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RUSSIA IN AFRICA: MANIPULATION AND EXPANDING INFLUENCE

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Master of Defence Studies

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RUSSIA IN AFRICA: MANIPULATION AND EXPANDING INFLUENCE

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ABSTRACT

Since 2016, the Russian Federation has embarked on a manipulative influence campaign to expand its global power and influence. While the Western media has a natural tendency to focus on domestic concerns such as the Arctic, or Russian border expansion in Eastern Europe, Russia has become increasingly active in Sub-Saharan Africa. This study examines motivators for Russia's interest in expanding its influence in Sub-Saharan Africa and why Africans may be vulnerable to Russia's efforts. The study then presents evidence of Russian manipulation campaigns that are ongoing in Central African Republic (CAR), Zimbabwe and Madagascar using publicly available data from the news media, academia, and reports from international organizations. In CAR and Zimbabwe, Russia has successfully used a combination of diplomatic and military resources, and information operations to prop up state leaders, in exchange for natural resource exploitation rights. In Madagascar's recent election, it was revealed that Russian agents had bribed and coerced political candidates with a view to having a pro-Russian candidate elected. As a result of Russia's campaign, African countries are beginning to turn away from the West in favour of Russia. Canada, a nation with extensive corporate mining interests in Sub-Saharan Africa, and a strong supporter of the rules-based international order has cause for concern. Without a coherent national strategy for Africa, Canada will struggle to maintain relevancy on the continent and will face challenges in achieving its development, defence and economic policy goals.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Since 2016, attention towards Russian foreign interference and manipulation of electoral processes has significantly increased. The true impacts of Russia's campaign to influence the American Presidential Election of 2016 and the French Presidential Election of 2017 are not yet known. However, the resulting investigations have uncovered credible evidence of Russia's attempts to manipulate public opinion, undermine faith in democracy,¹ and to defame Russia's international political opponents.² The Western and European Media, think tanks and academia have placed a significant focus on Russian meddling in the United States' election. Benefiting from a free press and transparent government organizations, ongoing investigations in the United States continue to uncover the extent of the manipulation campaigns that Russia has waged. While these investigations unfold, however, little attention is being paid to Russia's growing campaign of influence and manipulation in Africa.

Historically, the Soviet Union held significant political, military, economic and ideological partnerships with select African countries throughout the Cold War. These relationships often provided marginal economic benefits, but more importantly, were leveraged by the Soviet Union to fuel the growth of its communist ideology and to combat the growing influence of the West in Africa.³ When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, relationships between African countries and Russian Federation significantly diminished as a result of "the demise of superpower competition, the disappearance of an

¹ Michael Tomz and Jessica Weeks, "Public Opinion and Foreign Electoral Intervention," proceedings of 2018 Annual American Political Science Association Meeting, Boston. (August 2018), 2.

² Robert Mueller. *Report on the Investigation Into Russian Interference in the 2016 Presidential Election*. (Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Justice, 2019), 1-2.

³ Mark Webber, "Soviet Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Final Phase," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 30, no. 01 (1992): 1-4, doi:10.1017/s0022278x00007709.

ideological imperative, and the recognition that the region offers few if any economic advantages.”⁴ Perhaps more significantly, the 1990s also saw the Russian Federation enter a significant economic depression resulting in increases of its poverty rate to 40%, a 50% drop in output, a 90% decrease in foreign investment.⁵ As the Russian Federation turned to address its pressing domestic challenges, there was little scope, nor desire, to maintain the same type of foreign policy towards Africa that had existed during the reign of the Soviet Union. After the 1990s, however, Russia has regained its economic footing, and its interest in cultivating relationships for military, economic and diplomatic gain in Africa has re-emerged. *The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation* of 2008 signaled Russia’s re-entry to the continent, specifically stating that economic cooperation in the African energy sector was “of strategic importance to Russia’s interests.”⁶

As Russia has already displayed the ability to execute campaigns to influence election outcomes in the United States, France and the United Kingdom, it is likely Russian influence campaigns have been ongoing in other regions.⁷ Given Russia’s renewed interest in Africa, influence and manipulation campaigns are likely to appear there as well as part of Russia’s strategy to increase its global power and regional influence. Electoral manipulation strategies, accompanied by traditional methods of cultivating influence employed during its Soviet era, are likely to be highly effective should Russia to employ them in certain vulnerable countries. This thesis for this directed

⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁵ Joseph Stiglitz. "Joseph Stiglitz: The Ruin of Russia." *The Guardian*. April 09, 2003. Accessed January 15, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/apr/09/russia.artsandhumanities>.

⁶ Russian Federation. "The Foreign Policy Concept of The Russian Federation." President of Russia. January 12, 2008. Accessed February 12, 2019. <http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/4116>.

⁷ Julia Gurganus and Eugene Rumer, "Russia's Global Ambitions in Perspective," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 20, 2019, accessed April 26, 2019, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/02/20/russia-s-global-ambitions-in-perspective-pub-78067>.

research paper is that the Russian Federation is embarking on a campaign to manipulate selected countries in sub-Saharan Africa for economic and diplomatic gain. Specifically, this essay will investigate Russian manipulation campaigns presently ongoing in Central African Republic (CAR), Zimbabwe and Madagascar. After the analysis of Russia's campaign, this research paper will also discuss implications for Canada.

This research paper is organized in seven chapters. Chapter 2 will discuss the Soviet legacy in Africa and the historical factors that shape its re-engagement on the continent today. Chapter 3 will provide an overview of why Russia's attention has returned to Africa and what President Vladimir Putin may seek to achieve. Chapter 4 will highlight Russian regime influence strategies it employs domestically and abroad to identify what types of strategies might be employed in chosen African nations. Chapter 5 will discuss the vulnerabilities to Russian influence campaigns that many African nations experience. Chapter 6 will provide evidence for Russian influence and manipulation campaigns ongoing in Central African Republic (CAR) and Zimbabwe. Chapter 7 will discuss policy implications from a Canadian perspective and offer recommendations should Canada wish to counter Russia's influence strategies in sub-Saharan Africa.

CHAPTER 2: THE SOVIET LEGACY IN AFRICA

The historical basis for Russia's recent interest in Africa is essential to understand in evaluating its ongoing campaign on the continent as Russian identity and existence is heavily shaped by its Soviet past. Russian polling data from 2016 and 2018 suggest that nostalgia for the Soviet Union is at an all-time high and that a growing proportion of Russia's population approve of Soviet-era policies.⁸⁹ President Putin also embodies this sentiment, referring to the collapse of the Soviet Union as a "geopolitical catastrophe," and frequently communicating his desire for Russia to return to the great power status it once held.¹⁰ Therefore, before analyzing Russia's current actions to manipulate African nations, the historical political and economic bases for Russia's strategy will be discussed, which play a significant role in Russia's motivations for re-establishing its presence in Africa.

This chapter will provide a historical overview of the Soviet Union's involvement in Africa. First, the political and economic basis for the Soviet Union's campaign in Africa will be discussed with a view to providing context for subsequent chapter's analysis of Russia's current re-engagement on the continent. Second, the strategies that the Soviet Union employed to manipulate and influence African nations during the Soviet era will be discussed. This historical review will inform the basis of understanding to

⁸ Andrei Gordeev, "Nostalgia for the Soviet Union Hits 14-Year High in Russia, Poll Says," *The Moscow Times*, February 28, 2019, accessed February 28, 2019, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/12/19/nostalgia-for-soviet-union-hits-14-year-high-russia-poll-says-a63884>.

⁹ David Masci. "In Russia, Nostalgia for USSR and Positive Feelings about Stalin." Pew Research Center. June 29, 2017. Accessed February 28, 2019. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/06/29/in-russia-nostalgia-for-soviet-union-and-positive-feelings-about-stalin/>.

¹⁰ Jakub M. Godzimirski, "Putin and Post-Soviet Identity Building Blocks and Buzz Words." *Problems of Post-Communism*. 55, No. 5 (September 2008): 22-25.

evaluate the strategies Russia employs under the leadership of President Putin to expand Russian power and influence in Africa.

The Soviet Strategic Interest in Africa

Throughout the Cold War period, both the Soviet Union and the West attempted to create alliances or partnerships with African nations to expand their global influence while weakening the influence of their competitors.¹¹ From the 1950s onward, both groups sought to expand their influence in order to support their competing views on how the world should be ordered: capitalism versus socialism. Overall, the Soviet Union's strategic interest in the African continent was rooted in three objectives centred around communist ideology, economic and geostrategic interests.

Ideological Roots

The Soviet ideological premise for its involvement in the African continent dates back to the 1920s. In 1923, Lenin wrote an article in *Pravda*, the official newspaper of the Soviet Union, where he advocated for a strategy of interventionism in the "third world" via expanding the Soviet Union's relationships with the colonies in Africa.¹² Lenin saw Africa as an ideal location for socialist revolution as Western nations had continually exploited African nations, and had deliberately prevented them from rising to become effective states. Overall, the oppression, disenfranchisement and exploitation that has existed throughout African history played well to the Soviet communist narrative. While Lenin saw African states as "uncivilized," he realized the need for partnership

¹¹ Henry Bienen, "Soviet Political Relations with Africa," *International Security* 6, no. 4 (1982): 153, doi:10.2307/2538682.

¹² Milene Charles. *The Soviet Union and Africa: The History of the Involvement*. (USA: University Press of America, 1980), 149.

there to establish an ideological majority around the world that could effectively resist the West's progress in spreading the capitalist ideology.¹³ This ideological position continued throughout the Soviet Union's history and was reinforced in the Brezhnev Doctrine of the 1960s. Brezhnev stated that "the adoption of the socialist orientation by many African countries had substantially tilted the balance of power on the continent" and expressed the need for the Soviet Union to intervene to help strengthen communism across the globe.¹⁴ The doctrine also further states that intervention would be targeted towards African nations that were stated to be "longing for socialism" versus "imperialism," forming the Soviet ideological justification for intervention.¹⁵

Economy and Strategic Minerals

The Soviet Union also had extensive interests in the strategic minerals available in the African continent during this timeframe. Not only would investments in resource extraction support economic growth but it would also give the Soviet Union a marked advantage in Soviet defence industrial capability. The strategic importance of Africa's natural resource base rose was initially realized during the Second World War. It was during this conflict that Allied forces needed to find sources of strategic resources to produce the vast quantities of military equipment, tooling and munitions required to sustain the war effort. Developing additional sources of coal, iron ore, chemicals and specialized heavy metals such as uranium were essential to maintain the required level of

¹³ Milene Charles. *The Soviet Union and Africa: The History of the Involvement*. (USA: University Press of America, 1980), 148-152

¹⁴ Morris Rothenberg. *The USSR and Africa: New Dimensions of Soviet Global Power*. (Miami: Advanced International Studies Institute, 1980), 5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

production as quantities available within Allied territories were insufficient.¹⁶ As many traditional sources of these strategic minerals had been occupied by Nazi Forces, alternative locations to extract such resources had to be developed outside the sphere of control of the Axis forces. Due to its geographic distance and abundance of resources, Africa was an ideal location. At the height of World War II, Africa's proportion of the world's mineral production accounted for 50% of gold, 19% of manganese, 39% of chromite, 24% of vanadium, 17% of copper, 90% of cobalt and 98% of industrial diamonds being produced around the globe.¹⁷ Even after the conclusion of the World War II, these resources continued to play significant importance in meeting the demands of a more industrialized and technologically advanced world.

During the Cold War period, the ability to access strategic minerals continued to play a significant role across the world. American policy in 1952 saw the United States specifically adopt an approach of global interdependence rather than self-sufficiency. In 1952, American President Harry Truman stated "we cannot allow shortages of materials to jeopardize our national security nor to become a bottleneck to our economic expansion."¹⁸ As a result, the United States adopted a foreign policy that would allow it to ensure it maintained access to vital raw materials in Africa that would be required for war mobilization. Furthermore, the United States believed that by securing global sources

¹⁶ Raymond Dumett, "Africa's Strategic Minerals during the Second World War," *Journal of African History* 26 (1985): 381.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 382-383.

¹⁸ *Strategic Materials: Technologies to Reduce U.S. Import Vulnerability*. (Washington, D.C.: Congress of the U.S., Office of Technology Assessment, 1985), 106

of high-grade uranium and thorium ore, the Soviet Union's ability to develop a nuclear weapon capability could be delayed and that its weapon production would be limited.¹⁹

Recognizing the American strategy to secure mineral resource bases in Africa, Stalin, leader of the Soviet Union from 1929 to 1953, initiated a counter strategy to attempt to diminish Western power through challenging the control of these strategic resources in what he perceived as the West's most vulnerable location, which was Africa.²⁰ This policy was continued by Stalin's successor, Khrushchev, who continued to place significant importance on access to strategic resources, and also reinforced the importance of making political alliances with the leaders of African nations to gain international diplomatic support and counterbalance a growing perception of American "world leadership."²¹ In the 1970s, the growing perception was that "Russia's Africa policy is not driven by its own resource, needs, but rather those of NATO" as the Soviet's continued their strategy to secure global strategic resources against Western control.²²

Soviet Tactics in Africa

To achieve its strategy of challenging the capitalist ideology of the West, the Soviet Union adopted a significant economic investment strategy across the African continent. The Soviet strategy evolved throughout the Cold War period as different approaches towards investment and financial aid were proven unsuccessful, and as the

¹⁹ Painter, David. "Oil, Resources, and the Cold War, 1945–1962." In *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, edited by Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, 486-507. The Cambridge History of the Cold War. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 487.

²⁰ Milene Charles. *The Soviet Union and Africa: The History of the Involvement*. (USA: University Press of America, 1980), 16.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 176-178.

²² A. Thomson, *U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Apartheid South Africa 1948-1994: Conflict of Interests* (New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 9.

situation on the continent continued to evolve. From the 1950s to the 1990s, events such as the decline of colonialism and the rise of independence, numerous political upheavals, coups, and the rise of violent conflict on the continent provided numerous opportunities for the Soviet Union to expand their influence on the continent through economic and political initiatives.

Soviet Economic Aid Strategy

The Soviet program to provide financial aid to African nations emerged during the 1950s. This new policy saw the USSR grant economic assistance in the form of grants and loans to African nations that had recently obtained independence with the intention of aiding their economies in a transition to socialism. The intention of economic aid was to help stimulate the development of national infrastructure and industry that would be relevant to the strategic interests of the Soviet Union.²³ From the 1950s to the 1960s, the majority of Soviet economic aid was directed towards Egypt and Algeria which offered significant oil reserves, strategic locations and who provided air and naval bases to the Soviet military.²⁴ At the time, this approach to economic investment in state infrastructure such as financing dams, transport infrastructure and industrial projects was believed to be an effective approach to acquiring influence with new African government leaders.²⁵ This influence mechanism was also designed to facilitate bilateral trade

²³ Gu Guan-Fu. "Soviet Aid to the Third World, An Analysis of its Strategy," *Soviet Studies* Vol XXXV, no.1 (January 1983), 71

²⁴ R. E. Clute, "The American-Soviet Confrontation in Africa: Its Impact on the Politics of Africa," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 24, no. 3-4 (1989): 160, doi:10.1177/002190968902400301.

²⁵ Colin W. Lawson, "Soviet Economic Aid to Africa," *African Affairs* 87, no. 349 (1988): 505.

relationships based on the belief that if the Soviet Union was the recipient of 40% of a newly independent African nation's trade, they "could be forced to become socialist."²⁶

The Soviet Union's initial influence strategy via economic investment proved to be often unsuccessful when it lost the support of local populations due to investment projects being poorly executed due equipment failures and lack of local technical expertise. For example, Soviet machinery delivered to Egypt quickly failed due to poor quality and lacking a design that accounted for the climatic conditions in North Africa. Eventually, the non-functional Soviet equipment had to be replaced by Swedish, English and American equipment.²⁷ Further frustrations emerged when projects were announced, but were sometimes significantly delayed or never fulfilled.²⁸ These failures resulted in strikes, local shortages of essential goods, and an over exertion of pressure that offended these new state leaders.²⁹ Upsets to civilian populations as a result of these policies even sometimes resulted in coups that were successful in precipitating the events leading to the pro-Soviet leaders in countries such as Algeria, Ghana and Mali being overthrown.³⁰

Economic influence was also not a viable strategy in the long-term for gaining influence on the continent as the financial horsepower of the West far outpaced the Soviet Union. Western aid totaled over \$14 billion from 1955-1969, while Soviet Aid was only

²⁶ Gu Guan-Fu. "Soviet Aid to the Third World, An Analysis of its Strategy," *Soviet Studies* Vol XXXV, no.1 (January 1983), 71

²⁷ Goldman, Marshall I. "A Balance Sheet of Soviet Foreign Aid." *Foreign Affairs* 43, no. 2 (1965): 355

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 356.

²⁹ Gu Guan-Fu. "Soviet Aid to the Third World, An Analysis of its Strategy," *Soviet Studies* Vol XXXV, no.1 (January 1983), 72-74.

³⁰ Keir Giles. *Russian Interests in Sub-Saharan Africa*. (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2013), 3-4.

\$2 billion.³¹ Learning from this failed approach, the Soviet Union adapted its economic investment strategy in the 1960s by re-focusing its economic investment strategy in the continent.³² It was then that the Soviet Union shifted from contributing to the development of state infrastructure and generic financial aid disbursements to focus on specific industrial projects of “mutual benefit” i.e. that would result in outputs that would be primarily exported to the Soviet Union.³³

Soviet Military Aid Strategy

In the 1960s, the Soviet Union realized a different approach was required to gain influence on the continent. It was then that military assistance proved to be a greater factor in obtaining influence in Africa than economic aid or investment.³⁴ While the Soviet Union could not compete effectively with the West’s ability to generate financial aid, it had found a competitive advantage in its ability to provide military assistance including training and equipment. Establishing military partnerships also provided strategic benefits through basing that could facilitate logistical support to Soviet forces, providing Soviet Forces enhanced operational reach through access to and control of seas.³⁵ During this period, Soviet military equipment was instrumental in arming regime forces, or rebel groups that espoused pro-Soviet ideals. The opportunity to receive Soviet military equipment was readily accepted by many leaders that had recently achieved their

³¹ R. E. Clute, "The American-Soviet Confrontation in Africa: Its Impact on the Politics of Africa," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 24, no. 3-4 (1989): 160, doi:10.1177/002190968902400301.

³² Goldman, Marshall I. "A Balance Sheet of Soviet Foreign Aid." *Foreign Affairs* 43, no. 2 (1965): 359.

³³ Colin W. Lawson, "Soviet Economic Aid To Africa," *African Affairs* 87, no. 349 (1988): 506-507.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 507.

³⁵ Richard E. Bissell, "Soviet Military Aid to Africa," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 1, no. 1 (1981): 5.

position via coup d'état that faced civil turmoil, and groups that sought to challenge their control.

One of the first examples of the Soviet Union's involvement of military aid was in the Congo in 1960 where it provided strategic airlift and operations and logistics support to the Congolese military.³⁶ However, due to the lack of strategic lift the Soviet military had at the time, its ability to provide significant value in terms of military aid was underwhelming and ineffective. As a result, the eventual regime change when the internal conflict between Lumumba and Kasavubu was resolved by a military coup by Congolese Army Colonel Joseph Mobutu, who's "first act as the new head of state in Leopoldville was to sever diplomatic relations with the USSR and expel all Soviet personnel from Congo."³⁷

After this frustrated attempt at military assistance in Africa, and having learned from the experience of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Soviet Union invested significantly in its strategic lift assets. From 1965 to 1974, the USSR produced over 50 Antonov An-22 heavy transport aircraft to provide the capability to transport mass quantities of troops and heavy equipment such as artillery pieces and T-62s via air.³⁸ Further, the Soviet Union invested in its passenger aircraft fleet for its civilian airline, *Aeroflot*, whose resources were also leveraged to transport military forces to deployed locations in Africa and also facilitated the deployment of Cuban forces to Angola.³⁹ These investments

³⁶ Alessandro Iandolo, "Imbalance of Power: The Soviet Union and the Congo Crisis, 1960–1961," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 16, no. 2 (2014): 41–46.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 49–51.

³⁸ Steven Mason and Catherine Robertello, *Soviet Strategic Airlift*, Master's thesis, US Air Force School of Systems and Logistics, 1983 (California, 1983), 41.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

allowed the Soviet Union to counterbalance increases in American capabilities as the US expanded its cargo ship fleet and also doubled its airlift capacity in the early 1960s to improve the United States' ability to project military forces abroad.⁴⁰

Soviet Military aid was offered to African countries frequently while in competition with the West. From 1962 to 1963, a United States-led coalition began negotiating with Somalia on the topic of military assistance and equipment. In 1963, the Soviet Union intervened to undermine US interests by closing an even more generous deal valued at USD \$30,000,000, which would in turn provide the Soviet Union strategic access to Somalian ports.⁴¹ This deal effectively cut out US military interests in Somalia in the early 1960s and enhanced the Soviet present in the region as the Soviet Union was able to develop naval support installations that provided access to the Indian Ocean.⁴² The establishment of naval facilities in Somalia would allow the Soviet navy to significantly enhance its presence in the Indian Ocean by permanently deploying 10-30 warships in the region which raised significant concerns amongst NATO members at the time.⁴³

In addition to simply providing arms and equipment Soviet personnel were also seconded to African militaries to maintain and operate specialized equipment. When American influence in Ethiopia waned in the mid-1970s, the Soviet Union stepped in to

⁴⁰ Richard Kugler. *The Great Strategy Debate: NATO's Evolution in the 1960s*. (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1991), 18.

⁴¹ Jeffrey A. Lefebvre, "The United States, Ethiopia and the 1963 Somali-Soviet Arms Deal: Containment and the Balance of Power Dilemma in the Horn of Africa," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 36, no. 4 (1998): 612-614.

⁴² Kenneth Weiss. *The Soviet Involvement in the Ogaden War*. (Virginia, USA: Center for Naval Analyses, 1980), 2.

⁴³ A. Thomson, *U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Apartheid South Africa 1948-1994: Conflict of Interests* (New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 8

assume the void in 1976.⁴⁴ Then, the Soviet Union entered into an agreement with Ethiopia to provide military capabilities from 1977 to 1982 which was estimated at 684 T-54/T-55 tanks, 905 artillery pieces, 886 mortars, 767 air defence guns, 51 helicopters and 148 combat aircraft among many other offensive capabilities and military supplies.⁴⁵ Advisors, trainers, strategic airlift and naval forces from the Soviet Union were also employed to increase the effectiveness of Ethiopia's armed forces and facilitate the inflow of Cuban advisors that would also support the regime.⁴⁶ These forces were instrumental in strengthening the Ethiopian regime and also provided diplomatic value to the Soviet Union as Ethiopia was the seat of the Organization of African Unity (succeeded by the African Union), the oldest independent African state, and possessed valued strategic mineral resources such as gold, copper, platinum and tantalum.⁴⁷

Realizing how a strategy of military aid could be effective in Africa, the Soviet Union continued to focus its investment in Africa by selecting specific nations they could influence via arms deals from the 1970s onward. From 1975 to 1979, the amount of military aid the Soviet Union provided to Africa was valued at USD \$12,075,000 compared to economic aid of only USD \$2,528,000.⁴⁸ Overall, this strategy of influence was much more successful, and eventually enabled Russia to establish military treaties

⁴⁴ Kenneth Weiss. *The Soviet Involvement in the Ogaden War*. (Virginia, USA: Center for Naval Analyses, 1980), 6.

⁴⁵ Central Intelligence Agency. United States. *Ethiopia: The Impact of Soviet Military Assistance*. (Langley, Virginia, 1983), 2.

⁴⁶ Richard E. Bissell, "Soviet Military Aid to Africa," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 1, no. 1 (1981): 6.

⁴⁷ Kenneth Weiss. *The Soviet Involvement in the Ogaden War*. (Virginia, USA: Center for Naval Analyses, 1980), 15.

⁴⁸ Gu Guan-Fu. "Soviet Aid to the Third World, An Analysis of its Strategy," *Soviet Studies* Vol XXXV, no.1 (January 1983), 74.

with countries such as Egypt, Angola, Somalia, Mozambique and Ethiopia.⁴⁹ In the 1970s and 1980s, Soviet interests in South Africa became increasingly focused, where it offered political and military assistance to the African National Congress (ANC). During this timeframe, the Soviet Union brought ANC leadership to Soviet military academies and provided them training in guerrilla warfare, military strategy, intelligence analysis, and firearms training.⁵⁰ The training offered to ANC personnel was exceptional as it ventured outside the typical Soviet training approach which was equipment and capability focused. For the ANC, however, tactics and strategy were included as part of the curriculum as it was thought these individuals would become part of an ANC-led South African Army Officer Corps.⁵¹ Political and diplomatic support was also provided from the Soviet Union through research organizations and scholarships that would assist ANC leaders, publishing houses, and lawyers.⁵² Soviet assistance in this period was instrumental in strengthening the ANC, which would eventually be elected to power in South Africa's first election in 1994. However, the benefits Soviet-ANC cooperation would not be fully realized as the Soviet Union had collapsed.

Throughout the 20th century, the Soviet Union continued to evolve its foreign policy until it found a successful combination where it could achieve a competitive advantage over its Western competitors in Africa. The Soviet ability to provide military

⁴⁹ Gu Guan-Fu. "Soviet Aid to the Third World, An Analysis of its Strategy," *Soviet Studies* Vol XXXV, no.1 (January 1983), 74-75.

⁵⁰ Leander, "The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the Anti-Apartheid Struggle," South African History Online, February 03, 2017, , accessed March 11, 2019, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/union-soviet-socialist-republic-ussr-and-anti-apartheid-struggle>.

⁵¹ V. Shubin, "The Soviet Union/Russian Federations Relations With South Africa, With Special Reference To The Period Since 1980," *African Affairs* 95, no. 378 (1996): 12, doi:10.1093/oxfordjournals.afraf.a007713.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 15.

and diplomatic assistance to African leaders was most effective in nations where governments were newly formed and were often struggling to maintain control of their populations. There, leaders would welcome Soviet support in exchange for Soviet access to invest in resource extraction, or to establish military facilities. Understanding the Soviet history in Africa provides the basis for understanding how Russia may choose to re-engage in the continent as it pursues its vision to grow the its global presence and influence.

CHAPTER 3: MOTIVATORS FOR RE-ENGAGEMENT

Having significantly improved its position since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation is now able to resume efforts to regain power and influence in Africa. The 2000 to 2010 revival of the Russian economy provides the federation with the financial ability to resume its foreign policy. Russia's GDP has increased in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from 516.8 billion in 1990⁵³ to 1.6 trillion in 2017 (current USD).⁵⁴ This economic growth, accompanied by the vision of President Putin have facilitated Russia's rise in prominence on the world stage. This strategy appears to be effective in enhancing the international perception of Russia. A survey on international perceptions of Russia conducted by the Pew Research Center indicated that 42% of 26,612 respondents believe that "that Russia is playing a more important role in world affairs," while 28% stated they believe Russia's role is "as important" compared to 10 years ago.⁵⁵ This perception likely due to growing Russia influence throughout the world through policies such as Arctic expansionism, establishing strategic partnerships with China, and the annexation of Crimea and Georgian territories. In recent years, Russia has also significantly increased its presence in countries in sub-Saharan Africa such as CAR, Eritrea and Zimbabwe. To evaluate where and why Russia may seek to cultivate influence there, it is important to understand the political, military and economic motivators that relate to opportunities existing in Africa.

⁵³ 516.8 billion USD represents the Soviet Union's GDP in 1990.

⁵⁴ World Bank. "Russian Federation." 2018. Accessed January 15, 2019.
<https://data.worldbank.org/country/russian-federation>.

⁵⁵ Clark Letterman,. "Global Views of Putin, Russia Largely Negative." Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project. December 14, 2018. Accessed January 15, 2019.
<http://www.pewglobal.org/2018/12/06/image-of-putin-russia-suffers-internationally/>.

Political Interests

Russia's growth in influence in Africa has gone largely unreported by the Western media, which has been more focused on Russia's other activities in the Arctic, Europe and in competition with the United-States on a variety of fronts. The Russian Federation views African countries as increasingly important for diplomatic support. Russia's national security strategy notes the importance of increasing collaboration within BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) as well as other nations in Latin America and Africa to enhance political, trade, economic, military and social ties.⁵⁶ Alliances with African nations also provide diplomatic benefits for Russia's in the face of increased isolation from Europe and North America. African nations comprise 54 out of 193 nations in the United Nations. Further, three out of 10 non-permanent Security Council seats are allocated to African countries. Russia has also openly advocated for United Nation's Security Council reforms that would expand African representation on the Security Council further.⁵⁷ By establishing ties in Africa, Russia will be better positioned to build consensus in multilateral forums and defend against Western narratives that seek to condemn Russia's actions. Russia's behaviour in this regard is consistent with the approach of the Soviet Union during the Cold War, in that by making political allies around the world, Russia will be more effective in resisting diplomatic pressure and can grow its global influence to reduce the relative power of the West and NATO.

Military Interests

⁵⁶ Russian Federation, Kremlin, *Russian Federation's National Security Strategy* (Moscow, Russian Federation, 2015), 24.

⁵⁷ Africa Times. "Lavrov: Russia Supports AU Call for UN Security Council Reforms." Africa Times. March 10, 2018. Accessed January 29, 2019. <https://africatimes.com/2018/03/10/lavrov-russia-supports-au-call-for-un-security-council-reforms/>.

Africa also presents several opportunities for the Russian Federation to enhance its military capabilities. Participation in conflict is one such opportunity that supports the development of Russia's combat capabilities. Russia's involvement in Syria provided the opportunity for Russia to enhance the professionalism of its military. There, the Russian contribution in support of President Asaad was leveraged as an "incubator of training and innovation." Russian military commanders and staff rotated into theatre for approximately three-month deployments where they would gain relevant operational experience in combined arms warfare and operational planning.⁵⁸ By participating in the Syria conflict, Russia also capitalized on the opportunity to enhance military research, testing and development and showcase new technologies such as cruise missiles, precision guided munitions and unmanned aerial systems in support of Russia's defence industrial base.⁵⁹ Russia's participation in the Syrian conflict has also been leveraged domestically to increase support of Russia's population for its military and foreign policies. In February 2019, the Russian Defence Ministry launched a public affairs campaign to showcase its victory and several war trophies from its Syrian campaign as part of an effort to raise public awareness and support for its campaign.⁶⁰

Enhancing Russia's force mobility and power projection capabilities into distant theatres of operation is considered a top priority for President Putin.⁶¹ While Russia frequently exercises the operational mobility of its forces within Russia's vast borders, it

⁵⁸ Dmitry Adamsky, "Russian Lessons Learned From the Operation in Syria: A Preliminary Assessment," in *Russia's Military Strategy and Doctrine* (Washington, D.C.: Jamestown Foundation), 382.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 395.

⁶⁰ Maxim Suchkov, "Moscow Looks to Boost Support for Syria Campaign with Traveling Exhibit," *Al-Monitor*, March 04, 2019, accessed March 11, 2019, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/03/russia-syria-exhibit-train.html>.

⁶¹ Dmitry Adamsky, "Russian Lessons Learned From the Operation in Syria: A Preliminary Assessment," in *Russia's Military Strategy and Doctrine* (Washington, D.C.: Jamestown Foundation), 397.

lacks operational support hubs in foreign countries that allow it to stockpile resources, stage forces and conduct maintenance. Understanding Russia will never likely gain rights to establish operational support hubs in North America or Europe, it must look elsewhere. Amongst the other regional economic benefits that exist, Africa presents several strategic locations for military basing for force projection purposes that could allow it to influence global trade routes such as the Suez Canal. As a result, Russia has established a diplomatic relationship with Eritrea that includes rights to build a military naval logistics facility.⁶² Russia has also been developing plans in conjunction with the government of Sudan to establish a permanent naval and air base on its coast.⁶³ These port facilities will enhance Russia's operational reach into the Indian Ocean and Asia, and provide it the ability to influence traffic passing through the Red Sea to and from the Suez Canal. The importance of these facilities will also increase in the coming years as Russia' seeks to expand its presence further in sub-Saharan Africa as they will provide a vital intermediate staging area for the deployment of military forces.

Economic Interests

In 2015, the Russian Federation released an updated national security strategy document. The document is self-described as the:

strategic planning document defining the Russian Federation's national interests and strategic national priorities, objectives, tasks, and measures in

⁶² Salem Solomon, "Russia-Eritrea Relations Grow with Planned Logistics Center," VOA, September 17, 2018, accessed March 11, 2019, <https://www.voanews.com/a/russia-eritrea-relations-grow-with-planned-logistics-center/4554680.html>.

⁶³ PressTV. "'Military Deal with Sudan Paves Way for Russia to Build Base on Red Sea.'" January 14, 2019. Accessed March 11, 2019. <https://www.presstv.com/DetailFr/2019/01/14/585740/Russia-Military-Base-Sudan>.

the sphere of domestic and foreign policy aimed at strengthening the Russian Federation's national security and ensuring the country's sustainable development in the long term.⁶⁴

The Russian national security strategy highlights the role of the economy as most significant as it is a key enabler for other priorities such as quality of life improvement and military modernization. The policy outlines the key economic threats to Russia's national security, which include a high dependence on external economies, the depletion of Russia's raw-material resource bases, reduced production and stocks of strategic mineral resources.⁶⁵ Russia's economic performance is of significant concern within the past five years. In 2015, Russia's GDP fell by 3.7 percent from 2014 figures due to price fluctuations in the energy sector,⁶⁶ as well as the economic impact of sanctions imposed after Russia's annexation of Crimea and lost trade with Ukraine. (Figure 3.1)⁶⁷



⁶⁴ Russian Federation, Kremlin, *Russian Federation's National Security Strategy* (Moscow, Russian Federation, 2015), 1.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶⁶ World Bank. *Russia Economic Report: The Long Journey to Recovery*. No 35. (April 2016), 7.

⁶⁷ World Bank. *GDP (Current US \$)*. 2018.

As a result of these setbacks, diversification in Russia's industrial outputs as well as its trading partners is a necessary recovery strategy to offset the negative impact of ongoing sanctions. Therefore, opportunities to trade with, and invest in African countries have increased in importance.

Given Russia's expertise in the natural resource sector, foreign investment in the fields of energy extraction and mining are optimal ways to enhance its existing industrial base. This approach is also consistent with the national security strategy's statement on the requirement to develop strategic mineral reserves in sufficient quantity to "guarantee the mobilization needs of the Russian Federation and the requirements of the country's economy for the long term."⁶⁸ As Russia has been heavily dependent on natural resource extraction for its economic base for many years, it is in a position where some of its strategic mineral reserves are forecasted to decline in the coming decades. For example, Russia is expected to face a domestic shortage of gold, alluvial diamonds and platinum metal groups from existing extraction sites within approximately thirty, twenty and ten years, respectively.⁶⁹ Further, Russia has placed a significant stake increasing its ownership and stockpiles of Chromium production,⁷⁰ and Cobalt which both face global supply shortages⁷¹. Establishing a controlling interest in foreign production sites provides

⁶⁸ Russian Federation, Kremlin, *Russian Federation's National Security Strategy* (Moscow, Russian Federation, 2015), 15

⁶⁹ Eugene Gerden, "Russia May Face with Shortage of Gold and Strategic Commercial Minerals during next 20 Years," InvestorIntel, October 19, 2015, accessed January 29, 2019, <https://investorintel.com/sectors/gold-silver-base-metals/gold-precious-metals-intel/russia-may-face-with-shortage-of-gold-and-strategic-commercial-minerals-during-next-20-years/>.

⁷⁰ Tanya Ashreena, "Chromium Prices Jump 25% on Severe Supply Shortage," Metal Bulletin, accessed January 29, 2019, <https://www.metalbulletin.com/Article/3799648/Chromium-prices-jump-25-on-severe-supply-shortage.html>.

⁷¹ Mark Burton, "Chromium Prices Jump 25% on Severe Supply Shortage This Commodity Investor Is Hoarding the World's Cobalt Supply," Bloomberg.com, March 13, 2018, accessed January 29, 2019, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-03-13/this-commodity-cowboy-is-hoarding-the-world-s-cobalt-supply>.

Russia the opportunity not only for income generation, but a guarantee of access to these supply chains at preferred rates. This type of investment in foreign production supports Russia's national security strategy, which states it will develop strategic mineral reserves in enough quantity to "guarantee the mobilization needs of the Russian Federation and the requirements of the country's economy for the long term."⁷² Further, if Russian firms are able to control the sources of these highly desirable minerals, it may serve to help shield the Russian economy from economic and financial sanctions in the future.

Given the abundance of such resources in certain African countries such as DRC, CAR and Zimbabwe, Russia's interest in expanding its role in Africa is consistent with its national security strategy. These countries have significant natural resource reserves of strategic minerals such as cobalt, chromium, diamond, ferroalloys, gold, platinum metal groups, manganese, uranium and vanadium, which are all essential minerals for the production of military equipment and munitions.⁷³ The importance of platinum metal groups has significantly increased in recent years due to its use in the growing production of fuel cells, automobiles and industrial emissions control applications. As a result, prices for these minerals have dramatically increased. For example, the cost per troy ounce of Palladium has increased from USD \$173 in 2008 to USD \$1,170 in 2018.⁷⁴ Cobalt, a mineral used in the production of batteries for electronics and electric vehicles has also dramatically increased in recent years and is expected to increase in demand as the global

⁷² Russian Federation, Kremlin, *Russian Federation's National Security Strategy* (Moscow, Russian Federation, 2015), 15

⁷³ Kenneth Kessel. *Strategic Minerals: U.S. Alternatives*. (Washington, D.C.: National Defence University Press, 1990), 8-10, 66.

⁷⁴ 1 Troy Ounce = 31.10 grams.

consumption of electric vehicle technology increases.⁷⁵ Both Russia and China have signaled their interest in cobalt resources by establishing large national stockpiles of the mineral to protect domestic industry and military production from potential supply disruptions.⁷⁶ As 58% of the global supply of Cobalt being produced in the DRC (2016 figures),⁷⁷ this is a significant location where Russia may seek to expand its influence, especially given the tenuous political and security situation the DRC has been facing throughout its years since independence.

While significant deposits of these strategically important minerals have also been found to exist elsewhere in Australia, Russia, Brazil, and Canada, they occur in difficult to access locations that prevent them from being easily exploited such as the Canadian North, Eurasian Steppes or deep in the Australian outback.⁷⁸ To further complicate matters, many developed countries that contain these resources have environmental policies that complicate resource extraction or make it financially unviable. Countries such as Canada have implemented indigenous rights guarantees in their constitutions that cause a significant amount of legal uncertainty that can delay, undermine and ultimately block natural resource extraction development projects.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Frik Els, "Cobalt Prices Could Rally 30% by Mid-2019," Mining.com, November 09, 2018, accessed January 29, 2019, <http://www.mining.com/cobalt-price-rally-30-mid-2019/>.

⁷⁶ Mark Burton, "This Commodity Investor Is Hoarding the World's Cobalt Supply," Bloomberg, March 13, 2018, accessed January 29, 2019, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-03-13/this-commodity-cowboy-is-hoarding-the-world-s-cobalt-supply>.

⁷⁷ Amanda Kay, "Top Cobalt Production by Country," Investing News Network, July 19, 2018, accessed April 28, 2019, <https://investingnews.com/daily/resource-investing/battery-metals-investing/cobalt-investing/top-cobalt-producing-countries-congo-china-canada-russia-australia/>.

⁷⁸ Kenneth Kessel. *Strategic Minerals: U.S. Alternatives*. (Washington, D.C.: National Defence University Press, 1990), 8-10, 66.

⁷⁹ Dimitrios Panagos and J. Andrew Grant, "Constitutional Change, Aboriginal Rights, and Mining Policy in Canada," *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 51, no. 4 (2013): 417-419.

Russia has extensive political, military and economic interests that drive its strategy of re-engaging in Africa. Motivated by nostalgia for the great power status the Soviet Union had previously held, President Putin and his corporate allies are expanding influence and power in the region on several fronts. Understanding these key motivators are helpful in determining which African nations are likely to become targets of Russian manipulation. In summary, nations in Africa that have the potential for political alignment with Russia, and that will trade natural resources extraction rights for military assistance are most likely to be targeted by Russian influence strategies.

CHAPTER 4: REGIME INFLUENCE STRATEGIES

Russia is not a country that is well known for democratic, fair and transparent governance practices. Critics have said that Russia operates a system of “managed democracy” where opposition candidates are barred from participating as candidates, and the media is tightly controlled.⁸⁰ On a scale of one being most democratic to seven being least democratic, the Russian Federation received a score of 6.57 by Freedom House, a non-governmental organization that monitors democracy, political freedom and human rights around the world.⁸¹ The Economist Intelligence Unit’s Democracy Index for 2018 classified Russia as an authoritarian regime and assigned it a global ranking of 144th, based on Russia’s electoral process, government function, political participation, culture and civil liberties.⁸² Political scientists have described the Russian governance structure as one of “competitive authoritarianism,” a type of regime where the government’s “pseudo-democratic institutions” are leveraged to prop up regimes in which power is centrally controlled.⁸³ When assessing how Russia might seek to manipulate leadership selection in Africa, it is valuable to first gain an appreciation of how Russia has manipulated its own presidential electoral processes. The example of Russian influence on the American Presidential elections in 2016 is also pertinent. Understanding Russia’s

⁸⁰ Simon Tisdall. "As Vladimir Putin Steals the Russian Election, Our Leaders Are Shamefully Silent." *The Guardian*. February 08, 2018. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/feb/08/vladimir-putin-russian-election-iran-zimbabwe>.

⁸¹ Freedom House. "Russia." Freedom House. January 30, 2018. Accessed January 29, 2019. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2017/russia>.

⁸² The Economist Intelligence Unit. *Democracy Index 2018: Me too? Political participation, protest and democracy*. (London, UK: The Economist, 2019), 39.

⁸³ Daniel Treisman, *The New Autocracy Information, Politics, and Policy in Putins Russia* (La Vergne: Brookings Institution Press, 2018), 2-3.

domestic and foreign influence strategies will provide a foundation to understand what types of methods might be employed in manipulation campaigns in African countries.

While Russia has been rated as an authoritarian regime by some international organizations, it does hold elections to select a president as well as representatives for the State Duma and regional and municipal governments. The issue is, however, that these electoral processes are not transparent, fair, or free. The most recent Russian Presidential election took place in March 2018, which led to the unsurprising re-election of President Vladimir Putin. The electoral process was observed by news media and the International Election Observation Mission from the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The observation mission and reports from the media highlighted concerns in Russia's supposedly democratic process in the areas of candidate participation, unfair control of the media, and voting irregularities.⁸⁴

Candidate Participation

First, the OSCE observation report highlights that numerous prospective candidates were barred from competing in the Russian Presidential Election of 2018 by the Russian Central Election Commission (RCEC). Candidate disqualification is a common occurrence in Russian elections and has been an issue for many years. Popova's 2006 study of the role of the RCEC and Russian court in reviewing candidate disqualifications in situations where incumbents' position is a stake noted that both the Russian court and RCEC were responsive to political pressure and that outcomes were

⁸⁴ International Election Observation Mission. *Russian Federation – Presidential Election, 18 March 2018 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions*. 19 March 2018.

biased towards suppressing opposition candidates.⁸⁵ Jarabinsky's study of the effectiveness of the RCEC in 2011 further noted that the United Russia (Putin's affiliated political party) has an "enormous influence" on the election of members to the RCEC.⁸⁶ His analysis of 3,831 potential cases of electoral fraud during the 2011 Presidential election demonstrates that the RCEC's bias towards Putin's party and how it disadvantaged the opposition party.⁸⁷ Therefore, the use of supposedly independent government institutions and judicial review systems to influence electoral processes and outcomes are both strategies that Russian leaders have found effective to maintain their positions of power.

In the Russian 2018 Presidential election, 36 individuals applied to become candidates but, in the end, only eight were registered as valid candidates by the RCEC as multiple candidates were barred from participation for various reasons.⁸⁸ During the period of time leading up to the election, several tactics were employed to discredit or disqualify potential competitors to the incumbent, President Vladimir Putin. For example, one such candidate, Alexei Navalny who was known to be critical of the Putin was convicted of embezzlement in 2017, which disqualified him from becoming a candidate. However, this conviction is suspicious as Navalny had been convicted for the same charge of embezzlement before, but the verdict was overturned in 2013 by the European Court of Human Rights. Navalny, as well the media suggest that his second conviction,

⁸⁵ Maria Popova, "Watchdogs or Attack Dogs? The Role of the Russian Courts and the Central Election Commission in the Resolution of Electoral Disputes," *Europe-Asia Studies* 58, no. 3 (2006): 407-411.

⁸⁶ Ivan Jarabinský, "Appearances Are Deceptive: Credibility of the Russian Election Commission," *East European Politics* 31, no. 1 (2015): 99.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 96-98.

⁸⁸ International Election Observation Mission. *Russian Federation – Presidential Election, 18 March 2018 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions*. 19 March 2018.

for which he received only a suspended sentence was only done to disqualify him from the electoral process as candidate's with criminal records are prohibited from running for office in Russia.⁸⁹ A similar strategy was also employed in 2012, when two opponents of Vladimir Putin, Grigory Yavlinsky and Dmitry Mezentsev, were disqualified from becoming candidates by the RCEC. In this case, the RCEC determined that Yavlinksy and Mezentsev had faked signatures to achieve the two million signatures required for candidature at the time, which both candidates disputed.⁹⁰ Political opponents to President Putin also face the risk of violence and loss of life. For example, Boris Nemtsov, a political opponent to President Putin who was rising in popularity and intended to compete for the Russian Presidency of 2016 was murdered in 2015.⁹¹

Given the reality that effective opposition candidates will inevitably be squashed during Russian elections, many candidates demonstrate a fatalist approach during the election process. Leading up to the election, opposition candidates would publicly suggest the idea that Putin would be elected and that they would not win.⁹² During the election, Ksenai Sobchak, an opposition candidate who eventually received only 1.6 percent of the vote, said to the media "I'm quite realistic: [In a] casino, [the] casino

⁸⁹ Saim Saeed, "Russian Opposition Leader Barred from Running in 2018 Election," Politico, February 08, 2017, accessed February 01, 2019, <https://www.politico.eu/article/russian-opposition-leader-barred-from-running-in-2018-election/>.

⁹⁰ Miriam Elder. "Russian Liberal Leader Faces Exclusion from Presidential Election." The Guardian. January 23, 2012. Accessed February 01, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/23/russian-liberal-exclusion-presidential-election>.

⁹¹ Cristina Maza, "U.S. Lawmakers Condemn Russia for Murdering Political Opponents, Call for Investigation into Nemtsov Death," Newsweek, March 13, 2019, , accessed March 14, 2019, <https://www.newsweek.com/us-lawmakers-condemn-russia-government-murder-political-opponents-boris-1361501>.

⁹² International Election Observation Mission. *Russian Federation – Presidential Election, 18 March 2018 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions*. 19 March 2018.

always wins. In Russian elections, Putin always wins.”⁹³ Some analysts of Russian elections also assert that such opposition candidates specifically run “to generate votes that could be reallocated to the winner-apparent without the risk of being challenged by the “loser” in the courts, the media, etc.”⁹⁴

Media Control

Another characteristic of Russian election is the ruling party’s control over the media narrative throughout the electoral process. Centralization of the media has been a gradual process in Russia. Since the early 2000s, Putin has sought to concentrate all major media corporations under the ownership of a select few of his loyalists.⁹⁵ Putin’s strategy has been successful in ensuring that that the top three Russian broadcasters are now under the direct influence of the government. The heads of these broadcasters have been tightly integrated into Putin’s political staff who have met with them on a weekly basis to discuss how the week’s news should be covered since the early 2000s.⁹⁶ This media strategy continues to be effective as television continues to be the primary news source for the Russian population with 86% of the population stating they watch national television news for news and only 33% stating they view the news online.⁹⁷

⁹³ Zachary Gross. "Opposition Candidates in the 2018 Russian Presidential Election: A Primer." Foreign Policy Research Institute. March 13, 2018. Accessed February 04, 2019. <https://www.fpri.org/article/2018/03/opposition-candidates-2018-russian-presidential-election-primer/>.

⁹⁴ Rodion Skovoroda and Tomila Lankina, "Fabricating Votes for Putin: New Tests of Fraud and Electoral Manipulations from Russia," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 33, no. 2 (2016): 117-118.

⁹⁵ Maria Lipman, Anna Kachkaeva, and Michael Poyker, "Media in Russia," in *The New Autocracy: Information, Politics, and Policy in Putin's Russia* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press), 159.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 177.

This data is consistent with the OSCE observation mission's assessment that state-owned or supported media outlets were the dominant source of political information for Russian citizens.⁹⁸ The overall impact of the centralized control of the media by the state is that the political discount is limited and there are little to no opportunities for "critical analytical coverage" of election candidates or debates.⁹⁹ As a result, election related broadcasting is primarily positive towards Putin, and negative towards all other candidates. Further, the media placed a significant focus on Vladimir Putin's official duties during the election and devoted approximately 40% of political coverage to him.¹⁰⁰ This coverage is significant as it allows Putin to command the media narrative on a daily basis and to project an image of himself as "firmly in charge – a guarantor of social and political stability and the country's ultimate problem solver – while destroying faith in any alternative."¹⁰¹

Independent election polling data was also not available during the 2018 Presidential elections. The only independent Russian polling firm, The Levada Centre, stopped publishing polling data after the Russian Justice Ministry determined it was a "foreign agent."¹⁰² In 2014, the Russian government passed a law which bans all organizations deemed "foreign agents" from working with electoral candidates or

⁹⁸ International Election Observation Mission. *Russian Federation – Presidential Election, 18 March 2018 Election Observation Mission Final Report*. 6 June 2018.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Maria Lipman, Anna Kachkaeva, and Michael Poyker, "Media in Russia," in *The New Autocracy: Information, Politics, and Policy in Putin's Russia* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press), 167.

¹⁰² Zachary Gross. "Opposition Candidates in the 2018 Russian Presidential Election: A Primer." Foreign Policy Research Institute. March 13, 2018. Accessed February 04, 2019. <https://www.fpri.org/article/2018/03/opposition-candidates-2018-russian-presidential-election-primer/>.

participating in election campaigns.¹⁰³ By controlling the media's access to polling data, leaders in authoritarian regimes are able to shape the narrative leading up to their eventual successful election outcomes.

Kalinin's study of the Russian Presidential election in 2012 notes the role that pre-election polls played in "guaranteeing the credibility of rigged electoral outcomes for the autocrat."¹⁰⁴ Kalinin further notes that the government manufactured polling data is then used as a target that regional governors are expected to achieve to show loyalty to the ruling leader in attempt to win favour and benefits.¹⁰⁵ Publishing falsified pre-election polling data is therefore a viable strategy that can be employed in target countries of manipulation. In these situations, leaders are then able to use pre-election polling data to justify the legitimacy of their successful election outcome. However, to be successful in this approach, competing versions of pre-election polls must be suppressed to control the narrative. By comparison, if an autocrat's election data was significantly different than pre-election polling data, there would likely be serious questions raised about how a miraculous change in voter preferences tookplace overnight.

Voting Irregularities

Another common theme in Russian electoral processes is a wide range of voting irregularities during voting and when ballots are counted. This trend continued during the

¹⁰³ Elena Mukhametshina, Svetlana Bocharova, and Olga Churakova, "Russia's Independent Levada Center Says It Won't Publish New Polling Data until after the Presidential Election Because of Its 'foreign Agent' Status," Meduza, January 16, 2018, accessed February 04, 2019, <https://meduza.io/en/news/2018/01/16/russia-s-independent-levada-center-says-it-won-t-publish-new-polling-data-until-after-the-presidential-election>.

¹⁰⁴ Kirill Kalinin, "Linking Preference Falsification and Election Fraud in Electoral Autocracies: The Case of Russia," *Political Studies* 66, no. 1 (2017): 95.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 87-92

2018 presidential election during which the OSCE election observation team noted multiple cases of ballot box stuffing and group voting.¹⁰⁶ For example, in Yakutia, voters were captured on video stuffing ballot boxes.¹⁰⁷ Yakutia is a vast region in Russia's north with a population of nearly one million at a density of 0.31 persons per kilometer squared with nearly 20% of its population living in areas with no access to polling stations.¹⁰⁸ These isolated populations that have a reduced ability to communicate to the outside world are ideal locations for voting irregularities to take place as election observers are less likely to visit them, and the population has little means to raise concerns about the process. In other regions, some voters found themselves removed from the voting list and therefore unable to vote as they were listed as individuals who had either died or left the country.¹⁰⁹ Other voting irregularities appeared in the vote counting stage where 13% of observed polling stations were assessed negatively by the OSCE observation mission.¹¹⁰ Further, some observers indicated cases of suspected vote rigging took place as evidenced by numerous polling locations reporting exact figures of 85%, 90%, and 95% voter turnout. One and a half million votes also mysteriously appeared and were added to the final vote count.¹¹¹ These results are suspicious as a significantly higher voter turnout

¹⁰⁶ International Election Observation Mission. *Russian Federation – Presidential Election, 18 March 2018 Election Observation Mission Final Report*. 6 June 2018.

¹⁰⁷ Chloe Chaplain. "Russian Officials Filmed 'putting Fake Voting Slips into Ballot Boxes'." Evening Standard. March 19, 2018. Accessed February 04, 2019. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/russian-election-video>

¹⁰⁸ Max Seddon. "Russian Elections: How Putin Reaches Voters at the End of the Earth." Financial Times. March 16, 2018. Accessed February 04, 2019. <https://www.ft.com/content/7f6da330>

¹⁰⁹ Mikhail Zelensky. "The Results of Russia's 2018 Presidential Election Putin's Record Support, Purged 'dead Souls,' and a Second 'Crimea Referendum'." Meduza. March 19, 2018. Accessed February 04, 2019. <https://meduza.io/en/feature/2018/03/19/the-results-of-russia-s-2018-presidential-election>.

¹¹⁰ International Election Observation Mission. *Russian Federation – Presidential Election, 18 March 2018 Election Observation Mission Final Report*. 6 June 2018.

¹¹¹ Andrew Roth. "Vladimir Putin Secures Record Win in Russian Presidential Election." The Guardian. March 19, 2018. Accessed February 04, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/19/vladimir-putin-secures-record-win-in-russian-presidential-election>

than average that also has higher than average support for the ruling party points towards falsified data, which has been a common feature of Russian elections.¹¹² Further, instances of violence against individuals monitoring elections were also reported at certain polling stations.¹¹³ This type of behaviour also occurs in regional elections. In 2018, the results of a regional election in Russia's Primorsky region were thrown out by the Central Election Commission for several procedural violations including allegations of the incumbent rewriting voting protocols, vote buying and significant ballot counting irregularities.¹¹⁴

Another Russian strategy to avoid potentially unfavorable results in elections has been to simply delay elections to prevent power loss or to hold the election during a more favourable time. For example, the elections for the governor of Khakassia (a region in Siberia) was temporarily blocked from proceeding to second-round ballots as, Valentin Konovalov, an opposition candidate to Putin's ruling party, United Russia, won the first-round ballot. After a month-long delay, the second-round election finally took place, at which point Konovalov was the only candidate remaining on the ballot and therefore won by default.¹¹⁵ In some instances, election dates have been altered to produce more favorable outcomes for the ruling party. For example, during the State Duma elections of 2016, the traditional election date in December was changed to September. This change

¹¹² Neil Robinson. *Contemporary Russian Politics*. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018), 188.

¹¹³ Andrew Roth. "Vladimir Putin Secures Record Win in Russian Presidential Election." *The Guardian*. March 19, 2018. Accessed February 04, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/19/vladimir-putin-secures-record-win-in-russian-presidential-election>.

¹¹⁴ Yuri Smityuk. "Russia's Strangest Election All Year The Communist Candidate Was Winning Primorsky Krai's Gubernatorial Race - until the Last Minute." *Meduza*. September 17, 2018. Accessed February 01, 2019. <https://meduza.io/en/feature/2018/09/17/russia-s-strangest-election-all-year>.

¹¹⁵ Andrew Roth. "Communist Challenger Exposes Cracks in Putin's Grip on Power." *The Guardian*. October 13, 2018. Accessed February 01, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/13/communist-challenge-exposes-cracks-putins-power>.

meant that many students would be on vacation, and therefore away from their assigned polling stations which overall decreased the number of citizens who would be more likely to vote for opposition parties.¹¹⁶ Overall, the strategies Russia uses to manipulate its domestic electoral processes and political institutions will be relevant in Sub-Saharan Africa as Russia exports political consultants and operatives to countries such as Zimbabwe and Madagascar to support Russia's preferred candidates.¹¹⁷ Given Russia's familiarity with mechanisms such as controlling media narratives including pre-election polls, suppressing opposition candidates, vote manipulation, it is logical that these tried and tested methods might be applied elsewhere.

Russian Foreign Electoral Influence

Russian influence on the American Presidential elections of 2016 is one of the most reported on examples of Russian foreign influence in recent history among other examples of Russian influence targets. The Mueller investigation into the 2016 election highlights the Russian sponsored "social media campaign designed to provoke and amplify social discord in the United States" and "cyber intrusions (hacking) and releases of hacked materials damaging to the Clinton Campaign."¹¹⁸ Russia has also been accused of attempting to manipulate electoral processes during the independence referendum of Crimea in 2014, the 2016 Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom, and France's elections in 2017.¹¹⁹ Outside of electoral influence, Russia has also been accused of a

¹¹⁶ Neil Robinson. *Contemporary Russian Politics*. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018), 193.

¹¹⁷ Andrey Maslov and Vadim Zaytsev, "What's Behind Russia's Newfound Interest in Zimbabwe," Carnegie Moscow Center, November 14, 2018, accessed February 25, 2019, <https://carnegie.ru/commentary/77707>.

¹¹⁸ Robert Mueller. *Report on the Investigation into Russian Interference in the 2016 Presidential Election*. (Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Justice, 2019), 4.

¹¹⁹ Rick Noack. "Everything We Know so Far about Russian Election Meddling in Europe." *The Washington Post*. January 10, 2018. Accessed March 14, 2019.

range of foreign influence activities ranging from as sponsoring a coup attempt in Montenegro in 2016 to attempt to prevent it from joining NATO to supporting the social media campaign behind the Gilet Jaune protests in France in 2018 and 2019.¹²⁰

The United States Intelligence Community characterizes the Russian strategy to influence American elections in 2016 as a “messaging strategy that blends covert intelligence operations—such as cyber activity—with overt efforts by Russian Government agencies, state-funded media, third-party intermediaries, and paid social media users or “trolls.”¹²¹ While the specific results achieved by Russia’s campaign in the United States may never be fully quantified, the influence the events have had in dominating the news media is significant. The results of judicial and government investigations into key personnel within President Trumps’ inner circle and the indictment of Russian agents have raised public awareness of this approach. Notably, the keystone of Russia’s influence strategy was to leverage internet-enabled news media and social media to spread its desired information campaign that would lead to the election of Russia’s preferred candidate, President Trump. This type of influence strategy is likely to manifest in sub-Saharan Africa as well. Chairman of the Russian State Duma, Vyacheslav Volodin stated “it is necessary to take certain steps together for the Russian media to work on the African continent” communicating a vision of Russian media

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/01/10/everything-we-know-so-far-about-russian-election-meddling-in-europe/?utm_term=.eb7546cc2f81.

¹²⁰ Rhys Blakley. “Russian accounts fuel French outrage online,” *The Times*. December 8, 2018. Accessed March 14, 2019. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/russian-accounts-fuel-protesters-outrage-online-xx2f2g8th>

¹²¹ Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Intelligence Community Assessment. *Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections*. (January 2017), ii. https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA_2017_01.pdf

organizations broadcasting in African languages on the continent.¹²² This statement may serve to signal an increase in Russian efforts to dominate news media narratives in a similar fashion to the American election of 2016.

Summary

A study of the methods by which Russia controls its own domestic electoral processes provides insight into what strategies might be exported to chosen African countries where Russia seeks to gain influence. Manipulating aspects of election processes such as by limiting the participation of unfavourable candidates through threats and violence or influencing their actions through bribery and extortion, manipulating the media narrative to support a preferred leader, and deliberately causing voting irregularities are all methods that could likely be effective in Africa. Investigation reports from United States' analysis of its 2016 election also point to the extensive use of cyber warfare and internet-enabled information operations to shift public perception of electoral candidates. While Russian strategies have been effective in allowing Putin to maintain control of his own regime, an analysis of the characteristics of African electoral processes and voter behaviour is required to assess whether these strategies will translate into results.

¹²² Russia. State Duma. "Development of Interaction between Russia and African Countries Was Discussed in the State Duma." State Duma. November 19, 2018. Accessed February 19, 2019. <http://duma.gov.ru/en/news/28831/>.

CHAPTER 5: AFRICAN VULNERABILITIES

Democratic governments are relatively new in Sub-Saharan Africa due to Africa's colonial past. In evaluating the evolution of democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa, a diverging trend emerges. Certain countries such as Benin, Cape Verde and Ghana have embraced democratic processes and good governance, while others have struggled.¹²³ Countries that have effectively embraced democracy can be characterized by multi-party competition in elections, and fairly elected legislatures that provide meaningful input into government decision-making.¹²⁴ On the other hand, Countries such as Zimbabwe have "suffered from party-system instability, violence surrounding episodes of political competition, and the deeper entrenchment of autocracy."¹²⁵ The Polity IV dataset provides an overview of governance and authority characteristics of nations for comparison purposes. The data in Table 5.1 is an extract from the Polity IV dataset, which categorizes countries as either autocratic, anocratic and democratic.¹²⁶ Multiple definitions of anocracy exist, however, a relevant description of this quality of governance is "regimes with nominally democratic institutions, such as legislatures, that allow the co-option of competing political groups."¹²⁷ Regime types are classified as either open or closed. Closed regimes refer to those where "executives are determined by hereditary succession," and Open regimes refer to those where executives "are chosen by

¹²³ Kennedy Ochieng' Opalo, "African Elections: Two Divergent Trends," *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 3 (2012): 80, doi:10.1353/jod.2012.0039.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹²⁶ Center for Systemic Peace. "The Polity Project." Polity IV Regime Trends: Myanmar (Burma), 1948-2013. 2018. Accessed February 07, 2019. <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html>.

¹²⁷ Patrick M. Regan and Sam R. Bell, "Changing Lanes or Stuck in the Middle: Why Are Anocracies More Prone to Civil Wars?" *Political Research Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (2009): 748.

elite designation, competitive election, or transitional arrangements between designation and election.”¹²⁸

Table 5.1 – Polity IV Scores for African Countries (2017 Data)

Country	Democracy Score	Autocracy Score	Polity Classification
Eswatini	0	9	Autocracy
Eritrea	0	7	Autocracy
Libya	0	-7	Autocracy
Cameroon	1	4	Closed Anocracy
Chad	1	4	Closed Anocracy
Egypt	1	4	Closed Anocracy
Morocco	1	4	Closed Anocracy
Rwanda	1	4	Closed Anocracy
Sudan	1	4	Closed Anocracy
Angola	2	4	Closed Anocracy
Congo Brazzaville	2	4	Closed Anocracy
Mauritania	1	3	Closed Anocracy
South Sudan	2	4	Closed Anocracy
Togo	1	3	Closed Anocracy
Burundi	2	3	Closed Anocracy
Uganda	1	2	Closed Anocracy
Algeria	3	1	Open Anocracy
Ethiopia	2	1	Open Anocracy
DRC	4	1	Open Anocracy
Gabon	4	1	Open Anocracy
Mozambique	4	1	Open Anocracy
Tanzania	4	1	Open Anocracy
Djibouti	5	1	Open Anocracy
Guinea	5	1	Open Anocracy
Guinea-Bissau	5	1	Open Anocracy
Côte d'Ivoire	5	1	Open Anocracy
Nigeria	5	1	Open Anocracy
Somalia	5	1	Open Anocracy
Zimbabwe	5	1	Open Anocracy
Gambia	5	0	Open Anocracy
Madagascar	6	1	Open Anocracy
Mali	6	1	Open Anocracy
Niger	6	1	Open Anocracy

Source: Center for Systemic Peace. "The Integrated Network for Societal Conflict Research Data Page." 2018. Accessed February 07, 2019. <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>.

¹²⁸ Center for Systemic Peace. "Polity IV Project: Dataset Users Manual." 2018. Accessed April 29, 2019. <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>.

While many of the countries in Table 5.1 are rated poorly, all of them except Eritrea and Eswatini hold elections to select their head of state. The issue, however, is that the processes and institutions supporting democratic elections are often manipulated to support the maintenance of power by current leaders. It is in the interest of the leaders in these countries, however, to present the image of being a democratic, fair and open society. Leaders who are believed to have unjustly won democratic elections often face significant challenges in the international community following elections. Economic sanctions and public condemnation are punishments that states may face should they find themselves in the position that they are decreed as undemocratic. The United Nations, European Union (EU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and African Union (AU) have all declared an interest in promoting democratic principles within Africa. Article 23 of the AU constitution states

any Member State that fails to comply with the decisions and policies of the Union may be subjected to other sanctions, such as the denial of transport and communications links... and other measures of a political and economic nature to be determined by the Assembly.¹²⁹

Further, the EU applies sanctions and suspends economic agreements with nations that engage in “grave and persistent breaches of human rights, the rule of law or democratic principles.”¹³⁰

¹²⁹ African Union. *Constitutive Act of the African Union*. (2000)

¹³⁰ Andrea Charron and Clara Portela, "The UN, Regional Sanctions and Africa," *International Affairs* 91, no. 6 (2015): 1369, doi:10.1111/1468-2346.12452.

As the African economy as whole is largely dependent on commodity exports, avoiding such sanctions is desirable for leaders who wish to maintain their position of power. Sanctions reduce economic performance resulting in increases to poverty, inequality and civil unrest. Von Soest and Wahman's analysis of the effectiveness of democratic sanctions found that sanctions have historically been effective in increasing democratic performance in existing democracies and increase probability that authoritarian leaders will lose power.¹³¹ Neither of these outcomes are desirable for strongman style leaders that wish to maintain their position of dominance. Therefore, such leaders have an interest in maintaining an appearance of democratic elections and ensuring that their efforts to manipulate their outcomes are undetected. Two primary strategies exist to achieve this aim. First, leaders may seek to influence voters to re-elect them through both legitimate and manipulative tactics. Second, leaders may seek to manipulate the electoral process itself through creating voting irregularities or manipulating electoral bodies that oversee the conduct of elections among other means. To understand how this impact may be achieved, it is therefore necessary to understand the nature of voter behaviour and electoral processes in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Voter Behaviour in Africa

Three dominant influences on voter behaviour in Sub-Saharan Africa emerge from a review of academic research on the topic: Vote Buying, Ethnicity/Religion and Media Influence. Acknowledging it is problematic to paint all of sub-Saharan Africa with a broad brush in terms of understanding the behaviour of African voters, these trends

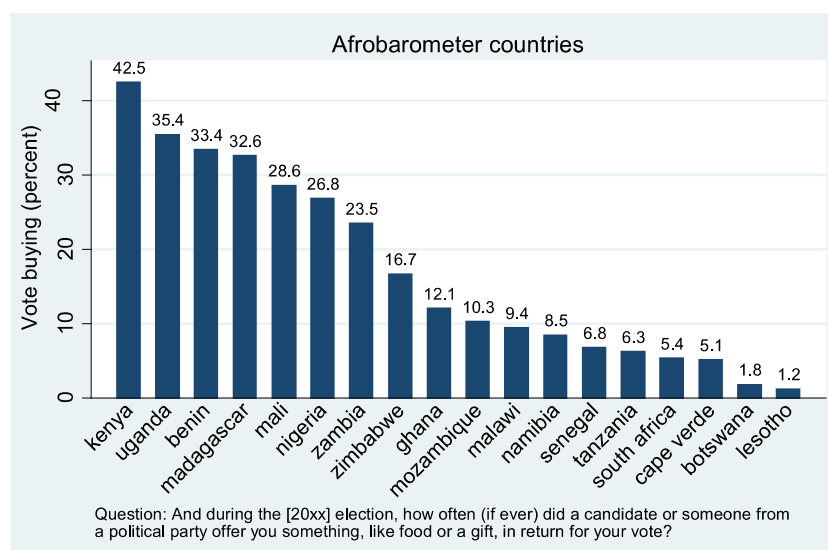
¹³¹ Christian Von Soest, and Michael Wahman. "The Underestimated Effect of Democratic Sanctions." E-International Relations. April 26, 2014. Accessed February 07, 2019. <https://www.e-ir.info/2014/04/26/the-underestimated-effect-of-democratic-sanctions/>.

appear identified in several studies despite differences in culture, political structure, level of development and election format. Understanding the primary influences on African voters is significant due to the risk of “democratic reversal” caused by the election of an authoritarian-minded leader.¹³² Further, this knowledge may aid democratically-minded nations to identify methods that may be employed by Russia to manipulate African election outcomes to their favour might be countered.

Vote buying can be defined as “the direct exchange at the individual level of rewards and material goods by political patrons in return for electoral support by voters.”¹³³ This form of political clientelism is a common feature of many democratic electoral processes in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin

America, especially in new democracies facing conditions of widespread poverty. Vote buying tactics may involve incentives to vote for certain candidates such as receiving

Figure 5.2 Frequency of Population Experiencing Vote Buying in African Countries



Source: Peter Sandholt Jensen and Mogens K. Justesen, "Poverty and Vote Buying: Survey-based Evidence from Africa," *Electoral Studies* 33 (2014): 220-222, doi:10.1016/j.electstud.2013.07.020.

¹³² Michelle Kuenzi and Gina M. S. Lambright, "Voter Turnout in Africa's Multiparty Regimes," *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 6 (2007): 666, doi:10.1177/0010414006288969.

¹³³ Peter Sandholt Jensen and Mogens K. Justesen, "Poverty and Vote Buying: Survey-based Evidence from Africa," *Electoral Studies* 33 (2014): 220-221, doi:10.1016/j.electstud.2013.07.020.

direct cash or supplies such as food and fertilizer, but can include retribution for those who fail to comply.¹³⁴ These tactics are most effective in rural polling locations where international election observation teams seldom visit and where populations are vulnerable.¹³⁵ Figure 5.2 shows the frequency of the population has experienced vote buying in certain African countries.¹³⁶

While vote buying as a tactic is most common in impoverished regions, the effectiveness in producing desired outcomes is more difficult to measure. Distributions of money or gifts amongst poor populations are often part of electoral campaigns however, the direct effectiveness of them is not fully known as they are “unenforceable deals.”¹³⁷ Vincente conducted a field experiment to assess the impact of vote buying and clientelism in Benin and Sao Tome and Principe. Overall, the results of Vincente’s research demonstrate that clientelism, “the exchange of votes for favours conditional on being elected (e.g. jobs in the public sector)” was an effective strategy for incumbents that make individual or community level promises as part of their election campaigns.¹³⁸ Further, he concluded that vote buying increases the rate of voter turnout and that it had a

¹³⁴ Kassie Bracken and Michael Downey, "How a Peaceful Election in Zimbabwe Turned Violent | Dispatches," *New York Times*, August 02, 2018, accessed February 07, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtNEkRCJssc>.

¹³⁵ P. C. Vicente and L. Wantchekon, "Clientelism and Vote Buying: Lessons from Field Experiments in African Elections," *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 25, no. 2 (2009): 300-301, doi:10.1093/oxrep/grp018.

¹³⁶ Peter Sandholt Jensen and Mogens K. Justesen, "Poverty and Vote Buying: Survey-based Evidence from Africa," *Electoral Studies* 33 (2014): 220-222, doi:10.1016/j.electstud.2013.07.020.

¹³⁷ Danielle Resnick, "Opposition Parties and the Urban Poor in African Democracies," *Comparative Political Studies* 45, no. 11 (2012): 1354.

¹³⁸ P. C. Vicente and L. Wantchekon, "Clientelism and Vote Buying: Lessons from Field Experiments in African Elections," *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 25, no. 2 (2009): 293.

significant effect on increasing voter intentions towards supporting the incumbent buying votes.¹³⁹

Not only is vote buying employed in elections, but it is also used to gain the votes of representatives within state legislatures to support presidential laws. For example, in 2005 Uganda's President, Yoweri Museveni paid members of parliament USD \$2,000 each to vote in his favour for the elimination of the presidential term limit.¹⁴⁰ This strategy has also been observed in Nigerian Senate and House of Assembly.¹⁴¹ This strategy, however, is not a viable approach in the long term due to the long term effect of "patronage inflation" if vote buying is used consistently in legislative institutions.¹⁴² As a result, there are benefits to ensuring that elections for legislative assemblies result in outcomes that favour the ruling head of state's affiliated political party. Vote buying, however, may not be as viable a strategy in the context of elections for legislative representatives as they are elected in much greater numbers. For example, Zimbabwe holds elections for a total of 350 representatives to its legislature (80 Senators and 270 Members of Parliament).¹⁴³ Given these numbers, vote buying may not always be the most effective tool when considering options to manipulate election outcomes outside of

¹³⁹ P. C. Vicente and L. Wantchekon, "Clientelism and Vote Buying: Lessons from Field Experiments in African Elections," *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 25, no. 2 (2009): 300-302, doi:10.1093/oxrep/grp018.

¹⁴⁰ Ioannis Gatsiounis, "Uganda Term-limits Bill Grandfathers Museveni," *The Washington Times*, April 23, 2012, accessed April 29, 2019, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/apr/23/uganda-term-limits-bill-grandfathers-museveni/>.

¹⁴¹ Sakariyau Rauf Tunde, Aliu Fatima Lawal, and Adamu Muhammed, "The Phenomenon of Money Politics and Nigeria's Democratization: An Exploration of the Fourth Republic," *Journal of Social Economics Research* 2, no. 1 (2015): 4, doi:10.18488/journal.35/2015.2.1/35.1.1.9.

¹⁴² Kennedy Ochieng' Opalo, "African Elections: Two Divergent Trends," *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 3 (2012): 84, doi:10.1353/jod.2012.0039.

¹⁴³ Parliament of Zimbabwe. "National Assembly - Members." Parliament of Zimbabwe. 2019. Accessed February 07, 2019. <https://www.parlzim.gov.zw/members-of-parliament/members>.

head of state elections. Instead, vote buying may be most effective when there is a close vote and the marginal benefit of a purchased votes is high.

Ethnicity and race have also been identified as a contributor to voting behaviour in elections. In 2009, Carlson conducted a study of Ugandan voter preferences to evaluate the impact of co-ethnicity in elections. Her results indicated that co-ethnic candidates were selected by survey participants 60 per cent of the time under conditions of voter privacy.¹⁴⁴ Similar results were also reached in Gutiérrez-Romero's study of the Kenyan Presidential elections of 2007, which indicated that ethnicity influenced voting intentions more greatly than any other indicator of identity.¹⁴⁵ Race and ethnicity also emerged as issues in the 2008 Zimbabwean elections where it was used as a strategy to mobilize populations to vote for candidates.¹⁴⁶ These results are not surprising given the long history of ethnicity based violence and genocide that has affected numerous countries in Africa. The theory of "Retrospective Economic Voting" applies in these situations, which posits that voters will vote for an incumbent based on their past performance in improving their economic and social outcomes.¹⁴⁷

Media Influence in African Countries

¹⁴⁴ Elizabeth Carlson, "Identifying and Interpreting the Sensitivity of Ethnic Voting in Africa," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 80, no. 4 (2016): 848, doi:10.1093/poq/nfw034.

¹⁴⁵ Roxana Gutiérrez-Romero, "To What Extent Did Ethnicity and Economic Issues Matter in the 2007 Disputed Kenyan Elections?" *Development Policy Review* 31, no. 3 (2013): 302, doi:10.1111/dpr.12008.

¹⁴⁶ Didmus Dewa. "Factors affecting voting behavior and voting patterns in Zimbabwe's 2008 harmonized elections," *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 3, no. 11 (2009): 495.

¹⁴⁷ Danielle Resnick, "Opposition Parties and the Urban Poor in African Democracies," *Comparative Political Studies* 45, no. 11 (2012): 1356.

The media also plays an important role in influencing African voter behaviour in ensuring that citizens are aware of when and where elections will be held, are informed on election issues and the character of candidates for which they may vote. Frère argues that the media plays an important role in supervising “the way the electoral administration was organizing the polls.”¹⁴⁸ Overall, ensuring an independent and open press is essential for democracy. However, African media organizations can often face significant challenges in attempting to fulfill this function. Reporters without Borders summarizes several of the key challenges that reporters face in Africa including: arbitrary censorship, internet cuts, arbitrary arrests of journalists, government violence against the media and lack of financial means to effectively gain, produce and distribute the news to their desired audiences.¹⁴⁹

Unlike North America where television and social media has come to dominate the way citizens receive information about elections, the dominant source of election and political information in Sub-Saharan Africa has tended to come from radio broadcasters. The reliance on radio as a source of news is based on development factors such as access to televisions, mobile phones, and the internet. Especially for those experiencing poverty, radio is often the only form of media access that is affordable.¹⁵⁰ Further, radio may be the only access point for media in rural locations that have limited communications infrastructure, or unreliable access to electricity. Slow penetration of mobile phone

¹⁴⁸ Marie-Soleil Frère. “Covering Post-Conflict Elections: Challenges for the Media in Central Africa,” *Africa Spectrum* 1 (2011): 3.

¹⁴⁹ Reporters without Borders. "Africa: | Reporters without Borders." RSF. 2016. Accessed February 19, 2019. <https://rsf.org/en/africa>.

¹⁵⁰ Otis Thomas and Ephraim Okoro. “An Analysis of the Effect of Social and New Media on Elections’ Outcomes: Interactive Communication among Diverse African Communities,” *International Journal of Business and Social Science* Vol 8 No. 1 (January 2017): 182

technology is another reason why radio may continue to dominate the media in Africa. As of 2017, the mobile phone subscriber rate in Sub-Saharan Africa was reported to be 44%, which is significantly lower than the global average of 66%.¹⁵¹ Further, it is noted that many of these wireless networks are using legacy 2G (77%) and 3G (23%) connections which provide an extremely limited means to access the internet from mobile devices.¹⁵²

Literacy rates are also another important factor that much be considered when evaluating media influence on the voting population. According to the World Bank the aggregate literacy rate for Sub-Saharan Africa is 64%.¹⁵³ Therefore, even if more people had access to internet-based media, a significant proportion of them would not be able to understand it. However, internet transition and text-to-speech services are helping to reduce this barrier. As a result, due to many factors, radio remains the most effective form of media access in Sub-Saharan Africa as the ability to access other sources of information can be much more difficult. Quantitative analyses of African elections support this assertion. Kuenzi and Lambright's study of voter turnout in Africa noted that the number of radios per person in a country had a "positive effect on voter turnout in Africa" as individuals that possessed them would have greater knowledge of election campaigns and understand when and where to vote.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Global System for Mobile Communications Association. *The Mobile Economy: Sub-Saharan African 2018*. (2018), 9.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁵³ World Bank. "Literacy Rate, Adult Total (% of People Ages 15 and Above)." Literacy Rate, Adult Female (% of Females Ages 15 and Above) | Data. 2019. Accessed February 19, 2019. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS?end=2010&locations=ZG-1W-Z4-8S-Z7-ZJ&start=2010&view=bar>.

¹⁵⁴ Michelle Kuenzi and Gina M. S. Lambright, "Voter Turnout in Africa's Multiparty Regimes," *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 6 (2007): 680, doi:10.1177/0010414006288969.

Despite the low cost of radio media compared to television, poor economic conditions still make the development of an effective news media base difficult. Media agencies still require capital to pay reporters, acquire audio visual equipment and computers, which are often not readily available in low income areas with limited economic activity. This means that non-publicly funded radio media must focus on tailoring its programming to produce interested listeners to ensure the station gains sufficient operating revenues through advertising. As a result, some radio stations encourage journalists to use “inflammatory language, exaggerate discord and present shocking news in order to attract audiences.”¹⁵⁵ Since populist strategies rely on gaining the support through an anti-elite discourse that tends to appeal to the disadvantaged poor, they may be more effective in increasing audience sizes and revenues.¹⁵⁶ As a result, populist strategies may become more prevalent amongst private broadcasters in Africa, especially if they are struggling financially.

In some cases, news radio stations have emerged to support specific political ends. For example, in the DRC election of 2006, seven out of thirty-three presidential candidates owned their own radio and television stations in Kinshasa, which broadcasted messages supporting their candidacy.¹⁵⁷ Due to a variety of factors such as a political knowledge, attitudes towards current political leadership and partisan orientation, trust in

¹⁵⁵ Devra C. Moehler and Naunihal Singh, "Whose News Do You Trust? Explaining Trust in Private versus Public Media in Africa," *Political Research Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (2009): 280, doi:10.1177/1065912909349624.

¹⁵⁶ Danielle Resnick, "Opposition Parties and the Urban Poor in African Democracies," *Comparative Political Studies* 45, no. 11 (2012): 1359.

¹⁵⁷ Marie-Soleil Frere. "Elections and Media Constraints in Sub-Saharan Africa. *CMI Brief* vol. 9 no. 4 (2010), 2

the private media in Africa actually tends to be lower than trust in state-owned media.¹⁵⁸

The exception to this rule is that citizens who lived in countries with high levels of corruption and low freedom of the press tended to prefer private media over state owned media sources.¹⁵⁹ Given the vulnerable state of the private news media, these stations may actually present ideal targets for manipulation should they be offered capital in exchange for broadcasting in support of a particular candidate. It is further noted that in regimes where government transparency is low, and where the media have no access to government officials, the quality of news from private broadcasters is frequently low due to lack of access to political information.

¹⁵⁸ Devra C. Moehler and Naunihal Singh, "Whose News Do You Trust? Explaining Trust in Private versus Public Media in Africa," *Political Research Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (2009): 287, doi:10.1177/1065912909349624.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 6: MANIPULATION AND EXPANDING INFLUENCE

In Chapter two and three, this research paper established the historical, political and economic basis for Russia's interest in Africa. Since 2014, indicators of a Russian resurgence in Africa have grown in strength and quantity. While Russia has strengthened its ties specifically with South Africa as part of the BRICS organization, it is also strengthening ties with numerous other African countries through enhancing both bilateral relations and Russia's involvement in African multinational organizations. For example, since 2015, Russia has established over 21 bilateral military cooperation agreements with African countries. Annex A provides a summary of these agreements by locations. Figure 6.1 indicates the African countries where Russia has established a military cooperation deal, and where it has natural resource interests. As an example of Russia's efforts to engage Africa multilaterally, in October 2019, Russia will host the first Russia-Africa Summit in Sochi with African Heads of State, signaling its interest in expanding ties across the continent and with the African Union.

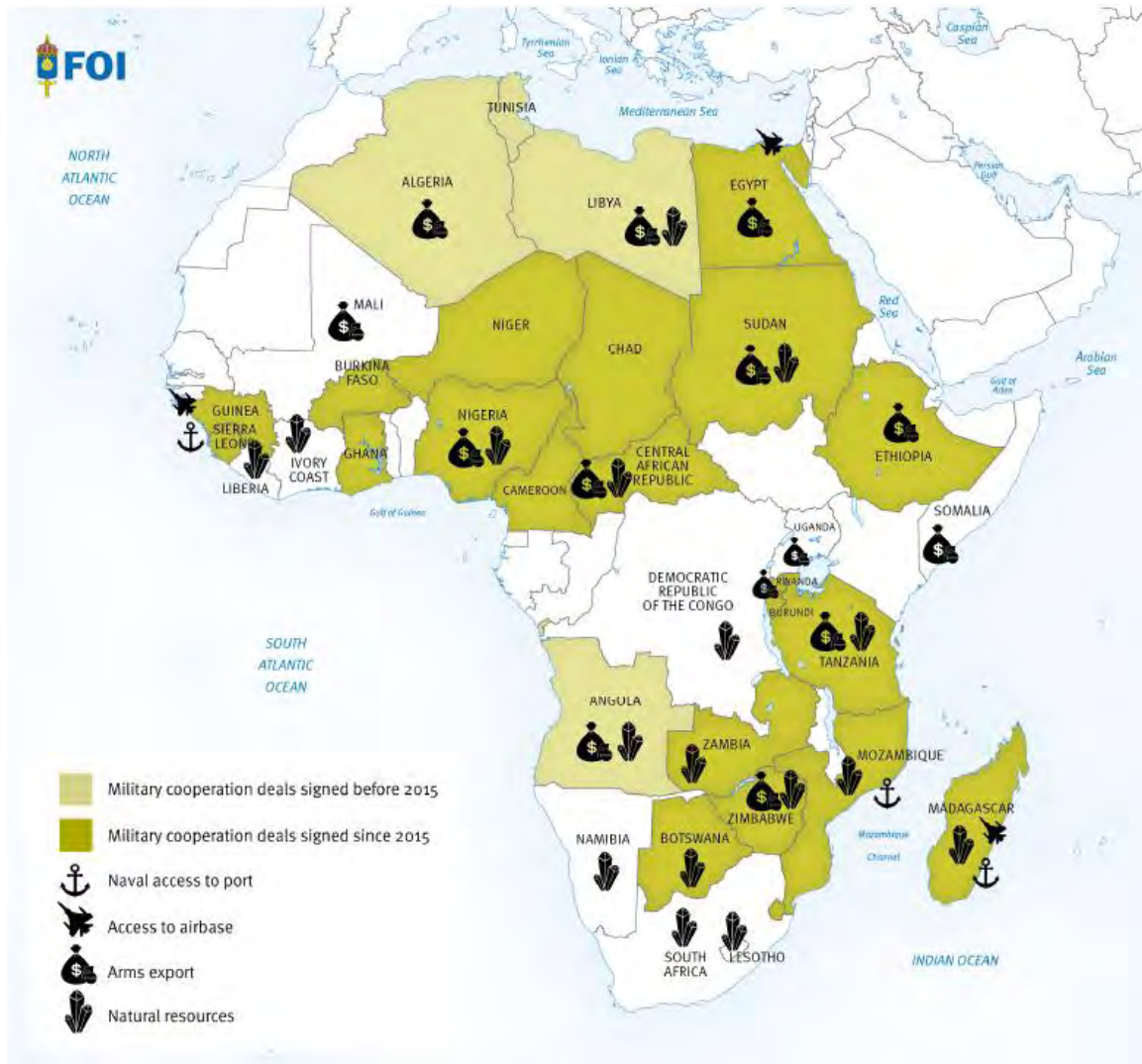
Since 2018, Yevgeny Prigozhin, an ally of Putin made famous for his participation in the annexation of Crimea and being indicted for his role in meddling in the American election of 2016, has been actively engaged in Africa.¹⁶⁰ Journalists documenting his involvement noted Prigozhin and affiliates have been offering electioneering and political consulting services in countries such as DRC, Sudan, Libya,

¹⁶⁰ Neil Macfarquhar, "Yevgeny Prigozhin, Russian Oligarch Indicted by U.S., Is Known as 'Putin's Cook'," *The New York Times*, February 16, 2018, accessed February 07, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/16/world/europe/prigozhin-russia-indictment-mueller.html>.

Madagascar, Angola, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and the CAR.¹⁶¹

The details of many of his activities in these countries are difficult to obtain due to the media and political environment that this paper has highlighted, which make it difficult for local media agencies to report on government activities.

Figure 6.1 - Russia's Military Cooperation and Strategic Interests in Africa



Source: Jakob Hedenskog. "Russia is Stepping Up its Military Cooperation in Africa," *Swedish Defence Research Agency*. (December 2018), 3.

¹⁶¹ Henry Meyer, Ilya Arkhipov, and Aina Rahagalala, "Putin's Notorious 'chef' Is Now Meddling across Africa - BNN Bloomberg," BNN Bloomberg, November 20, 2018, accessed February 07, 2019, <https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/putin-s-chef-is-now-meddling-across-africa-1.1170783>.

Russia's foreign policy minister, Sergei Lavrov has also been active in the continent, having met with Heads of State from Angola, Central African Republic, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe in 2018.¹⁶² While some of Russia's activity on the continent could be considered the execution of typical foreign policy, evidence of Russian involvement that point towards a manipulative agenda have begun to emerge. Russian activities in nations such as Central African Republic, Zimbabwe and Madagascar provide recent examples of how Russia is using political, military and economic aid to strengthen its grip on the leaders of these nations in exchange for benefits such as natural resources exploitation rights.

Russia and Central African Republic

Central African Republic (CAR) has faced significant challenges in addressing ongoing violent conflict within its borders since 2012 when rebel groups broke existing peace agreements. In 2012, a rebel group named Séléka emerged as a violent Muslim extremist organization that committed numerous atrocities against civilian populations and eventually overthrew Bangui, the capital of CAR in 2013 and ousted the President. In 2014, the United Nations deployed a force of approximately 10,000 soldiers to CAR to protect civilian, support rule of law, facilitate humanitarian assistance and

¹⁶² Czerep, Jędrzej. "Russia's Political Offensive in Africa." Polish Institute of International Affairs. November 16, 2018. Accessed February 19, 2019. <https://www.pism.pl/Publications/PISM-Strategic-Files/PISM-Strategic-File-no-1-88>.

peacekeeping.¹⁶³ This force has been successful in helping the CAR government to re-establish itself and secure Bangui. In 2017, CAR's president Faustin Touadéra visited Russia's Foreign Minister Lavarov in Moscow to sign a series of agreements. The intentions behind this visit were manifested the following year. Russia and CAR established a military relationship, which was eventually approved by UN Security Council CAR Sanctions Committee (UNCARSC), allowing ammunition, weapons and military personnel to be sent to the country as of December of 2017.¹⁶⁴ Following approval from the UNCARSC, Russian activities quickly increased in intensity in the country across diplomatic, information, military and economic fronts.

Russia's diplomatic effort in obtaining UNCARSC approval was significant in ensuring that the assistance it would render to the CAR would have legitimacy in the international community given the previous arms embargo that CAR faced. The most significant diplomatic event emerging from Russia's new relationship with CAR was the appointment of Russian diplomat Valery Zakharov as National Security Advisor to CAR's President. This unprecedented arrangement is highly significant due to the political and diplomatic ramifications of having a foreign national operate as one of the chief advisors to CAR's head of state. Given publicly available information on Zakharov's activities, has become involved in managing the state military and activities

¹⁶³ United Nations. "MINUSCA Peacekeeping." United Nations. 2018. Accessed February 19, 2019. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/minusca>.

¹⁶⁴ Daniel Welz. "Russia Builds Military Ties with Africa | DW | 01.06.2018." Deutsche Welle. June 1, 2018. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://www.dw.com/en/russia-builds-military-ties-with-africa/a-44042071>.

ranging from meeting with rebel militia leaders to discuss issues disarmament and natural resource revenue distribution.¹⁶⁵

Since the UN Security Council resolution came into effect, Russia has provided numerous shipments of weapons destined for the CAR Army and Presidential Guard.¹⁶⁶ Further, military personnel have been deployed to CAR to help strengthen and professionalize CAR's forces. Initial numbers of deployed Russian personnel are publicly stated to be only five military personnel, and up to 170 civilian contractors. These numbers include forces that provide training to CAR's military forces, as well as a set of personal bodyguards that have been assigned to protect CAR's President.¹⁶⁷ These civilian contractors are alleged to be members of the Wagner Group, a Russian military private contractor, which has also been linked to Russian military activities in Crimea and Syria as well as Russia's efforts to manipulate the 2016 US Presidential Election.¹⁶⁸ However, as public scrutiny over the use of military contractors in CAR has grown, Russian spokespeople have reframed these soldiers as "military reservists" as of April 2019.¹⁶⁹ The exact role of the Wagner Group personnel is unknown, however, allegations that they have been participating in securing mineral extraction zones. Russian

¹⁶⁵ Aaron Ross. "How Russia Moved into Sub-Saharan Africa." *The Moscow Times*. October 17, 2018. Accessed February 19, 2019. <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/10/17/how-russia-moved-into-sub-saharan-africa>.

¹⁶⁶ United Nations Security Council. *Letter dated 23 July 2018 from the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to resolution 2399*. (30 January 2018), 2.

¹⁶⁷ Marcel Plichta. "Russia Is Back In Africa - and Making Some Very Odd Deals." *Defense One*. May 22, 2018. Accessed April 10, 2019. <https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2018/05/russia-back-africa-and-making-some-very-odd-deals/148371/>.

¹⁶⁸ Ryan Browne. "Top US General Warns Russia Using Mercenaries to Access Africa's Natural Resources." *CNN*. February 07, 2019. Accessed February 19, 2019. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/07/politics/us-russia-mercenaries-africa/index.html>.

¹⁶⁹ Nicolas Haque. "Russia in Africa: Inside a Military Training Centre in CAR," *Al Jazeera News*. April 14, 2019. Accessed April 24, 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/talktojazeera/inthefield/2019/04/russia-africa-military-training-centre-car-190411152658162.html>

contractors also providing security for Russian donated infrastructure such as a hospital in the town of Bria.¹⁷⁰

The provision of training and equipment from Russian military officers and contractors surpasses what had previously been offered by the US and France through the UN as Russian trainers are willing to venture deep into conflict zones to combat the rebel groups that are destabilizing the country.¹⁷¹ The Russian contingent has also faced allegations of torture by local citizens where an individual was taken by CAR military forces, and then interrogated and tortured by Russian military instructors for information.¹⁷²

From an economic perspective, Russian corporations have been highly involved since the onset of Russia's entry into CAR. Since its entry in 2018, the Russian mining company, Lobaye Invest, received prospecting, exploration and mining concessions from the CAR government.¹⁷³ While the involvement of Russian mining corporations is publically communicated as supporting the mutually beneficial development of Central African natural resources such as gold, diamonds and uranium,¹⁷⁴ resource exploitation

¹⁷⁰ United Nations Security Council. *Letter dated 23 July 2018 from the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to resolution 2399*. (30 January 2018), 7.

¹⁷¹ Jack Losh and Owen Mathews, "'Battle for Africa': Russia Pushes into 'free Country for the Taking' in Attempt to Rival the West," *Newsweek*, August 13, 2018, accessed February 04, 2019, <https://www.newsweek.com/2018/08/17/russia-putin-africa-kremlin-central-republic-devastated-power-dynamic-1061066.html>.

¹⁷² Agence France-Presse. "UN Investigates 'Russian Soldier Torture' Case in CAR." *Le Nouveau Centrafrique*. February 13, 2019. Accessed February 22, 2019. <http://www.lanouvellecetrafricque.org/2019/02/13/un-investigates-russian-soldier-torture-case-in-car/>.

¹⁷³ Carl Schreck. "What Are Russian Military Contractors Doing in The Central African Republic?" *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*. August 02, 2018. Accessed April 10, 2019. <https://www.rferl.org/a/explainer-what-russian-military-contractors-are-doing-in-central-african-republic/29405290.html>.

¹⁷⁴ Lefevre, Arnaud. "African Mining for Russia." *NBN*. July 6, 2018. Accessed February 19, 2019. <https://nbn.media/african-mining-for-russia/>.

rights are being offered at a fraction of their market value in exchange for military support in terms of equipment, training and advice. While military support may help to address immediate concerns related to the ongoing conflict in CAR, the discounted sale of mineral extraction rights to Russian corporations means that little is being done to address the weakness of CAR economy. Further, this economic arrangement is likely to perpetuate problems of inequality, poverty and corruption which will continue to set the conditions for destabilization in CAR.

Lobaye Invest has also been involved in helping to realize Russia's manipulation campaign in CAR by funding a new radio station in Bangui called Lengo Songo (translation: build solidarity.)¹⁷⁵ Lengo Songo was publically introduced by local press as "fulfilling its duty to inform, educate and entertain the public, the radio station has emerged as the new pride in the media landscape of the Central African country eager for reconciliation."¹⁷⁶ The Russian embassy in Bangui has also been active in sponsoring local social and cultural events with Russian links to promote Russian influence and reputation in the country. These events include sponsoring the Central Africa Republic Beauty Pageant (which Zakharov presided over), a Children's Soccer Tournament and a drawing and poetry contest, which offered a beach holiday in Crimea to the context winner.¹⁷⁷ Russia has also been actively countering French influence in CAR through an information campaign discrediting the French and celebrating Russia's contributions to

¹⁷⁵ Patricia Huon and Simon Ostrovsky, "Russia, The New Power in Central Africa," Coda Story, February 10, 2019, accessed February 19, 2019, <https://codastory.com/disinformation/russia-new-power-central-africa/>.

¹⁷⁶ Oman Mbiko, "Central African Republic: New Radio Station Promotes Peace," AllAfrica.com, February 06, 2019, accessed February 19, 2019, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201901310711.html>.

¹⁷⁷ Patricia Huon and Simon Ostrovsky, "Russia, The New Power in Central Africa," Coda Story, February 10, 2019, accessed February 19, 2019, <https://codastory.com/disinformation/russia-new-power-central-africa/>.

the country.¹⁷⁸ The result of this campaign has been to bolster the anti-French rhetoric in the CAR media.¹⁷⁹ This campaign has been effective in reducing the strength of French-CAR bilateral ties and has resulted in Russian officials often replacing the French diplomats and officials in CAR's official government ceremonies.

Implications of Russian Manipulation in CAR.

There are several consequences for the international community that may result from Russia's foreign policy actions in CAR. First, CAR's strategic geopolitical location in the heart of Africa with close access to other conflict locations is significant. CAR's neighbors include areas such as Chad, Sudan, South Sudan, Cameroon, DRC and Congo-Brazzaville, all of which have a history of conflict and a wealth of natural resources that Russia may also seek to exploit when the conditions are right. Not surprising, given the strategic location of CAR, Russia is reportedly considering establishing a permanent military base in the country.¹⁸⁰ Should Russia be able to establish a military base and logistical hub in CAR, this facility would be able to provide an operational support hub which would facilitate the transportation of Russian equipment and forces to other regional conflict zones where Russia may seek to expand its influence.

¹⁷⁸ Sergey Sukhankin. "The Kremlin's Game in the CAR: What Does the Façade Conceal?" *The Jamestown Foundation*. January 23, 2019. Accessed February 22, 2019.

<https://jamestown.org/program/the-kremlins-game-in-the-car-what-does-the-facade-conceal/>

¹⁷⁹ *Zambian Observer*. "France Warns Russia: Leave the Central African Republic Because This Country Belongs To Us." *The Zambian Observer*. November 17, 2018. Accessed February 22, 2019.

<https://www.zambianobserver.com/france-warns-russia-leave-the-central-african-republic-because-this-country-belongs-to-us/>.

¹⁸⁰ *PressTV*. "PressTV." *Russia Mulls Opening Military Base in Africa*. January 11, 2019. Accessed April 29, 2019. <https://www.presstv.com/Detail/2019/01/11/585454/Central-African-Republic-Russia-military-base>.

Russian involvement in CAR has also been effective in reducing CAR's affiliation with France, with whom it has maintained close diplomatic relations given CAR's colonial history and membership in La Francophonie. The Russian strategy in CAR may be a test-bed where a successful strategy may be exported to other African nations where Russia seeks to undermine diplomatic relations between African countries and the West. Further, Russia's actions also serve to destabilize past efforts in achieving peace deals with the rebel factions operating in CAR with whom the African Union and Western nations have been involved in negotiations.¹⁸¹ It is also possible that Russia is seeking to destabilize the fragile security situation within Africa. Doing so could complicate development agendas on the continent further to force the West to expend further diplomatic and financial effort to address the situation and counter Russian influence.

Russian Manipulation in Zimbabwe

Since 2014, Russia has also taken an active interest in cultivating its relationship with Zimbabwe, particularly since 2017 during the lead up to the election of President Emmerson Mnangagwa. Compared to the growth of Russia's relationship with CAR where Russia has worked in growing relationships with an existing Head of State, in Zimbabwe, Russia was involved throughout the recent electoral period to help achieve a favourable outcome for Russian interests. Given Russia's Soviet history and ties to the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), which Russia and China have supported since the 1970s, endorsing a candidate from this party was a

¹⁸¹ RFI. "Russia Clashes with France at UN over CAR Peace Moves." November 16, 2018. Accessed April 29, 2019. <http://en.rfi.fr/20181116-russia-clashes-france-un-over-car-peace-moves/>.

logical choice for Russia.¹⁸² Prior to the election, Russia faced allegations that it would attempt to influence the Zimbabwe election in 2017 by the international community. In response, during a visit from the Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov where bilateral deals were signed related to agriculture, mining and political and economic support, he specifically stated that Russia would not play a role in the election.¹⁸³

It was later revealed, however, that Russian political consultants were actively involved in the Zimbabwe election that saw President Mnangagwa become elected by a narrow margin, with only a 36,464 vote lead ahead of the second place candidate.¹⁸⁴ During the campaign, Russian political advisors supported Mnangagwa and his campaign team. During the election period, media reported that up to 64 Russians were operating in the Zimbabwe capital to assist in Mnangagwa's electoral campaign.¹⁸⁵ Further, it was alleged by members of several opposition parties that Chinese associates had played a role in manipulating election data to ensure a victory for ZANU-PF. Associates of Yevgeny Prigozhin (who has also been involved in CAR, Ukraine, Syria and the US Presidential Election manipulation campaign) and other Russian operatives were also involved in shaping the Zimbabwe election.¹⁸⁶ Not only did Russian consultants advise

¹⁸²Alex Magaisa. "Forum Q&A Alex Magaisa on Zimbabwe's Upcoming 2018 Elections." *International Forum for Democratic Studies*. <https://www.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Alex-Magaisa-on-Zimbabwes-Upcoming-2018-Elections.pdf>

¹⁸³ Adrian Frey. "Russia 'will Not Interfere in Zimbabwe Elections'." Club of Mozambique. March 8, 2018. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/russia-will-not-interfere-in-zimbabwe-elections/>.

¹⁸⁴ BBC News. "Zimbabwe Election: Opposition Calls Poll Results a 'coup'." August 03, 2018. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-45055223>.

¹⁸⁵ Andrey Maslov and Vadim Zaytsev, "What's Behind Russia's Newfound Interest in Zimbabwe," Carnegie Moscow Center, November 14, 2018, accessed February 25, 2019, <https://carnegie.ru/commentary/77707>.

¹⁸⁶ Henry Meyer, Ilya Arkhipov, and Aina Rahagalala, "Putin's Notorious 'chef' Is Now Meddling across Africa - BNN Bloomberg," BNN Bloomberg, November 20, 2018, accessed February 07, 2019, <https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/putin-s-chef-is-now-meddling-across-africa-1.1170783>.

Mnangagwa, but they also assumed a role in advising the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC). Prior to the election, the head of the ZEC met with Nikolai Levichev from the RCEC to discuss issues of “electoral sovereignty.”¹⁸⁷ Throughout the election, Mnangagwa’s opponents actively criticized his involvement with Russia, and made allegations of interference and manipulation, for example that Russia was had provided pre-marked voting ballots to voting stations.

The Election Observation Team from the European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM) observed the election and produced an unfavourable report following completion of its mission. The EUEOM report noted significant shortcomings in universal suffrage and voters’ ability to register for, and vote in the elections. Further, the allocation of state resources leading up to the election and the coverage of state media was heavily biased towards the ZANU-PF. The EUCOM report noted that voting processes were also poor, as voting information being transferred in a manner that did not achieve transparency, traceability or verifiability as results were simply entered into an excel spreadsheet and then saved on a CD-ROM rather than official ballot documentation process being followed. Overall, these issues made the “close and contested outcome” non-verifiable and non-contestable in the courts.¹⁸⁸ An American-led Election Monitoring team also noted a lack of transparency in ballot printing, and many similar inconsistencies in ballot counting and results reporting. Further, the election results for the national assembly were also questioned, specifically in that the outcomes resulted in

¹⁸⁷ Andrey Maslov and Vadim Zaytsev, "What's Behind Russia's Newfound Interest in Zimbabwe," Carnegie Moscow Center, November 14, 2018, accessed February 25, 2019, <https://carnegie.ru/commentary/77707>.

¹⁸⁸ European Union Election Observation Mission. *Final Report Republic of Zimbabwe Harmonized Elections 2018*. (European Union, 2018).

the ZANU-F-PF winning the exact amount of seats in the National Assembly required to allow it to amend the Zimbabwe National Constitution.¹⁸⁹

Following the election of President Mnangagwa, ties between Zimbabwe and Russia have grown significantly closer. In March 2018, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov visited Zimbabwe to meet with President Mnangagwa who had recently gained leadership of the country after the resignation of Mugabe. During his trip Lavrov stated

We insist that African problems need African solutions, and the international community should respect the Africans' choice of resolving a conflict, and support them morally, politically and financially in training staff for peacekeeping operations, which Russia has been actively doing.¹⁹⁰

During Minister Lavrov's visit in March, Russia and Zimbabwe established a mining joint venture between Zimbabwe Government and a Russian Mining Consortium based on VI Holdings and Rostec. This deal was enabled by Zimbabwe having just amended its indigenisation laws which previously mandated all natural resource exploitation firms in Zimbabwe to have a majority ownership by a Zimbabwean. The venture in Great Dyke will be backed by the Russian government-owned development bank, *Vnesheconombank* in the

¹⁸⁹ Zimbabwe International Election Observation Mission. *IRI/NDI Zimbabwe International Election Observation Mission Final Report: October 2018*. (Washington, D.C: International Republican Institute and National Democratic Institute, 2018), 10

¹⁹⁰ Ineke Mules. "Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov Makes Zimbabwe Stopover during Africa Tour." Deutsche Welle. March 7, 2018. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://www.dw.com/en/russian-foreign-minister-lavrov-makes-zimbabwe-stopover-during-africa-tour/a-42875110>.

Zimbabwe Great Dyke Region.¹⁹¹ This partnership is strategically significant as the Great Dyke Region is assessed to be the largest deposit of platinum metal groups in the world.¹⁹²

Shortly after President Mnangagwa's rise to power in 2018, he was soon seeking Russian assistance in January of 2019. Amidst extreme civil unrest due to having raised gasoline prices by 150%, rioting and the threat of economic collapse due to a nearly bankrupt government, President Mnangagwa chose to charter a jet to visit President Putin in Russia to seek assistance. With seemingly few additional allies with any amount of power, Zimbabwe found itself in a position where it was in an extremely weak bargaining position as it desperately needed assistance, yet had little to offer other than the rights to its own natural resources. By helping to ensure the ZANU-PF rose to power, and by maintain positive and supportive relations, Russia had crafted situation where it stands to benefit significantly in the long-run, assuming these high-risk investment opportunities pay off.

While the exact content of the discussions between Presidents Putin and Mnagagwa are unknown, the visit resulted in multiple bi-lateral agreements being signed including deals on extradition, intellectual property, property protection, military cooperation, anti-terrorism, Darwendale mining rights and the supply of

¹⁹¹ Denis Manturov. "Russia to Invest in Infrastructure Projects in Africa." Rostec. September 16, 2014. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://rostec.ru/en/news/4514579/>.

¹⁹² Clara Denina and Barbara Lewis, "Russian-Zimbabwean Firm to Invest \$400 Million in Zimbabwe Platinum," Reuters, March 15, 2018, , accessed February 25, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-zimbabwe-mining-platinum/russian-zimbabwean-firm-to-invest-400-million-in-zimbabwe-platinum-idUSKCN1GR222>.

Russian fertilizer to Zimbabwe.¹⁹³ In Russia, Mnangagwa also spoke with the press and invited other Russian firms to invest other resource extraction industries in Zimbabwe such as oil and gas.¹⁹⁴ Shortly after the meeting between the two presidents, Russia's state-owned diamond mining company, Alrosa, announced that it would return to Zimbabwe to develop a new mining projects.¹⁹⁵ Alrosa's investment, however, is made contingent on the Russian firm being granted legal approval to hold a controlling stake of its operations in Zimbabwe,¹⁹⁶ a privilege which other firms such as Rio Tinto and De Beers have been unable to secure. As of 10 April 2019, this deal was formally announced as a four billion dollar (USD) investment into a Russia-Zimbabwe joint venture to develop the Great Dyke platinum group metals mine.¹⁹⁷ This investment also supports Russia's strategic interests as current Russian diamond extraction sites are expected to near exhaustion by the year 2047 and Zimbabwean diamonds have the potential to be extracted more efficiently than many of the diamond reserves located in Russia's

¹⁹³ The Kremlin. "Russia-Zimbabwe Talks." President Of Russia. January 15, 2019. Accessed February 25, 2019. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/59679>.

¹⁹⁴ Latham, Brian, Stepan Kravchenko, and Godfrey Marawanyika. "Mnangagwa Seeks Cash in Russia as Zimbabwe Slides Into Chaos." Bloomberg.com. January 15, 2019. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-01-15/with-president-mnangagwa-in-russia-zimbabwe-descends-into-chaos>.

¹⁹⁵ Latham, Brian, Stepan Kravchenko, and Godfrey Marawanyika. "Mnangagwa Seeks Cash in Russia as Zimbabwe Slides Into Chaos." Bloomberg.com. January 15, 2019. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-01-15/with-president-mnangagwa-in-russia-zimbabwe-descends-into-chaos>.

¹⁹⁶ Barbara Lewis and Eric Onstad. "Russian diamond miner Alrosa wants controlling stake to mine in Zimbabwe," *Reuters*. March 18, 2019. Accessed March 23, 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mining-alrosa-zimbabwe/russian-diamond-miner-alrosa-wants-controlling-stake-to-mine-in-zimbabwe-idUSKCN1QZ1N6>

¹⁹⁷ Bloomberg. "Zimbabwe, Russia Finalise Deal for \$4bn Platinum Mine." Mining Weekly. April 10, 2019. Accessed April 10, 2019. <http://www.miningweekly.com/article/zimbabwe-russia-finalise-deal-for-4bn-platinum-mine-2019-04-10>.

North.¹⁹⁸ In addition to natural resource exploration and extraction rights, the establishment of a permanent Russian military base in Zimbabwe and the provision of Russian weapons to the Zimbabwe military have also been discussed.¹⁹⁹ These types of deals are consistent with China-Zimbabwe bilateral deals that have resulted in strategic air defence systems being deployed on Zimbabwean soil.²⁰⁰ Both the timing and quantity of these deals were criticized by the press as it appeared that Russia has opportunistically “colonized” Zimbabwe.²⁰¹

Implications of Russian involvement in Zimbabwe.

There are several consequences for the international community that result from Russia’s foreign policy actions in Zimbabwe. First, by securing access to the wealth of strategic minerals in Zimbabwe, Russia will have an economic and industrial advantage should it look to expand military production. Second, should Russia establish military infrastructure in Zimbabwe, much like Russia’s plans to establish military infrastructure in CAR, a Russian base in Zimbabwe would provide an operational support hub to facilitate access to other African countries such as Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique. Most importantly Zimbabwe shares a border with South Africa, with whom Russia also shares a strategic interest based on their membership in the BRICS organization, plus

¹⁹⁸ Yuliya Fedorinova. "Russia's Alrosa Returns to Mine in Zimbabwe." BusinessLIVE. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/companies/mining/2019-01-14-russias-alrosa-returns-to-mine-in-zimbabwe/>.

¹⁹⁹ Dzirutwe MacDonald. "Russia Seeks Military Cooperation, Diamond, Platinum Projects In..." Reuters. March 08, 2018. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-zimbabwe-russia/russia-seeks-military-cooperation-diamond-platinum-projects-in-zimbabwe-idUSKCN1GK2JK>.

²⁰⁰ <https://bulawayo24.com/index-id-news-sc-national-byo-143959.html>

²⁰¹ Johan Burger. "The Return of Russia to Africa." The Herald. November 16, 2018. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://www.herald.co.zw/the-return-of-russia-to-africa/>

bilateral discussions for investments such as a Russia-South Africa Nuclear Energy Cooperation deal. By expanding its global network of economic investment to Africa, and involving external sources of financing for development projects such as the Africa Development Bank and Egypt's Afreximbank, Russia is also finding markets where it can invest and trade in currencies other than the US dollar to help insulate Russian investments from the impact of American sanctions.

Russian Manipulation in Madagascar

Recent media reporting also indicates the Russia has also been involved in attempts to manipulate the government of Madagascar. In Madagascar's election in December 2018, six out of Madagascar's 35 presidential candidates were offered money by "dozens" of Russian political strategists in a "systematic and coordinated operation" spanning nearly a year.²⁰² During the political campaign, Russian political strategies asked candidates to incorporate specific political messages into their campaigns in exchange campaign funding and in some cases were even provided Russian bodyguards and asked to withdrawal from the election and back Russia's preferred candidates. Russian operatives were also active in Madagascar communities to help organize anti-France protests in the name of anti-colonialism, offering students money to participate in them.²⁰³ The goal of this influence campaign was to attempt to ensure a presidential

²⁰² Henitsoa Rafalia. "Russian Operatives Offered Money to Multiple Madagascar Presidential Candidates – BBC." The Moscow Times. April 10, 2019. Accessed April 10, 2019. <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/04/09/russian-operatives-offered-money-to-multiple-madagascar-presidential-candidates-bbc-a65153>.

²⁰³ Gaelle Borgia. Executive Producer Stephen Scott. BBC News Africa. *Russia's Madagascar Election Gamble*. Documentary. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wH64iztZM0&feature=youtu.be&t=384>

candidate would win the election that would be willing to consider shifting Madagascar's alignment with France and the West towards Russia.

As President Andry Rajoelina only came to power in Madagascar in late-December 2018, it is difficult to determine the impact of Russia's campaign of manipulation. While some media reports indicate Russia would have preferred the election of the incumbent, former President Hery Rajaonarimampianina, election coverage reporting indicated that multiple candidates were financed by Russia, including Rajoelina.²⁰⁴ Should Russia have been successful in co-opting Madagascar's new president, this outcome would be beneficial in further expanding Russian influence in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as the potential to influence resource extraction deals for Madagascar's nickel, cobalt, chromite and uranium reserves. Resource exploitation in Madagascar is significant for Russia as it has already invested significantly in Madagascar's state-owned mining company, Kraoma which has been mired in strikes and financial difficulties for months since Madagascar's entered into a contract with Russian firm Ferrum Mining to take over mine operations. With a political ally in control of Madagascar, this long-standing dispute may finally be resolved in Russia's favour.

Growing Russian Influence

Russian influence in sub-Saharan is growing. Through a combination of manipulative diplomatic, military and economic foreign policy actions, Russia has been successful in co-opting the government of CAR, Zimbabwe and potentially Madagascar.

²⁰⁴ Tom Parfitt, "Kremlin in Botched Attempt to Influence Madagascar Election," World | The Times, March 15, 2019, accessed April 29, 2019, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/kremlin-in-botched-attempt-to-influence-madagascar-election-tfwkvhp0d>.

Media reporting from Russia's manipulation campaigns in Madagascar highlights that Russia's foreign policy strategy is continuing across the continent. In Burundi, the influence campaign has already been successful. Burundi's Foreign Minister stated Burundi-Russia relations are "a the best ever" citing improved diplomatic, economic and cultural relations as a result of joint military training, Russian scholarships for the Burundi elite and foreign policy training to Burundi government officials.²⁰⁵ Further, Russian sales of weapons to Africa has doubled from the period of 2012 to 2017.²⁰⁶ As a result, Russian-African relations continue to grow in number and in strength, with many countries turning away from their previous colonial allegiances and away from United States to explore growing bilateral ties with Russia and China. Further, the evidence uncovered in this research points to a trend whereby Russia will work with authoritarian regimes to gain influence, while undermining Western development aims.

²⁰⁵ John. "Burundi-Russia Relations 'at the Best Ever', Says the Burundi Foreign Ministry." RegionWeek. December 21, 2018. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://regionweek.com/burundi-russia-relations-at-the-best-ever-says-the-burundi-foreign-ministry/>.

²⁰⁶ Nastassia Astrasheuskaya, "Russia: Vladimir Putin's Pivot to Africa," Financial Times, January 22, 2019, , accessed April 29, 2019, <https://www.ft.com/content/a5648efa-1a4e-11e9-9e64-d150b3105d21>.

CHAPTER 7: IMPLICATIONS FOR CANADA AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research paper has demonstrated evidence of Russia's campaign to manipulate selected countries in Sub-Saharan Africa to increase its global influence, strengthen its economy, and to reduce the power and influence of the West. While the evidence has focused on the concerted efforts of the Russian Federation in CAR, Zimbabwe and Madagascar, Russia's proven strategy will likely spread across the continent, supplanting ties to the West. From the perspective of Canada, Russian manipulation of African national governments is concerning as it threatens to undermine the power and relevance of the institutions of the rules-based international order which Canada wishes to "robustly support... and seek ways to strengthen and improve."²⁰⁷ Further, as Russia props up authoritarian leaders through the provision of military assistance, the resource exploitation rights they extract in kind threaten to perpetuate, and exacerbate economic inequality. As seen in Madagascar, Russian mining corporations have failed to provide adequate working conditions and have even refused to pay their employees.²⁰⁸ This situation sets the conditions for continued violence and poverty, including gender-based violence and gender inequality, which is contrary to Canada's development and security interests.²⁰⁹ To provide the background for future policy recommendations, first a synopsis of Canada's policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa will be

²⁰⁷ Global Affairs Canada. "Address by Minister Freeland on Canada's Foreign Policy Priorities." Global Affairs Canada. June 12, 2017. Accessed April 24, 2019. https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2017/06/address_by_ministerfreelandoncanadasforeignpolicypriorities.html.

²⁰⁸ Réseau Malina. "KRAOMA MINING: A Joint Venture at the Centre of Attention." Malina. December 31, 2018. Accessed April 29, 2019. <https://malina.mg/en/article/19/kraoma-mining-a-joint-venture-at-the-centre-of-attention>.

²⁰⁹ Global Affairs Canada. "Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy." Global Affairs Canada. April 12, 2019. Accessed April 24, 2019. https://international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_developpement-enjeux_developpement/priorities-priorites/policy-politique.aspx?lang=eng#5.6.

provided. Implications and recommendations will then be presented within the domains of diplomacy, and defence strategy.

Canada's Africa Policy

Canada's history of involvement in Africa has generally revolved around the provision of development assistance and participation in United Nations-led peacekeeping operations in countries such as Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Darfur, CAR, Rwanda, Somalia, Western Sahara and Namibia. As a result of a lack of grand strategy, Canada's decisions to assist African countries tend to be focused on specific events rather than a long-term strategic vision with the Prime Minister having a "central role in shaping and sustaining Canadian activism on the African continent."²¹⁰ Canada's historical relationship with Africa only began in the 1950s once the previous European colonies began to achieve independence.²¹¹ In Dawson's study of Canada's foreign policy towards Africa since 1950, he asserts that Canada had two aims when it developed Africa foreign policy. First, Canada wished "to facilitate building constituencies of support with Africans when and where interests converge on issues of common concern" and second, "to prevent Canada from being alienated from Africa, and the alienation of African states and peoples from the West."²¹² Canada's approach in Cold War can be summarized by Prime Minister Diefenbaker in 1968:

"unless measures are quickly taken in this crucial formative period in the history of these new African nations there may very well develop in those

²¹⁰ Edward Ansah Akuffo, *Canadian Foreign Policy in Africa: Regional Approaches to Peace, Security, and Development*. (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 49-50.

²¹¹ Grant Dawson. "Player, partner and friend: Canada's Africa Policy since 1945," *International Politics* 50.3 (2013): 412

²¹² *Ibid.*, 413

nations doubt as to the goodwill of the developed countries of the West, and they may be tempted to look for sympathy and assistance in other directions.”²¹³

Canada’s approach since then has continued to embrace the liberalism school of international relations by embracing cooperation, development and reinforcing the importance of international organizations and NGOs on the continent.

Since then, Canadian foreign policy has consistently portrayed African countries through a development lens that sees African nations as impoverished and struggling states that require Canadian benevolence to ameliorate their conditions. Urell notes that a benevolence frame can result in foreign actors sometimes undertaking “activities that are not in the best interest of community members. Instead, activities satisfy the need for activity, involvement, and excitement.”²¹⁴ A recent example of this behaviour of development as political opportunism can be found in Prime Minister Trudeau’s controversial tweet in December 2018 where he pledged \$50 million to the Education Cannot Wait organization.²¹⁵ Many historical examples of Canadian involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa can be characterized as capitalizing on opportunities to address symptoms, rather than causes of inequality. i.e. providing bulk food aid rather than considering policy options to stimulate economic activity to reduce the need for foreign aid. Swanson’s study of foreign aid distribution in Africa from 1960 to 2000 noted that

²¹³ Grant Dawson. “Player, partner and friend: Canada’s Africa Policy since 1945,” *International Politics* 50.3 (2013): 419

²¹⁴ Ellen Urell, “Simulating Benevolence: Obstructing Systemic Problem Solving,” *World Futures* 62.7 (2006): 527.

²¹⁵ Janice Dickson. “Trudeau criticized for tweet to Trevor Noah pledging \$50M charity gift,” *CBC News*. December 3, 2018. Accessed April 29, 2019. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/trudeau-trevor-noah-money-1.4930216>

increased levels of foreign aid were correlated with lower economic growth.²¹⁶ As a result of embodying a development lens in its approach towards Africa, Canada has not viewed African nations as a true partner in attaining mutual strategic interests such as strengthening diplomatic, economic or military relations.²¹⁷

This approach is said to be part of the desire of Canadian political leaders to maintain Canada's non-imperial identity on the continent and instead to maintain Canada's image as a "morally responsible nation."²¹⁸ Narratives from the Canadian media perpetuate this line of thinking and have often criticized perceived linkages between Canada's foreign aid agenda and economic interests, seemingly positing that the two must be mutually exclusive endeavours.²¹⁹ Instead, foreign aid funding has been typically used to appeal to the current government's domestic political base. For example, Prime Minister Harper's foreign aid policy saw a higher proportion of Western Canadian based Christian Evangelical NGOs being funded for development activities in Africa.²²⁰ Now, Prime Minister Trudeau is placing an emphasis on funding programs specifically to improve outcomes for Women and Children. This sentiment still exists today with the Canadian media observing that Prime Minister Trudeau has "shown little interest in the

²¹⁶ Ana Swanson, "Does Foreign Aid Always Help the Poor?" World Economic Forum. October 23, 2015. Accessed April 24, 2019. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/10/does-foreign-aid-always-help-the-poor/>.

²¹⁷ Edward Ansah Akuffo, *Canadian Foreign Policy in Africa: Regional Approaches to Peace, Security, and Development*. (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 49-50.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 217.

²¹⁹ Kim Mackrael. "Commercial Motives Driving Canada's Foreign Aid, Documents Reveal." The Globe and Mail. May 12, 2018. Accessed April 24, 2019. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/commercial-interests-taking-focus-in-canadas-aid-to-developing-world/article16240406/>.

²²⁰ Stephen Brown. "All about that base? Branding and the domestic politics of Canadian aid," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 24.2 (2018): 149.

African continent.”²²¹ As a result, most of the Government of Canada’s official documentation on its relations with Africa exists in a terms of development assistance or contributing to UN missions, rather than reinforcing other economic or diplomatic policy goals.

Presently, Global Affairs Canada’s African policy focuses Canadian international development efforts on Benin, Burkina Faso, DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, South Sudan and Tanzania.²²² Notably, this list does not reflect Canada’s diplomatic presence,²²³ nor the presence of significant investment from Canadian corporations.²²⁴ Canadian business, on the other hand, has significant investments in many African economies and is a global leader in Africa’s mining sector.²²⁵ Figure 7.1 indicates the primary African countries where Canadian mining corporations are operating using available data from Natural Resources Canada. Of the top 40 global mining firms, six of them are headquartered in Canada.²²⁶ One hundred and ten Canadian mining firms have assets in African countries that are valued over CAD 26 billion dollars in total.²²⁷ Further, the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX) and TSX Venture Exchange have become the world’s primary markets for mining and mineral exploration firms and

²²¹ Geoffrey York, "In Trudeau Government's Africa Strategy, the Continent Does Not Come First," *The Globe and Mail*, April 9, 2018, , accessed February 12, 2019, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-in-trudeau-governments-africa-strategy-the-continent-does-not-come/>.

²²² Global Affairs Canada, and Corporate Communications. "Canada and Sub-Saharan Africa." Global Affairs Canada. February 27, 2018. Accessed February 25, 2019. https://international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/africa-afrique/index.aspx?lang=eng.

²²³ Note: Canada has no diplomatic presence in Benin. Global Affairs Canada. "Embassies and Consulates." Travel.gc.ca. November 28, 2018. Accessed April 24, 2019. <https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/embassies-consulates>.

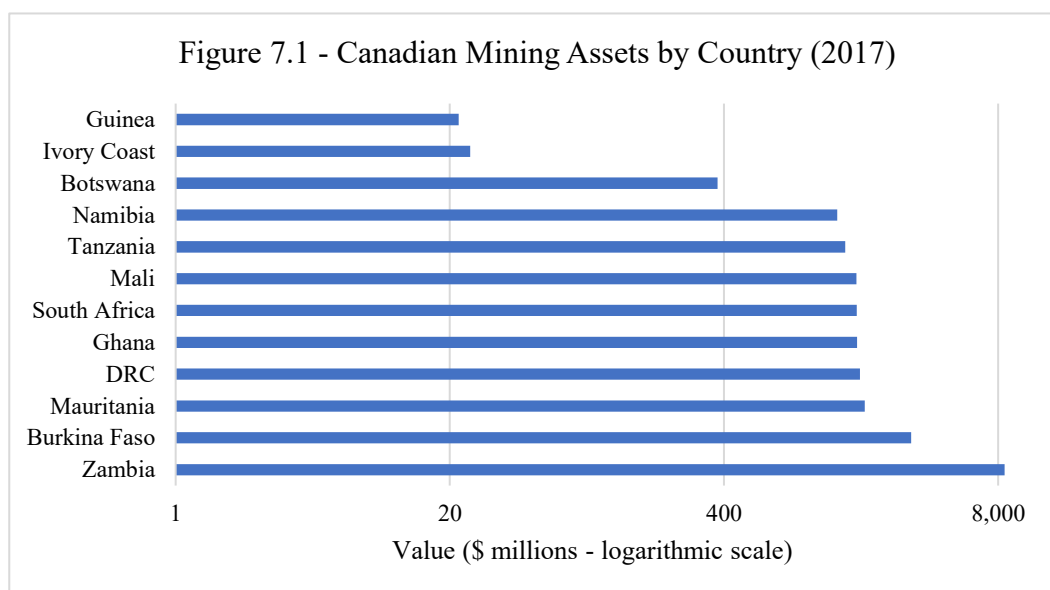
²²⁴ Natural Resources Canada. "Canadian Mining Assets." February 06, 2019. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/mining-materials/publications/19323#S2>.

²²⁵ Akuffo, 217.

²²⁶ Price Waterhouse Cooper. *Mine 2018: Tempting Times*. (2018), 22.

²²⁷ Natural Resources Canada. "Canadian Mining Assets." February 06, 2019. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/mining-materials/publications/19323#S2>.

account for 50% of global mining and exploration corporations, raising a third of global equity capital for the industry.²²⁸ Canadian firms are continuing to expand their



Source: Natural Resources Canada. "Canadian Mining Assets (CMA) by Country and Region 2019." Accessed April 29, 2019. <https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/mining-materials/publications/15406>

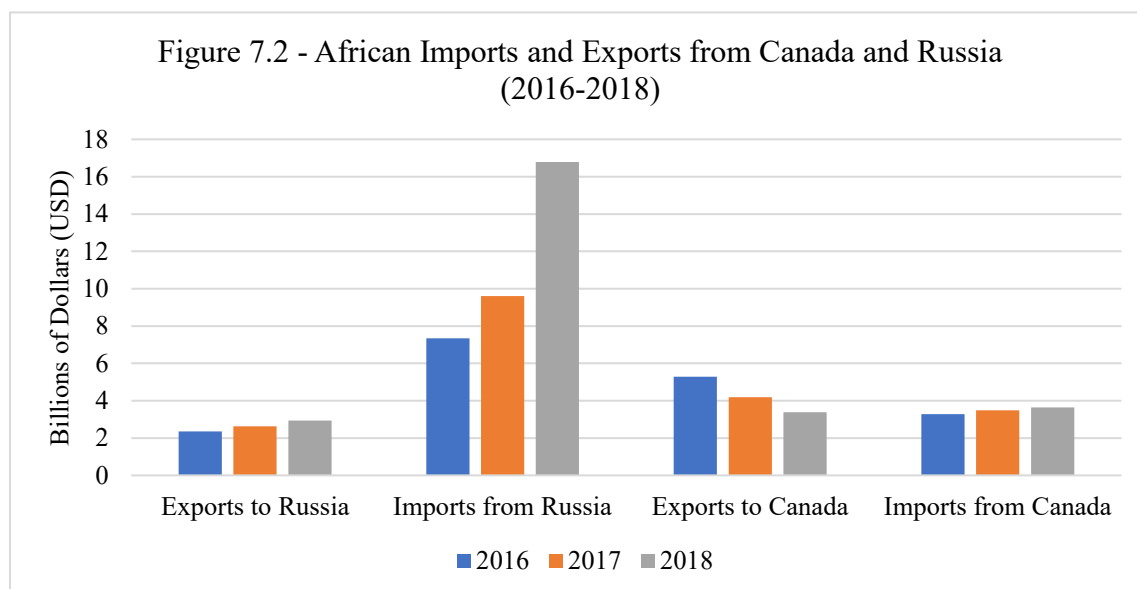
investments into African economies. For example, NextSource, a mine development company based in Toronto recently obtained a 40-year graphite mining license in Madagascar and will commence operations in 2020.²²⁹ If Russian influence continues to grow in these regions, it may leverage its ability to manipulate African Heads of State in these countries to undermine Canadian business interests as a means to indirectly place pressure on the Canadian government. Further, as Russia's trade relationship with African countries continues to grow, the importance of Canadian investment will diminish. Figure 7.2 indicates the levels of Canadian and Russian imports and exports in Africa, noting a significant surge in Russian imports into Africa in 2018.

²²⁸ Natural Resources Canada. "Minerals and the Economy." August 10, 2018. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/mining-materials/facts/minerals-economy/20529>.

²²⁹ Miningreview.com. "Madagascar to Host New Producing Graphite Mine in 2020." Miningreview.com. February 18, 2019. Accessed April 10, 2019. <https://www.miningreview.com/features-analysis/madagascar-to-host-new-producing-graphite-mine-in-2020/>.

Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Presence

As Canada's foreign policy towards Africa has focused on reacting to specific events and broad multilateral development initiatives, it is failing to cultivate effective

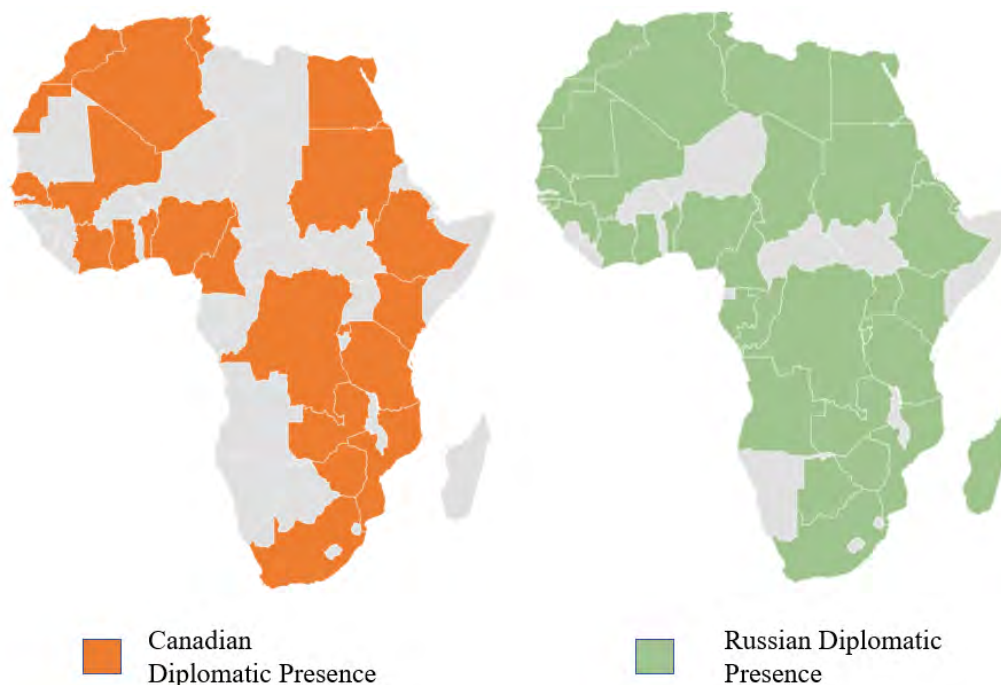


Source: Trademap.org. "Trade Statistics for International Business Development." 2018. Accessed April 29, 2019. <https://www.trademap.org/>

bilateral relationships with Heads of State and African governments. Development funding through multi-lateral organizations is likely most effective in ensuring that funding is distributed to vulnerable local populations, rather than being misappropriated by government leaders or corrupt bureaucrats. However, by adopting this approach, the ability to influence African leaders is reduced as it leaves little to be gained or lost from bilateral relations. Further compounding a poor ability to influence African leaders is Canada's low diplomatic presence across the continent, with embassies in only 22 of Africa's 54 countries. By comparison, Russia has 39 embassies in Africa. Figure 7.3 provide a graphical representation of Russia and Canada's diplomatic presence on the continent. As a result, Canadian ambassadors and consulate personnel are required to also fulfill their duties in countries of second accreditation, making it difficult to focus on the

country the embassy is located in.²³⁰ This lack of focus by under resourced diplomatic missions encumbers efforts by Canadian officials to promote trade in the region.²³¹

Figure 7.3 – Canadian and Russian Embassy Locations in Africa



Data Source: Embassy WorldWide. 2019. Accessed April 30, 2019. <https://www.embassy-worldwide.com/>. Note: Russia also has embassies in Mauritius and Seychelles (not pictured).

Canada has also historically leveraged use La Francophonie “to develop a close and active bilateral relationship with francophone Africa in the context of Canadian unity.”²³² As 55% of French-speakers live in Africa and African countries form the majority of member nations in La Francophonie, events unfolding in francophone African countries affect the integrity and strength of this organization. Canada’s international

²³⁰ Michelle Zilio, "Dwindling Canadian Diplomatic Presence in Africa a Concern: Experts." iPolitics. February 26, 2013. Accessed April 10, 2019. <https://ipolitics.ca/2013/02/26/dwindling-canadian-diplomatic-presence-in-africa-a-concern-experts/>.

²³¹ David Hornsby. “Changing Perception into Reality: Canada in Africa,” *International Journal* 69.3 (2014): 340

²³² Grant Dawson. “Player, partner and friend: Canada’s Africa Policy since 1945,” *International Politics* 50.3 (2013): 416

policy specifically mentions Canada reputation and ability to work constructive with multilateral partners in the United Nations, G7, G20, Commonwealth and La Francophonie.²³³ La Francophonie is of particular importance to Canada due to Canada's historical roots, but also because the world's francophone population is expected to grow significantly in the coming years, specifically in Africa. Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy summarizes Canada's strategic goals by membership La Francophonie for Canada:

By engaging directly with members of La Francophonie, we will continue to promote the values of democratic governance, human rights and the rule of law; expand our support for women's economic empowerment and their sexual and reproductive health and rights; address climate change; and prevent radicalization.²³⁴

As Russian influence in Africa continues to grow, the relevance of La Francophonie may be set to further decline as francophone countries that have traditionally aligned with France such as Burundi, Rwanda, Benin, and Niger continue to grow their diplomatic, economic, and military ties to Russia. As seen in Burundi, and CAR, the growth of the relationship between these countries and Russia has come at the expense of relationships with France, against whom Russia directs and supports negative information campaigns.²³⁵ Further, as countries such as Mauritania, Madagascar, Mai,

²³³ Global Affairs Canada. "Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy." February 13, 2019. Accessed February 28, 2019. https://international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_developpement-enjeux_developpement/priorities-priorites/policy-politique.aspx?lang=eng.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ Patricia Huon and Simon Ostrovsky, "Russia, The New Power in Central Africa," Coda Story, February 10, 2019, accessed February 19, 2019, <https://codastory.com/disinformation/russia-new-power-central-africa/>.

Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau are suspended from La Francophonie due to intrastate violence or the rise of governments that are deemed unconstitutional, the influence of this multilateral organization in establishing consensus and achieving its strategic aims diminishes.

Should Canada wish to expand its influence on the continent and have a greater awareness of issues affecting these nations, a greater diplomatic presence is required. As institutions such as La Francophonie become less effective, and with a future United Nations being increasingly contested by Russia and China, bilateral relationships must be cultivated. Further, an expanded diplomatic presence would be beneficial by increasing Canada's ability to negotiate bilateral trade deals, support Canadian corporations, and to provide bureaucratic advice and assistance on issues of mutual interest to African governments.²³⁶ Further, diplomatic relations could be helpful in monitoring Canadian development aid disbursements to ensure they are used effectively and efficiently towards the accomplishment of Canadian foreign policy goals.

Canadian Military Strategy for Africa

Canada's historical approach towards military engagement in Africa has frequently seen military training teams deploy to former Commonwealth colonies in Africa, such as Ghana and Tanzania. The aim of these deployments was to help professionalize African forces so they would become "disposed to reinforce pro-western and democratic governments in their countries."²³⁷ This strategy proved effective, with

²³⁶ Note: Canada does not currently have free trade agreements in place with any African countries.

²³⁷ Andrew Godefroy. "The Canadian Armed Forces Advisory Training Team Tanzania 1965–1970," *Canadian Military History* 11.3 (2002): 31.

Canadian officers providing mentorship and advice to the Ghanaian military by delivering the Junior Staff Officers course and embedding personnel in the Ghanaian Ministry of Defence. Communiqués from the Canadian High Commissioner to Ghana from 1965 summarize the impact of this training and assistance mission, “since independence, it [Ghana’s military] has changed in outlook, perhaps less than any other institution. It is still equipped with Western arms and although essentially non-political, is Western oriented.”²³⁸ One year later, Ghana’s Head of State, Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown in a coup d’état by its western oriented armed forces, which was supported by the US Central Intelligence Agency, as a result of Nkrumah’s growing ties with the Soviet Union and China.²³⁹

In Tanzania, A Canadian Armed Forces Advisory and Training Team was deployed in 1965 which aided in the creation of the Tanzanian People’s Defence Force and aided with a wide range of tasks from helping to draft Tanzania’s National Defence Act, establishing command and control structures and to developing doctrine and training aids.²⁴⁰ While the mission was effective in establishing the Tanzanian military, eventually the Canadian Armed Forces contingent saw itself lose relevance and influence as its

²³⁸ Engler, Yves. "Canada's Role in the Overthrow of Ghana President Kwame Nkrumah." Canada's Role in the Overthrow of Ghana President Kwame Nkrumah. February 24, 2017. Accessed April 24, 2019. <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/2017-02-24t000000/canadas-role-overthrow-ghana-president-kwame-nkrumah>.

²³⁹ Seymour M. Hersh, "C.I.A. Said to Have Aided Plotters Who Overthrew Nkrumah in Ghana," The New York Times, May 09, 1978, accessed April 24, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/1978/05/09/archives/cia-said-to-have-aided-plotters-who-overthrew-nkrumah-in-ghana.html>.

²⁴⁰ Andrew Godefroy. “The Canadian Armed Forces Advisory Training Team Tanzania 1965–1970,” *Canadian Military History* 11.3 (2002): 31.

presence was eventually undermined by the inflow of Russian and Chinese military aid that surpassed the equipment Canada was willing to provide.²⁴¹

From the 1990s to 2013, civilian experts from Canada's Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, "with military officers in some cases, provided assistance at African Peacekeeping Schools in Ghana and Mali, and were involved in training activities across Africa, including in Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Kenya and Somalia."²⁴² Canada has also frequently participated in UN operations in Africa, though usually with only small quantities of observers and staff officers. Prior to the deployment of medical evacuation helicopters in support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the number of deployed military members on UN operations had fallen to a historic low of only 29 military and 44 police.²⁴³

On the future role of the Canadian Armed Forces in Africa Canada's new Defence Policy, *Strong Secure Engaged* (SSE) states:

In Africa, the Defence team will work within an integrated whole-of-government approach to advance Canada's objectives, notably by contributing to peace and security through re-engaging in United Nations peace operations, providing training, supporting development and empowering women and girls. Our approach to Africa will seek to make tangible contributions to the stability necessary to advance Sustainable

²⁴¹ Andrew Godefroy. "The Canadian Armed Forces Advisory Training Team Tanzania 1965–1970," *Canadian Military History* 11.3 (2002): 44.

²⁴² Grant Dawson. "Player, partner and friend: Canada's Africa Policy since 1945," *International Politics* 50.3 (2013): 422.

²⁴³ Walter Dorn, "UN Peacekeeping: Canada's Back? When? How?" Policy Options, November 7, 2017, accessed April 24, 2019, <http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/november-2017/un-peacekeeping-canadas-back-when-how/>.

Development Goals and create the conditions for peace. To be successful, Defence will need to build new bilateral relationships in Africa, particularly with the African Union, given its leadership role in peacekeeping efforts in the region. Such relationships are an important avenue to address conflict prevention and help to stem the expansion of instability.²⁴⁴

To date, finding a way to meaningfully accomplish this strategy appears to be difficult. Plans to deploy Canadian military forces to Africa following Canada's exit from Mali in mid-2019 are still unknown. Regardless, future Canadian deployments to Africa must consider the growing influence of Russia and capitalize on their ability to achieve an impact in domains aside from strictly military training. Military missions partnered with Global Affairs Canada initiatives to provide mentorship and policy advice to national governments would be a more effective strategy. Canada, however, may be challenged in providing a desirable alternative to Russian assistance due to a reluctance to provide training and equipment related to the use of force in countries that have questionable human rights records. In such countries, Western nations have often imposed restrictions on the limits of acceptable military training and equipment. While this policy may provide a shield against the political and ethical risk of providing lethal capabilities to military forces that might use them inappropriately, it serves to reduce the ability of the West to influence and access military officials from these countries.²⁴⁵ As a compromise, Schroeder proposes providing training on topics related to peace and stability such as

²⁴⁴ Department of National Defence. *Strong, Secure, Engaged*. (2017), 92.

²⁴⁵ Matthew Schroeder, "US Security Assistance and Africa: Challenges of Weapon Sales and Military Aid." In *Security, Reconstruction, and Reconciliation: When the Wars End*, 284-307. (New York, NY: University College London Press, 2006), 292.

Civil-Military Cooperation, management, ethics, justice and engagement.²⁴⁶ While this type of training may be beneficial, in conflict ridden zones it is not likely to be effective in addressing the nation's most pressing needs. In CAR, for example, the effectiveness of UN-delivered training is considered inadequate as soldiers do not have adequate weapons or ammunition to train with. By comparison, Russian-delivered training that is supported with plentiful donations of small arms and munitions is touted as far superior.²⁴⁷ Should Canada move forward with a training mission in Africa, these factors must be considered. Canada's political and military leadership should consider methods to deliver effective and relevant training while minimizing political risk through measures such as trainee vetting to avoid the risk of newly acquired combat skills and equipment being used in an undesirable manner.

Other Policy Options

Aside from expanding Canada's diplomatic and military presence in Sub-Saharan Africa, several options to expand Canadian influence and support the rules-based international order in Africa exist. First, the international election monitoring missions have proved to be an effective strategy to reduce election irregularities and to ensure the public is made aware of shortcomings. During Russia's "2011 parliamentary elections, the mere presence of independent observers at Moscow's polling stations reportedly decreased the vote for the Kremlin-supported United Russia party by 11%," which

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁷ Nicolas Haque. "Russia in Africa: Inside a Military Training Centre in CAR," *Al Jazeera News*. April 14, 2019. Accessed April 24, 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/talktojazeera/inthefield/2019/04/russia-africa-military-training-centre-car-190411152658162.html>

potentially indicates the effectiveness of this tool in reducing election irregularities.²⁴⁸ Election Observation Missions in Africa, however, have sometimes faced criticism for bias, failure to expose wrongdoing by being overly positive when reporting their results and contributing to post-election violence.²⁴⁹ By contributing financially, and with personnel to Election Observation Missions, Canada may be able to improve their effectiveness by reducing the negative biases and external pressures these organizations face when reporting their findings. Further, by observing these elections, Canada may grow its understanding of foreign election influence methods being employed by Russia in Sub-Saharan Africa as part of its strategy to protect Canadian democratic processes.

Support for independent media is another method by which Canada could assist in preventing Russian manipulation in Africa. This research has highlighted the precarious position most media agencies in Sub-Saharan Africa experience due to lack of funding and, in some cases, the threat of government violence. Capitalizing on this situation, Russia is gaining an advantage by funding radio stations that deliver pro-Russian messages. To counter the growth of these types of subversive media stations, funding towards independent radio stations and newspapers in Africa would be beneficial to help counter false narratives communicated by Russian-influenced media. Further, Canada could sponsor programming that dissuades voters from being influenced by

²⁴⁸ Rodion Skovoroda and Tomila Lankina, "Fabricating Votes for Putin: New Tests of Fraud and Electoral Manipulations from Russia," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 33, no. 2 (2016): 118, doi:10.1080/1060586x.2016.1207988.

²⁴⁹ Ursula E. Daxecker, "The Cost of Exposing Cheating," *Journal of Peace Research* 49, no. 4 (2012): 505, doi:10.1177/0022343312445649.

manipulative tactics such as vote buying.²⁵⁰ Assisting government institutions and media in developing polling and statistics capabilities would be effective option to help promote election transparency and avoid the type of poll manipulation that Russia employs in its domestic elections.²⁵¹

Another emerging realm for Canadian assistance could be helping African governments adapt to the challenges of social media manipulation and cyber defence. As cellular and internet service expand its reach across Sub-Saharan Africa, the exposure of Africans to foreign influence campaigns and social media bots will continue. A 2018 study of Twitter activity during African elections noted that 53% of leading voices on Twitter came from external countries, and that 25% of influential accounts during elections were bots.²⁵² Helping to understand and expose this phenomenon will be increasingly important as technology reaches a greater proportion of the African population. In this regard, Canada could help improve the awareness of the population to help reduce the effectiveness of subversive social media and news campaigns.

In closing, Canadian efforts towards accomplishing its foreign policy and development goals in Africa are likely to be frustrated by the growth of Russian influence on the continent. Without adapting its approach to consider the reality of the evolving nature of international relations on the continent, Canadian relevancy in Africa will continue to weaken. As a nation that is a strong proponent of the rules-based international

²⁵⁰ P. C. Vicente and L. Wantchekon, "Clientelism and Vote Buying: Lessons from Field Experiments in African Elections," *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 25, no. 2 (2009): 300-301, doi:10.1093/oxrep/grp018.

²⁵¹ Grant Dawson. "Player, partner and friend: Canada's Africa Policy since 1945," *International Politics* 50.3 (2013): 429.

²⁵² Portland Communications. "How Africa Tweets 2018." Portland Communications. 2018. Accessed April 24, 2019. <https://portland-communications.com/publications/how-africa-tweets-2018/>.

order, development outcomes, and with extensive corporate interests in Africa, Canada needs to revise its strategy towards Africa. By aligning development, diplomatic, economic and military strategy in Sub-Saharan African countries of interest, such as Zambia or Burkina Faso, Canada could benefit significantly by enhancing bilateral ties and being able to help its key partners protect themselves against Russian efforts to expand manipulation campaigns across the continent.

ANNEX A – RUSSIAN MILITARY AGREEMENTS IN AFRICA

Figure A-1 below highlights the Military Cooperation Agreements in Africa that have been established since 2015 as of December 2018. This table, created by the Swedish Defence Research Agency was compiled based on available data from Reuters, Jeune Afrique, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation.

Figure A-1 - Military Cooperation Agreements in Africa Since 2015

Country	Date	Note
Botswana	August 2018	Peace-keeping and military training.
Burkina Faso	August 2018	Cooperation on countering terrorism. Deal not yet in force.
Burundi	August 2018	Cooperation on counter-terrorism and joint training of troops.
Cameroon	April 2015	Military and technical cooperation.
Central African Republic	August 2018	Training of armed forces.
Chad	August 2017	Anti-terrorism cooperation and joint training exercises.
Egypt	November 2017	Deliveries of equipment and weapons for counter-terrorism operations.
Eswatini (former Swaziland)	February 2017	Supply of weapons, maintenance and other military assistance.
Ethiopia	April 2018	Training and cooperation on peace-keeping and counter-terrorism and anti-piracy efforts. Deal not yet in force.
Gambia	September 2016	Training of armed forces, deliveries of military equipment.
Ghana	June 2016	Military and technical cooperation. Deal not yet in force.
Guinea	April 2018	Cooperation on peace-keeping, counter-terrorism, search and rescue at sea. Deal not yet in force.
Mozambique	January 2017	Deliveries of military equipment, spare parts and component.
Niger	August 2017	Working meetings of military experts and cooperation on military education.
Nigeria	August 2017	Cooperation on military training, peace-keeping and efforts to counter-terrorism and anti-piracy.
Rwanda	October 2016	Supply of weapons and other military equipment.
Sierra Leone	August 2018	Supply of weapons and other military equipment as well as the provision of other military technical assistance.
Sudan	February 2018	Develop the Sudanese armed forces
Tanzania	January 2018	Arms shipments as well as joint training and research and development.
Zambia	April 2017	Provisions for the supply of weapons and delivery of spare parts.
Zimbabwe	October 2015	Supply of weapons and cooperation on producing military products.

Source: Jakob Hedenskog. "Russia is Stepping Up its Military Cooperation in Africa," *Swedish Defence Research Agency*. (December 2018), 4.

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