control. However, Nikita Khrushchev's shift in power sparked an interest in engaging with independent governments and anti-colonial movements (Giles, 2013).

Then Russia's diplomatic relations with African countries were resumed after World War II, but relations grew significantly in the late 1950s and early 1960s, as most of the colonies became independent states. These movements were led by middle-class youth (Rubinstein, 1975; Molera, 1976).

The first major arms shipment from the Soviet Union to Africa occurred in 1955, followed by diplomatic relations with Algeria, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Sudan, Morocco, and Libya, leading to their participation in the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party in 1961 (Giles, 2013). The Soviet Union also greatly influenced African history, as it supported Egypt, Angola, and South Africa (United Nations, 2013) The Soviet Union launched the Declaration on Granting Independence to Colonial Nations and Peoples at the United Nations General Assembly in 1960, with the support of 89 countries, including the colonial powers (Collins, 1993). Soviet military assistance to Africa focused on creating and equipping armed units and contributing to liberation efforts in the former Portuguese colonies, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa (Giles, 2013).

The Kremlin pursued a foreign policy towards Africa with four main goals: establishing a permanent presence, supporting local communist parties, providing economic and military assistance, and undermining the influence of the West and NATO. They opposed sending Soviet troops, while Fidel Castro sent 300,000 Cuban soldiers to support the liberation movements. The Kremlin eventually engaged in a bitter struggle with China for influence over local revolutionary movements (Scalapino, 1963; Gliges, 2002).

2.2. Post-Cold War Period

The 1990s saw a significant deterioration in African relations with the Soviet Union, leading to the Soviet Union disintegration and a lack of connection with African countries. Soviet government focused on internal issues, leaving many cooperative projects incomplete. Trade volume plummeted from \$1.3



billion to \$740 million, and Soviet Union closed nine embassies and consulates, further deteriorating cultural and scientific connections (Fidan & Aras, 2010) .

Russia's new authorities and media portrayed Soviet Union supporters negatively, fueling xenophobia and racism. Economic difficulties and social factors strained relations between Russia and Africa (Makarychev & Yatsyk, 2014).

Russian Federation faced domestic and international problems post-Soviet Union, adopting a new foreign policy approach under President Boris Yeltsin, aiming to appease the West and restore relations (Abu Samhadana, 2012).

Yeltsin sought to withdraw from Africa due to economic problems, leading to the closure of Moscow's embassies in nine African nations. Russia also suspended trade missions and cultural centers. The Russian government suspended aid to African countries and demanded debt repayment. Diplomatic, political, and military cooperation ceased, and economic ties suffered. Trade between Russia and Africa dropped significantly from one billion dollars in 1992 to 740 million dollars by 1994. However, some Russian scholars believe Moscow's re-engagement offers economic and pragmatic foreign policy benefits (Birgersson, Kozhemiakin, Kanet, & Tchimichkian, 1996).

Vladimir Putin's rise in Russia led to a shift towards realism in foreign policy, beginning with the expulsion of pro-Western foreign minister Andrey Kozyrev and the appointment of Yevgeny Primakov in 1996 (Arkhangelskaya & Shubin, 2013).

2.3. The Period of the Russian Absence from Africa

Russia's absence from Africa from 1991 to the 2000s resulted from a lack of political, economic, and military engagement between Russia and African countries. This withdrawal was prompted by internal and external factors that caused economic, political and diplomatic relations to deteriorate significantly. Factors that contributed to this decline include a loss of ideological stimulus, economic instability, and political confusion (Filatova & Makarychev, 2012). The Russian government's internal focus and political instability impeded interaction with African countries, which affected the maintenance of the forged relations established during the Soviet era. His absence also greatly affected relations between Russia and Africa, leaving African countries without a reliable partner (Carmody, 2017). In addition to significant economic losses, especially in trade, as Russian trade decreased by 80% between 1990 and 2000, while Chinese trade increased by 700% (Demidov, 2010) and increasing diversity and competition among global powers, with China and other countries filling the void (Doroshenko, 2019).

3. MAIN FACTORS AND STRATEGY BEHIND RUSSIA'S RETURN TO AFRICA

3.1. Factors of Russia's Return to Africa

Russia's geopolitical return to Africa aims to challenge Western hegemony and increase its influence in Africa, driven by geopolitical reasons (Mankoff, J. 2009). Russia's tensions with the United States and its allies have strengthened its Russia-Africa relationship, with senior leaders stressing Africa's importance to Russia's foreign policy (Fidan and Aras, 2010).

In the year 2000, Russia's foreign policy under Putin underwent a major transformation, with an emphasis on international relations and Russia's sovereign interests. Known as the "awakening of the bear's roar", this period attracted worldwide attention and influenced decision-making in the world. Under Putin's rule, Russia has restored its international standing and national security, implemented the "Putin principle" and promoted a multipolar world without a single superpower (Oliker, 2020)



We see the support of Africans for Russia in sovereignty, peace, and security, and affirm its position at the crossroads of global development trends during the turmoil (Lavrov, 2016). Therefore, Russia must prioritize African relations, strengthen international cooperation, and transform its approach towards Russian-African relations, to the benefit of both Russians and Africans (Arkhangelskaya, Voivodsk, Kashin, Maslov, and Shubin, 2019)

As for the economic strategy, Russia's political return to Africa is driven by economic prospects, favorable prices, and African markets that provide innovative services for industrialization and modernization (Arkhangelskaya, Voivodsk, Kashin, Maslov & Shubin, 2019) One of the main economic drivers of Russia's political return to Africa is energy resources and technology. Africa is a region rich in natural resources such as oil, gas, and coal, all of which are essential energy sources for the Russian industry. More importantly, is a need to gain influence and control over these important resources (Biryukova & Zhiltsova, 2018). Russia seeks to participate in nuclear energy projects in Africa, with an emphasis on renewable energy sources. With expertise in nuclear power facilities and modern technologies, Russia's transition away from fossil fuels could have a significant economic impact. The Fourth Industrial Revolution, global digitalization, and cybersecurity can facilitate the joint development and testing of innovative Russian technologies (Arkhangelskaya et al., 2019).

Russia's political return to Africa also aimed to gain access to new agricultural products and maintain trade relations with Africa (Biryukova & Zhiltsova, 2018). Africa's close trade and economic cooperation may offer Russia low-cost raw minerals.(Arkhangelskaya et al., 2019) So, it focuses Russia's political return to Africa on developing infrastructure, transportation, energy, and communications (Biryukova and Zeltsova, 2018), and Russia seeks to establish long-term partnerships in Africa to develop transport and energy infrastructure, and to benefit from its competitive advantage in energy programs and energy networks (Arkhangelskaya et al., 2019). Africa's development and growing economic opportunities make it a potential target market for Russian investment, which requires effective regulation and regulation.

We also note that it has expanded its cultural influence in Africa by establishing local institutions to spread and promote Russian culture. The African Organization of Russophony and the Pan-African Organization PARADE support Russia's position on the Ukraine war and African governments. Russian diplomacy also turned to religious institutions such as Islam and Orthodox Christianity to bring Africans closer to Russia. The religion became part of the official ideology after 70 years of Soviet oppression, in which the Russian Church established a patriarchal Exarchate in Africa and transferred the allegiance of the Orthodox cathedral to the Moscow diocese (Al-Subaitly, 2023). Russia's return to Africa also focuses on strengthening international relations, building closer ties with other countries and organizations, and strengthening its position in the international community (Biryukova and Geltsova, 2018).Russia's return to Africa is also driven by political cooperation, alliances, and agreements, with the aim of enhancing regional and international influence, humanitarian aid, and international prestige (Biryukova and Geltsova, 2018). In addition, Moscow cooperates with African countries in the field of space technology, as Nigeria launched the first Earth observation satellite, NigeriaSat-1, in 2003 for \$13 million. Two more satellites, NigeriaSat-2 and NigeriaSat-X, were launched in 2011, and Angola launched the AngoSat-2 communications satellite from Pad 24 at the 81st position of the Baikonur Cosmodrome on October 12, 2022, at 18:00 Moscow time (Al-Jundi,2022). Africa's vast natural resources and growing middle class attract foreign investment, including from Russia. An underdeveloped energy and mining infrastructure presents opportunities for Russian companies. By 2025, the African middle class is reach more than 1 billion, which will greatly affect global demographics and consumer markets (Arkhangelskaya et al., 2019).



3.2. Strategies of Russia's Return to Africa

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union viewed Africa, Asia, and Latin America as socialist reserves for victory over the West. The United States aimed to block Soviet targets, using third-world countries as proxy battlegrounds (Melvin, 2007; Liddy, 1990). Also during this phase, Soviet foreign policy in the Horn of Africa was inconsistent, with inconsistent accounts of Soviet reactions to important events. This may be due to internal political processes rather than a "grand plan". The Soviet Union's Horn of Africa policy mixed aggression with caution, resulting in cautious responses to local developments (Muhammad, 2009).

After that, the Soviet Union's policy in Africa differed from that of Russia during the Cold War, as it focused on regions that the West ignored until 2022, as Yevgeny Prigozhin leads the actions through a network of companies, including the Wagner Group, and is not constitutional. recognized as part of the Russian state (Dorisma and Masoor, 2022). President Putin's trips to Egypt, Algeria, South Africa, Morocco, and Libya have highlighted Russia's growing interest in Africa. His visit to South Africa in 2006 was the first by a Russian head of state to sub-Saharan Africa (Kolesnichenko, 2009),

Moscow aims to restore trust and influence in Africa by recreating longstanding alliances with poor countries. By establishing bilateral diplomatic relations and reviving the belief that Russia was never a colony, Russia aims to maintain political credibility and resist American global domination based on Western-style democratic values (Walt, 2018).

As for the economic side, Moscow's financial goals in Africa are based on the need for security and the strength of 60% of the world's ordinary assets. The African continent offers valuable financial benefits, including natural assets, speculative ventures, and a "virgin market" for specialized equipment and products (Lavrov, 2011). Russia's \$20 billion trade with Africa is mainly focused on arms and food exports, with Russian parastatals such as Rosneft and Lukoil competing in the mineral, gem, and oil sectors. The terms of these agreements are often hidden, making it difficult to estimate their value or duties on African countries (Florent et al., 2020 & Nmeková, T; Melnikova, L; & Piskunova, N, 2021).

The 2019 Russian-African summit also mentioned thermal energy, oil, and gas, agriculture, precious stones, military engagement, and equipment for African heads of state (TASS, 2019).

Nigeria has acquired 12 MI-35 attack helicopters and signed a training deal, while other countries have sought more military deals. Russia has more than 100 agreements in sub-Saharan Africa, including six in 2018. Twelve African heads of state visited Russia between 2015 and 2019 (review summary of the Kremlin press service, 2015; 2019).

Moscow's ambitions to control the African arms trade extend across the continent. Algeria has acquired 12 Su-34s, one Terminator II attack vehicle, and planned to purchase 12 Su-57s. Between 2013 and 2015, Algeria purchased 42 Mi-28N combat helicopters, 8 Mi-26 helicopters, and two Project 636 Varshavyanka submarines. However, the fall of the Soviet Union and the Algerian internal conflict weakened Russian-Algerian relations (Attalayar, 2022; Times Aerospace, 2020).

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As for the educational aspect, we note that 50,000 to 250,000 Africans received a Soviet education,



including the Peoples' Friendship University in Moscow, which affected industries such as health and manufacturing (Katsakioris, 2021). Russia aims to increase the enrollment of African students to 15,000 by 2025 through measures such as the “Scholarships for Russia and Africa” program (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2019). Russia has established educational relations with African countries and colleges, including cooperative research institutes and exchange programs. Rosatom supports science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs, and offers scholarships to African students studying in Russia. This support is particularly valuable for talented African students who lack the financial resources to study in Europe or the United States (Rosatom, 2030). The Russian Education in Africa strategy promotes the Russian language and culture, with the establishment of centers in several African countries and increased support for students studying the Russian language. This strategy aims to build long-term relations and create a new generation of African leaders with strong ties to Russia (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2019).

4. THE POSITION OF WESTERN COUNTRIES ON THE GROWING RUSSIAN INFLUENCE IN AFRICA

4.1. The American Position

US officials are concerned about the growing influence of Russia and China, with both Republicans and Democrats arguing that reducing US dominance in Africa would benefit adversaries. Support for US interests in Africa is seen as a check against rivals who are expanding their influence on the mainland. Russia has shown interest in establishing a coordinated naval operations center in Eritrea, but US officials believe there is no evidence that Moscow is helping African countries tackle extremist psychological threats (New York Times, 2020). The United States fears Russia's growing influence in Africa, citing military activities, economic linkages, and political interference. Rex Tillerson warned African leaders about the potential risks and benefits of engaging with Russia (Sullivan, 2021) Russia's growing economic involvement in Africa raises concerns about terms and conditions, as the United States calls for transparency and accountability (Brookings, 2020). The United States is concerned about Russia's political interference in Africa, citing its history of supporting authoritarian regimes and opposing democratic institutions (Council on Foreign Relations, 2019).

4.2. Russo-French Rivalry in Africa

Traditional French control of West Africa and the Sahel region is gaining international prestige and influence. The region is a major market for French exports, a source of natural resources, and a crucial line of defense against Europe's security concerns (Askar, 2021). As for Russia, it seeks to restore global influence in Africa, with a focus on the Sahel region for strategic relations (Bembe, 2023). One example of this influence is Russia's provision of affordable African weapons to African forces, although prices vary, including military helicopters and high-quality weapons for Mali (Irish. Pineau., & Felix, 2023) This Russian influence in Africa has alarmed European authorities, who have urged EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell not to intervene and prevent European specialists from monitoring UN sanctions violations (Basu, 2023). It also bothered France in particular, as the Russian presence in Mali and Burkina Faso undermines France's relations with the countries of the Group of Five. France's colonial history and the international aid provided by the former Soviet Union left a negative impression on the people of these regions (Siegel, 2021). The rivalry between Russia and France in the Sahel has divided international powers, including the United States and China. Washington supports Paris and Europe to counter Russian influence, but this could increase military power. Without a case, it is likely to escalate (Basu, 2023). Three possible scenarios for Russia and European countries in the Sahel region include continued competition, diplomacy and dialogue, and an escalation of Russian influence. The first scenario involves continued competition for influence, which could lead to instability. The second



scenario focuses on diplomacy and dialogue, while the third scenario proposes Russia gaining territory and changing the regional balance of power (Fairlois, 2023).

4.3. Russia-China Rivalry in Africa

China, a major African investor, has an eye on Russian influence in Africa, aware of potential threats to its interests (Xinhua News Agency, 2021). Russia is strengthening military and economic support for African countries, primarily through the export of military equipment and training (The Wilson Center, 2021). China aims to maintain good relations with Russia and African countries while protecting its interests in Africa, recognizing Russia's legitimate global power, and pursuing its own interests (Panda, 2019).

Russia is concerned about China's increasing activity in Central Asia and its military base in Djibouti. China's actions in Africa could undermine the Belt and Road Initiative. Academics at the University of Hong Kong have compared Russia's military-focused approach to China's economic penetration strategy, finding no concrete coordination between their strategies (Wang and Lu, 2019).

While China fears Russian competition in Africa, Moscow seeks to exploit the Soviet legacy by sending weapons and military advisors to regions lacking assistance, causing concerns about Chinese arms supplies (South China Morning Post, 2019).

China fears Russia's gains from instability in the Sahel region, which affects the regional status quo, and leads to an exacerbation of relations with China in the Wagner Group regions (Shane, 2020).

But we can see China and Russia cooperating in Africa through similar UN votes, focusing on peacekeeping and stabilization missions, but comparing their participation is problematic (Carnegie Moscow Center, 2020). China's pragmatic approach to Russian influence in Africa aims to protect interests, maintain positive relations, and maintain hegemony (The Diplomat, 2021).

4.4. Turkey's Position

Russia's growing engagement with African countries raises concerns for Turkey, which has historically enjoyed close ties and invested heavily in infrastructure and economy (Daily Sabah, 2021). Both countries compete for regional influence, focusing on the African continent, regional resources, and military exchanges (Al-Kindi, 2022). Turkey is concerned about Russia's military cooperation with African nations, and apprehensive about competition (TRT World, 2021). Turkey faces competition from Russia's increasing African economic relations and infrastructure investments (Tabekli Oglu, 2022). Turkey's African approach is diverse, influenced by so called neo-Ottomanism or historical ties, focusing on political, economic, diplomatic, cultural, and religious relations (Al-Kindi, 2022). Turkey maintains African influence by deepening economic ties, building infrastructure projects, and establishing partnerships to counter Russian competition (Suleiman, n.d). Turkish Development Agency provides \$1 billion in aid, investments, and trade to African countries (Al-Kindi, 2022). Turkey strengthens military ties with African nations to maintain its position as a major arms supplier; It is aimed that offering military training and equipment sales to prevent Russian influence growth in the region (Tabekli Oglu, 2022).

4.5. Britain's Position

The UK plans to build long-term strategic partnerships with Asia, Africa, and Latin America to counter Russia's influence and promote sovereignty, territorial integrity, and free trade (Foreign Office, 2022). Russia and the UK are re-engaging with Africa, focusing on commercial opportunities and political influence. Russia seeks BRICS membership and security cooperation, while the UK relies on historical ties and financial aid commitments. Africa's vastness supports both players and strengthening bilateral connections is crucial for large-scale public bids (Fletcher, 2019).



5. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT RUSSIA-AFRICA RELATIONS

5.1. Diplomatic Relations

Russia-Africa diplomatic ties strengthened after the 2019 summit, with increased engagement in trade, investment, military cooperation, infrastructure development, and countering Western influence (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021). Russia's engagement with Africa aims to expand global influence and access new energy and natural resource markets. Negotiations include trade and investment treaties, and military cooperation includes weapons and training (Brookings Institution, 2021). Academics worry Russia's increasing influence in Africa may escalate competition with Western countries, potentially as part of a global strategy (Carnegie Moscow Center, 2021). Russian-Ukrainian conflict affects African nations, causing divisions among blocs due to voting in UN General Assembly (Hassan Isilow, 2022). Russia sees Africa as a global opportunity to showcase its dominance, viewed as a "great power struggle" by the West (Vayez, 2020). Russia seeks long-term African influence through regular meetings with African commissioners and regional economic groups, promoting peace and security at UN forums (Oxford Analytica, 2023). Russia, like China and Turkey, aims to strengthen strategic ties with Africa, focusing on Central Africa, Sudan, Comoros, and South Sudan, while also aiming to strengthen Egypt, Uganda, and Ethiopia. (Blanchard et al., 2022). Russia focuses on geopolitical partnerships with African countries like Zimbabwe, restarting supply and finished commodities shipments, and establishing joint ventures in coffee, tobacco, and mining (Ayat, 2021). Russia enhances military cooperation with African countries, providing arms and training, attracting support as a counterbalance to Western dominance, but raising concerns about potential harm (Brookings Institution, 2021)

Russia's African foreign policy prioritizes resource access and strategic locations, supporting Libyan proxy forces and influencing elections to gain access to oil riches and Mediterranean ports (Megerisi, 2020). Russia seeks access to Red Sea seaports, particularly Port Sudan, through connections to the Sudanese army, the Omar al-Bashir regime, and Western gold smuggling networks (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2021). Mali military coup presents Russia's potential influence in the Sahel, potentially providing cover for dictatorship, with Wagner mercenaries dispatched (Foreign Policy, 2021). Russia may refocus diplomatic efforts on supporting Colonel Mamady Doumbouya's military junta in Guinea, potentially gaining political clout and unfettered access to the mining industry (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2021). Russia consolidates its position in the Central African Republic and plans to expand its influence in the Gulf of Guinea, establishing contacts with presidents for oil and mineral networks (The National Interest, 2021). Russia targets President Joo Lourenço due to Soviet military academy training and Cold War connections, increasing interest in 2022 (World Politics Review, 2021).

5.2. Economic Relations and Trade

Russia provides military weaponry and training to African countries in exchange for natural resource access, promoting economic growth (Brookings Institution, 2021). Russia's increasing engagement with Africa aims to access new energy and natural resource markets, including uranium, which is crucial for Russian nuclear firms. Large-scale natural resource corporations are established, collaborating with African governments to open the Russian market to African commodities (The National Interest, 2020). Russia lacks essential raw materials, while Africa's abundant natural resources offer growth opportunities. Russian firms like Alrosa acquire diamonds and aid in Africa's energy development through Gazprom, Lukoil, Rostec, and Rosatom (The National Interest, 2020). Russia expands mining involvement in Africa, focusing on strategic minerals like cobalt and copper, signing agreements, and seeking joint ventures (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2021). Russia gains influence in Africa's energy sector, particularly oil and gas, through significant investments (Carnegie Moscow Center, 2021). Russia seeks to secure access to raw materials and natural resources in Africa, improving its dominance



as an armaments supplier and expanding into resource-related sectors (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2021). Russian commercial firms own 36 large African projects, including 14 mining and 9 hydrocarbon projects. Mining projects are in central and southern Africa, while hydrocarbon operations are in the Gulf of Guinea and the Mediterranean. Rosneft, Tatneft, and Gazprom are partially owned by the Russian government. Lukoil is more involved in the Gulf of Guinea. (Grissom et al., 2022).

5.3. Russian Aid

Russia boosts African aid, but low investment in development aid persists, and sanctions may further shrink aid budgets (Foreign Policy, 2021), 7.3%-8.7% spent between 2012-2017, no identifiable external organization (Foreign Policy, 2021). Russian aid to African countries has expanded to include health, education, and infrastructure, with an emphasis on development and humanitarian aid (TASS, 2019) It also focuses on education, offering scholarships and training to African students and professionals, with the aim of increasing cultural exchanges and establishing cultural centers in various African countries (TASS, 2021). Russia provides aid for infrastructure development to African countries, such as Sudan, with deals worth \$1.5 billion signed in 2019 (TASS, 2019). Russian aid to Africa remains modest compared to China and the United States, but increased engagement may broaden alliances and provide development support (Al Jazeera, 2019).

6. THE FUTURE OF RUSSIA-AFRICA RELATIONSHIP

6.1. Opportunities

1- Africa's abundant natural resources, including oil, gas, minerals, and metals, attract Russian investment in infrastructure projects. African countries can export resources to Russia, diversifying economies, creating jobs, and reducing poverty, potentially promoting economic growth (Russia's Return to Africa, 2019).

2- Russia's increased involvement in Africa may enhance its political clout and counterbalance Western influence, potentially forming alliances with African countries (Carnegie Moscow Center, 2019).

3- Russia-African security collaboration may boost regional stability and security by providing military aid, training, and weaponry to address terrorism and insurgency concerns (United States Institute of Peace, 2019).

6.2. Limitations

1- Russia's small trade and investment involvement in Africa limits its influence on development, which could lead African countries to give priority to other major powers (Al Jazeera, 2019).

2- Russia faces competition from global powers such as China, the United States, and Europe, which seeks to strengthen relations with African countries, which requires Russia to compete with established countries with greater influence (Brookings Institution, 2019).

3- Political instability in African countries hinders Russia's ability to establish stable partnerships due to weak institutions, corruption, and weak governance, which may limit political influence and security cooperation (Carnegie Moscow Center, 2019).

4- Russian interference in Africa may limit sovereignty, raise tensions and raise concerns about transparency and accountability in aid and investment, according to the Council on Foreign Relations, 2019).

6.3. Challenge



- 1- Russia's involvement in Africa involves private military contractors, weapon sales, and misinformation, potentially damaging its reputation and affecting long-term relationships (Kumar, 2022).
- 2- Russia's involvement in Africa has been criticized for human rights abuses, including forced evictions, environmental damage, and labor abuses, potentially damaging Russia's reputation and limiting future cooperation. (Shelton, & Carozza, 2013) .
- 3- Russia's participation in Africa must be sustainable and beneficial for both parties, focusing on economic diversification, infrastructure development, and capacity building, rather than exploitation of natural resources (Moscow Cente, 2019).
- 4- Russia's cultural and linguistic ties with Africa hinder communication, effectiveness of aid, and potential tensions with West-allied African nations (Foreign Policy, 2019).
- 5- China and the US compete for Africa's influence, with Russia's new involvement potentially causing tensions and conflicts (Carnegie Moscow Center, 2019a, b).

6.4. Future Prospects

Russia's increasing engagement with Africa, including the 2019 Russia-Africa Economic Summit, presents complex future prospects with opportunities for cooperation and potential conflict (Moscow Times, 2019).

Russia and African countries can enhance economic and political cooperation in the energy, infrastructure, and security sectors by diversifying investments, addressing human rights violations, and promoting sustainable development through capacity building and infrastructure development (Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2019).

Political instability, weak governance, and African conflicts may also lead to tensions between Russia and African countries, which may lead to unintended consequences (Deutsche Welle, 2020).

Russia's disregard for human rights causes diplomatic isolation and international pressure in Africa, which impedes relations and causes dire consequences (Brookings Institution, 2020 The Diplomat, 2019).

Russia-Africa relations are complex and uncertain and require policymakers to prioritize mutual benefits, human rights, and sustainable development while avoiding conflict (Sullivan, 2021). Russia's engagement with Africa has major political ramifications, as it strengthens diplomatic relations and provides military and technical assistance. This includes military cooperation agreements, arms supply, and training. However, Russia's participation has faced criticism for lacking transparency and undermining democratic institutions and human rights (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2019).

Russia's future engagement in Africa can be classified into four categories based on its current participation and potential expansion. The first tier includes North African countries like Algeria, Egypt, Libya, and Sudan, where Russia has significant participation and large rents. The second tier includes 14 countries with favorable local conditions for Russian engagement, including Gabon, Nigeria, Chad, Guinea, Rwanda, South Sudan, Angola, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Russia is likely to extend its participation in these countries as opportunities arise. The third tier includes Kenya, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Rwanda, Uganda, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Togo, Tunisia, Zambia, Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Republic of the Congo, Senegal, and Tanzania. The fourth tier includes six countries with low Russian participation and low capacity, with Russia unlikely to significantly expand its activities in these regions (Grissom et al., 2022).



The new international order, which is characterized by the loss of American hegemony and the growth of a multipolar world, is expected to intensify competition and conflict in critical regions.

CONCLUSION

Russia's foreign policy towards Africa has evolved over time, with a renewed focus on expanding global influence, accessing natural resources, and countering the growing influence of the US, China, and other international powers. The complex relationship involves economic, political, and security implications, with Russia's economic focus on trade, investment, and military involvement. Western countries are concerned about Russia's growing influence, while some African countries welcome its engagement.

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