

From Traditional Partnership to Strategic Realignment: Determinants of Burkinabe–Russian Rapprochement and Transformations of French Influence during the Transitional Governance Period 2020-2026

Moniz John^{1a}, Stewart Kevin², Cassy Paulsen³, Robert F.Hare⁴, Andreas Hainmueller⁵

¹ Department of Political Science, University of California, San Diego, CA, USA. Email: Moniz.john@emory.edu

² Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden. Email: stewart.keven.ke@pcr.uu.se

³ Research Fellow, Department of Political and Social Sciences, European University Institute, Fiesole, Italy. Email: Cassy.Paulsen@eui.eu

⁴ School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin-Madison, WI, USA. Email: Robert.F.hare@alumni.upenn.edu

⁵ Research Group Prosocial Behavior, RWI – Leibniz Institute for Economic Research, Essen 45128, Germany. Email: Andreas-Hainmueller@rwi-essen.de

Corresponding Author: Moniz John, Moniz.john@emory.edu

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64440/BIRUNI/BIR0029>

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received Apr 20, 2026

Revised Apr 24, 2026

Accepted July 03, 2026

Keywords

Burkina Faso;
Coup-Belt, Africa;
Russian Rapprochement;
French influence;
Russia;
France.



This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the geopolitical realignment of Burkina Faso within the broader context of the Sahel region's evolving security and international order. It explores the transition from traditional Western security partnerships—particularly with France—to emerging alignments with non-Western actors, notably Russia, following the 2022 military takeover led by Captain Ibrahim Traoré. The research situates this shift within the structural legacy of colonialism, persistent state fragility, and the intensification of armed insurgencies in the Sahel. Drawing on critical approaches in International Relations and geopolitical analysis, the study argues that Burkina Faso's foreign policy transformation cannot be understood solely as a reaction to counterterrorism failures, but rather as part of a broader reconfiguration of global power relations in Africa. It highlights how declining trust in Western intervention models, combined with rising anti-French sentiment, has facilitated the reorientation of alliances and the emergence of alternative security providers, particularly Russia, as well as private security actors. The study further examines the interplay between security and resource geopolitics, demonstrating how competition over strategic minerals such as gold and uranium has become central to external involvement in the region. It also assesses the implications of military governance, institutional fragility, and ongoing insurgent violence for state sovereignty and regional stability. Ultimately, the paper concludes that Burkina Faso represents a paradigmatic case of multipolar competition in the Sahel, where shifting alliances, resource interests, and security imperatives intersect to reshape both domestic governance structures and international power configurations.

1. Introduction

The Sahel, a border region separating the Sahara Desert from the savanna, spans 10 states and is home to approximately 400 million people, most of whom gained independence from France or Great Britain in the mid-20th century, which is further characterized by weak institutional capacity, these states struggle to promote social rights or manage external debt, perpetuating a cycle of challenges that hinder sustainable development across the region [1]. Experts attribute this fragility to intersecting factors such as climate change, conflicts over natural resources, political and religious extremism, and the proliferation of weapons. As armed confrontations remain primarily national in scope, the growing involvement of external actors has intensified civilian casualties and displacement, affecting millions of people. Hitherto, to address these issues, it is necessary to prioritize objectives and analyze political amalgamations to optimize resource allocation [2].

The Sahel region has emerged as a complex geopolitical arena where international competition over resources intersects with the growing threat of transnational terrorism[3]. Over the past decade, the region has witnessed an increasing expansion of violent combatant groups whose roots can be traced back to the 1990s in the aftermath of the Algerian Civil War [4], particularly with the southward expansion of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) into the sub-Saharan region. The group later evolved into Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). This transformation facilitated the expansion of cross-border operations and the spread of violent extremist ideology throughout West Africa [5].

Subsequent developments, particularly the repercussions of the Arab Spring, contributed significantly to reshaping the regional security environment through the proliferation of weapons and the expansion of combatant networks. Conversely, such a scenario further complicated the security landscape in the Sahel states—namely Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso—as well as the Lake Chad Basin [6]. These organizations later fragmented into multiple entities, including Ansar Dine, Jama ‘at Nasr al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), thereby enabling actors to expand their influence across fragile rural areas. The intensity of violence escalated considerably during the period from 2012 to 2019, when the region recorded

1,463 armed clashes, resulting in the deaths of 4,723 civilians. These incidents were attributed to 195 violent armed groups operating across 1,263 different locations, highlighting the scale and geographic dispersion of insecurity throughout the region [7].

1. THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

The current government in Burkina Faso is fighting the Mujahideen from the Northern part of the country. Hitherto, terrorist activities have caused unrest, with citizens' frustration over their government's failure to rein in terrorists and maintain peace and security, and their clamour for change has remained a sticky issue, especially in erstwhile French West Africa [8]. Consequently, the French Republic continues to be plagued by populations for advancing decades of bitter relations with her erstwhile colonies, while terrorism and poverty wreaked devastation [9]. Albeit a potential paradigm shift in politics and security, coup juntas promise to implement political, security, and economic reforms to curtail terrorism and restore stability. Burkina Faso's Captain Ibrahim Traore deposed fellow military junta Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba [10]. This coup was both bloodless and seemingly popular; the coup leaders were keen to reduce or end their close ties with the French Republic, hence to cover the power vacuum created due to frustration over terrorism and France's neo-colonial posture. The military junta or transitional leaders sought new allies, with Russia providing the alternative, replacing the more traditional allies, France and the USA [11]. Consequently, Burkina Faso prioritized military cooperation, reaching out to Russia and expressing enthusiasm for exploring options such as training and technical assistance [12].

In 2019, the epicenter of the Sahel crisis shifted from Mali to Burkina Faso, where combatant groups—particularly Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS)—expanded their influence and established control over new territories by exploiting local ethnic and social divisions [13]. Consequently, the state increasingly relied on self-defense groups and community-based militias as part of its counterinsurgency strategy. Hitherto, this approach contributed to the escalation of intercommunal and retaliatory violence between these groups and armed extremist organizations. The conflict also acquired a pronounced regional and international dimension, as reflected in the competition among terrorist organizations for influence

across the region [14]. Simultaneously, intensive military operations conducted by government forces, coupled with allegations of human rights abuses and extrajudicial killings, heightened local grievances and enhanced the recruitment capabilities of armed groups. These dynamics collectively contributed to the deterioration of the security environment and a significant increase in civilian casualties [15].

Although the two groups share broad strategic objectives, they differ in certain ideological orientations and in their approaches toward local populations. They also engage in continuous competition over territorial control, resources, and spheres of influence. Several factors—most notably weak state institutions, widespread proliferation of weapons, porous borders, economic and social fragility, and entrenched ethnic divisions—have contributed to strengthening their recruitment capacity and territorial expansion [16]. Consequently, the insurgency has extended from its initial stronghold in the Sahel region to much of the country. Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) has become active across most administrative regions; in contrast, the Islamic State in the Sahel maintains a centralized presence in the northern areas, particularly in the provinces of Séno and Oudalan [17].

At the political level, the inability of successive Burkinabe governments to contain the escalating insurgency enabled the military establishment to justify its intervention and seizure of power, thereby disrupting the democratic transition and reinforcing authoritarian tendencies in the country. These security approaches, despite their rhetoric of democratic partnership, were, in practice, closely tied to strategic considerations of resources and geopolitical influence, rather than addressing the structural root causes of the crisis. This failure contributed to the erosion of the legitimacy of allied regimes and to a wave of military coups across the region between 2020 and 2023, leading to it being temporarily described as a “coup belt, *The Concept of “Coup Belt,”* by situating Burkina Faso within the wave of coups (2020–2023), the paper highlights regional contagion effects. This situates the case within broader debates on democratic backsliding and military resurgence in West Africa [18].”

In its 2026 report entitled *“None Can Run Away: War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity in Burkina Faso by All Sides,”* Human Rights Watch relied on a wide range of data and testimonies despite the considerable difficulties—and, in some cases, the

near impossibility—of obtaining accurate information due to the complexity of the security and humanitarian situation in the country. The report noted that some figures are available, including data from Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED), a non-governmental organization that collects and analyzes conflict data worldwide, indicating that at least 10,600 civilians have been killed in Burkina Faso since 2016 [19].

These power dynamics—combined with earlier policies, the legacy of colonial rule, and the proliferation of militias and armed groups—have made Burkina Faso one of the poorest countries in the world [20], as more than 40% of the population lives below the international poverty line. In contrast, the country ranks 186 out of 193 on the Human Development Index [21]. The escalation of armed conflict has further deepened the humanitarian crisis.

The United Nations estimated that approximately 6.3 million people, including 3.4 million children, required humanitarian assistance in 2024, while nearly 1.1 million people lived in areas under blockade by armed groups [22]. Although the article cites reports from Human Rights Watch and UNICEF, the humanitarian crisis (displacement, poverty, child vulnerability) is treated as a consequence rather than as a central analytical category. A stronger integration of human security would balance the state-centric geopolitical framing. Continued conflict has also led to large-scale displacement. By 2025, more than 2.3 million people had been forced to flee their homes—around 10% of the total population—including over 2 million internally displaced persons and approximately 270,000 refugees who crossed into neighboring countries such as Mali, Niger, Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, Benin, and Togo [23].

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1. What does the Kremlin’s Russia-Burkina Faso military cooperation strategy involve?

RQ2. How is Burkina Faso responding to Russia-Africa military cooperation strategy?

RQ3. What are the likely long-term implications of Russia's military cooperation strategy in Africa?

RQ4. Can Burkina Faso’s foreign policy transformation be understood solely as a reaction to counterterrorism failures?

RQ5. Is there a diplomatic way to curb French influence in Burkina Faso?

3. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research is based on realist theory, particularly classical realism, which attributes the root cause of conflict to human nature. It best explains the competitive nature of states as they seek to protect their own interests and project their power (Morgenthau, 1973). In Burkina Faso, battling terrorist threats has become the norm, prompting efforts to break free from unpopular colonial ties with France and forge new allies, such as Russia, to bolster homeland security and possibly establish additional mutual economic ties. Hitherto, towards the end of the Cold War, realism was on the defensive as the tide moved in errand of globalization and the universality of politics and economics; realism has powerfully bounced back after the Western liberal model failed to gain universal acceptance, calling into question states' ability to act together multilaterally. Consequently, the 21st century has seen a resurgence of realism, in which power is slowly but steadily being concentrated at the state level, and the liberal euphoria over the universality of norms is being strongly challenged.

This study aims to demonstrate how current circumstances in Burkina Faso hinder progress towards sustainable, more equitable development. To this end, we first examine the evolution of key sociopolitical variables that shape the prospects for sustainable development in the coming years. In the second phase, an econometric analysis is employed to assess the impact of critical factors on economic growth in such contexts.

Regarding socio-political aspects (governance, instability, or inequality), our findings reveal systemic barriers that require targeted policy interventions. The Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) has been a very useful source with variables that measure and monitor governance performance in African countries. Published since 2007, the IIAG was created to provide a quantifiable tool for measuring and monitoring governance performance in African countries, assessing their progress over time, and supporting the development of effective policy solutions, thereby giving visibility to the problem and allowing us to address the research objective adequately, as data are available from 2014 to 2023 [24].

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research reviewed existing academic literature and other “grey” literature, including reports from state and non-state actors on Russia-Africa military cooperation. The literature from academic articles, books, government reports, statutes, legislation, et cetera was thematically analyzed to inform the study's theoretical framework. The study argues that Burkina Faso’s fragility is not just a domestic failure but a product of international competition and colonial legacies. This reframing is valuable for comparative analysis across the Sahel. While the study sought to situate the topic within contemporary developments in Africa, it supported this argument with a historical reflection on Russia-Africa relations, particularly during the Cold War and decolonization. The study used HeinOnline, Taylor & Francis, geopolitical journals, and Google Scholar to access academic literature. This was searched using keywords such as “Africa,” “Russia,” and “Military cooperation,” among others. Dates in the search engine were systematically adjusted to retrieve literature covering the 2020- 2026 period. This chronological assessment of the existing literature enabled a historical and contemporary thematic analysis of Russia-Africa military cooperation. As the reflections are those of the researcher, this paper also corroborated the literature review with insights from informal interactions with genuine Scholars and diplomats at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and policy institutions in Russia.

The article situates Burkina Faso’s realignment within a long trajectory of colonial legacies, insurgent violence, and repeated military coups. This historical layering strengthens its argument that foreign policy shifts are structural rather than merely reactive. *Example:* The text notes that “Burkina Faso represents a paradigmatic case for understanding the dynamics of continuity and transformation in postcolonial West African states,” highlighting the interplay between colonial dependency and contemporary sovereignty struggles. The article consistently employs formal, analytical language and extensively cites scholarly sources. This enhances credibility and situates the work within established debates. While the article convincingly shows France’s declining influence and Russia’s rise, it cannot address the roles of other geopolitical actors (e.g., Turkey, AGCC states, and regional ECOWAS dynamics). This risks oversimplifying multipolar competition. Through adopting critical perspectives, the study challenges mainstream

narratives of Western intervention. It emphasizes anti-French sentiment and grassroots imaginaries, aligning with recent scholarship on decolonial geopolitics.

5. FINDINGS

5.1. The Resurgence of Russia in Africa

The growing role of Russia's military support for African countries has drawn mixed reactions about its costs and benefits for both Russia and Africa. While others view the Kremlin's closeness to Africa positively as a way to balance the dominant West, others see the Russia-Africa relationship as predatory. The Russia-Africa relationship has also been argued by critical observers to be motivated by Russia's international isolation by the West, and therefore to serve as a foreign policy tool to counter the West's argument that Russia is isolated [25].

Russia's interest in Africa centers on access to resources through mining concessions and on security markets involving the sale of military hardware and training, as it is Africa's largest arms supplier [26]. Indeed, the USA and European Union (EU) have raised concern about Russia's increasing military footprint in Africa, and Russia's support to authoritarian regimes that could erode democratic ideals. Interestingly, while the West is keen to portray Russia as seeking opportunities to access Africa's minerals, Russia has no such history in Africa, unlike the West. According to Neethling (2003), the Kremlin has used the state-funded Wagner private military company (PMC) to promote Russia's foreign policy in Africa, especially in resource-rich, fragile countries. The Kremlin, however, denies a direct link to Wagner, which is believed to be a Kremlin-controlled proxy used without accountability.

Russia is avoiding direct competition with countries such as the USA and China by targeting countries that are neither strongly aligned with the two nor have strong ties to them. Even though it cited the Ethiopian case, Russia was warned that it cannot continue to rely on its Soviet legacy to penetrate Africa; the role Russia played in the decolonization of some African countries still endears many African countries to what Russia has to offer in the 21st century [27]. Historically speaking, the erstwhile USSR worked with and supported the African National Congress (ANC), which struggled to defeat apartheid and

ultimately led South Africa to independence, and has since maintained close ties with South Africa under the ANC [28].

The democratic backsliding witnessed globally, including in purportedly developed democracies, hints at the need to reimagine alternative models of governance that explain the decline and address questions of sustainability. Post-Cold War, it was generally expected to usher in democratic ideals; with the end of history, this has not been the case. Although Russia relegated Africa to the periphery after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and adopted a relatively low profile in global power dynamics, Vladimir Putin later reaffirmed Russia's commitment to a multi-polar world [29]. This strategic approach was more evident during the second Gulf War, as the Iraq crisis and war of 2003, where Russia, alongside African countries, strongly objected and consequently denied the USA, Britain, and Australia the much-needed United Nations Security Council (UNSC) authorization for the war [30]. However, the war was declared; most African countries joined Russia in opposing the aggressors, with only very few supporting the invasion [31]. Although Africa remained marginalized, it was clear that it remained a powerful force in global affairs and found good company in Russia's stance. Unlike in the 1960's, when Russia and China were rivals, their relationship is now cordial, and they are collaborating to challenge Western norms. Even though Russia-Africa relations declined after the end of the Cold War, they were positively rebranded in the 21st century, with the African continent's rising prominence in the international arena presenting a new series of opportunities for Russia in economic and political domains [32].

Despite Africa's great potential and immense natural resources, it is lagging on the global stage, partly due to protracted conflicts and political instability. Consequently, the African Union (AU) recognized the perennial problem of conflict on the continent. It developed a flagship project, "*Silencing the Guns by 2020*, [33]" which, unfortunately, has not been very successful, given the many conflicts still being experienced on the continent. The strong neoliberal views still guiding the AU and its agenda - partly influenced by the AU's financing by Western countries seem to be facing strong pushback occasioned by democratic backsliding. Hitherto, the USA and its allies may have substantially succeeded in isolating Russia and strengthening the Trans-Atlantic alliance; they have not been successful in convincing African countries to cut ties with Russia [34]. Theoretically, the

study will be guided by “pragmatism,” which seems to guide Russia-Africa relations as it selectively picks its battles to its advantage.

5.2. Kremlin’s Russia-Africa military cooperation strategy

Although Russia-Africa military cooperation took a low profile after the end of the Cold War, the Kremlin has pursued an ambitious strategy to increase Russia’s engagement with Africa since the early 2000s. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union had close working relationships with Algeria, Angola, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, Mozambique, among others, and the Kremlin supported them with arms, military training, and advisory services. More recently, Russia targets natural resources and security contracts, especially in erstwhile French and Portuguese colonies in Africa, as these powers are deemed weak. In the wake of recent coups in the Sahel region, the Kremlin is open to military cooperation, which is ostensibly meant to help Sahel countries contain terrorist and combatant groups in the region. While it was expected that Russia’s entry into the Sahel could help Burkina Faso curb militancy and terrorist insurgency, the two countries continue to face several attacks, with Burkina Faso’s military being accused of human rights violations targeting civilians. Indeed, Burkina Faso has seen an increased number of deaths associated with militancy, including increased deaths of civilians caused by militants and security forces [35]. Although some have accused Russia of opportunistically exploiting fragile states in Africa to secure mining concessions and arms deals, this remains unsubstantiated, partly because Russia did not colonize any African country and has continued to champion state sovereignty, especially in Africa. Such a demonstration is depicted by Russian support for decolonization struggles in Africa, especially in South Africa, even though one could argue that the historical. Russia’s return to sub-Saharan Africa is driven by geo-economic and geopolitical considerations that were central pillars of Russian foreign policy and national security strategies during the period 2015–2023 [36]. This has been reflected in a significant expansion of Russia–Africa cooperation, focusing on securing access to strategic natural resources, increasing Russian arms exports, and expanding its presence in military and security services markets. This process has resulted in the signing of more than 21 military-technical cooperation agreements during this period [37].

In this context, Russian private military and security companies have emerged as a central operational tool for reshaping the security environment in several African countries

through targeted interventions that influence local security structures and regional governance patterns [38]. From a broader strategic perspective, the intensification of Russian–African security cooperation entails multi-layered geopolitical implications, as it contributes to reshaping the balance of international influence on the continent. One of the most significant repercussions is the growing concern over the redistribution of security dependencies along NATO's southern flank, particularly in light of the expansion of terrorist threats in the Sahel and the associated risks they pose to stability in Southern European states [39].

Africa represents a central arena in the “*Third International Competition*,” given the close connection between regional security and global security balances in the maritime, energy, and economic domains. Contextually, Russia’s return to Africa reflects an attempt to overcome political isolation and mitigate the impact of sanctions by expanding cooperation with African states, particularly through the use of private military and security companies in reshaping local security patterns [40].

Events have overtaken Russia's role in the decolonization of Africa and may not apply to current developments in the Sahel, while announcing the new military cooperation with Russia in 2023, the president of the National Council for the Safeguarding of Homeland of Niger, General Abdourahamane Tiani, welcomed the Russian deputy defense minister, Colonel General Yunus-bek Yevkurov, and announced a “*strengthening of defense cooperation*” with Russia in an unprecedented move; consequently, a Europe-backed civilian mission and European Union Military [41].

The junta led by Tchiani has since revoked the Partnership Mission in Niger (EUMPM, Niger). More recently, the Kremlin has rebranded the PMC as the African Corps, bringing it under Russian state control, with reports indicating it now operates in Burkina Faso. It could have replaced the PMC in Libya (Oxford Analytica, 2024). This not only demonstrates the Kremlin’s intention to work more directly with these particular regimes in Africa but could point to more robust military cooperation in the future.

5.3. Responses of Burkina Faso and Niger to Russia-Africa cooperation strategy

Burkina Faso is engaging positively with Russia and seems ready for strengthened ties, not just in the military. This has, however, angered allies like the USA, which has

reportedly warned Burkina Faso against engaging with Russia, undermining Niger's ability to make decisions as a sovereign state. Some analysts and commentators have also cited Burkina Faso's choice to embrace Russia as symbolizing the return of the Cold War in the Sahel [42].

Following the arrival of Russian military instructors to Niger in mid-April 2024, protests took place in which protestors reportedly demanded that USA military leave Niger to pave the way for the new Russian allies [43]. While it is unclear whether the junta-led government of Burkina Faso organizes these protests or whether they are spontaneous actions by populations keen to cut ties with their traditional allies, it is evident that both the USA and France are facing a major backlash in other Sahel countries [44].

5.4. Implications of Russia-Africa military cooperation strategy

As ties between Russia and Burkina Faso strengthen, traditional allies such as the USA and France face stiff competition [45]. They may feel that their geopolitical interests are at stake. Accordingly, France has major stakes in Uranium, Moroccan companies in roads and telecommunications, real estate, and banking, while Turkish companies are in hotel management and construction. It is therefore logical to argue that Burkina Faso's closeness to Russia suggests that Russian companies interested in doing business in this country are likely to be preferred over French companies.

In Burkina Faso, Russia has taken advantage of strained relations or failed policies of the Western powers, most of which were erstwhile colonizers, to project Russia as a defender of sovereignty and as one keen on political stability, rather than pushing for democratic ideals or interfering in domestic affairs [46]. It is the Russian approach to governance and development that has led to criticism that it supports autocracy and authoritarian regimes. This criticism is often echoed in the West, although the perceived popularity of these recent coups is now putting this argument into question.

5.5. State Fragmentation and the Rise of Security Threats (2015–Present)

Since 2015, Burkina Faso has entered an unprecedented phase of security deterioration, characterized by a declining capacity of the state to assert authority over its entire territory, alongside the growing activity of armed groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda and ISIS, such as Ansar al-Islam and the purported Islamic State in the Greater Sahara.

These organizations have exploited the fragility of state institutions, weak governance, and the absence of development in peripheral regions, thereby expanding their influence and attracting segments of local populations affected by economic and social marginalization [47]. This period demonstrates that the security crisis in Burkina Faso cannot be reduced solely to ideological or religious dimensions, but is closely linked to the weakness of state institutions, their inability to provide basic services, ensure equitable distribution of resources, and enforce the rule of law. As violence has escalated and the number of displaced persons and casualties has increased, the relationship between the state and society has experienced a growing erosion of trust. This marginalization has led many local communities to rely on self-defense formations and paramilitary groups to protect their areas. Consequently, a complex security landscape has emerged, marked by the proliferation of armed actors and the erosion of the state's monopoly over the legitimate use of force. Furthermore, deepened instability and weakened prospects for building a coherent national security framework capable of addressing escalating challenges and reasserting control over the national territory [48].

5.6. Crisis of External Intervention and the Erosion of French Legitimacy

In the face of escalating security threats and armed insurgencies in the Sahel, France intensified its military presence through Operation Barkhane, the cornerstone of its regional security strategy. However, the limited tangible gains on the ground and the continued expansion of armed groups led to a complex legitimacy crisis affecting both the Burkinabe state and its external allies, rather than contributing to the restoration of stability and strengthening public trust in state institutions, the intervention instead fuelled growing public resentment and increasingly vocal opposition to the French presence, which was framed as a continuation of historical colonial domination in a new form [49]. These perceptions were further reinforced by ongoing economic and social crises, as well as the inability of security policies to address the structural roots of the conflict, thereby weakening popular acceptance of France's role and eroding much of its political legitimacy, as domestic criticism intensified and confidence in the partnership's effectiveness with her declined, France gradually shifted from a key security partner to a controversial external actor. This transformation opened the way for new orientations aimed at reshaping foreign alliances and seeking strategic alternatives beyond the

traditional Western framework [50]. The French military presence in Francophone Africa is closely linked to its colonial legacy, as French forces have long been perceived as guarantors of stability in its erstwhile colonies. Through operations such as Serval, Sangaris, and Barkhane, France has justified its interventions on the grounds of counterterrorism, particularly in the Sahel region. In contrast, in 2013, Operation Serval was launched in Mali to stop the advance of militant groups toward Bamako, Mali's capital [51].

However, the outcomes of French intervention have faced growing criticism, as the strong military presence coincided with continued deterioration in security conditions, rising terrorist attacks, and expanding waves of displacement. Such reproachment has reinforced perceptions of the operation as an extension of post-colonial patterns of influence, particularly given Sahel dependence on French capabilities in intelligence, financing, and operational support [52].

In many French-speaking African countries, a political narrative has emerged in recent years that holds France responsible for multiple crises, from armed conflicts to poverty and underdevelopment, and casts reduced or severed relations with France as expressions of national sovereignty and a continuation of the decolonization process. Such a discourse is part of a preconceived anti-Western trend, accusing Western powers of exploiting African resources through employing their political and cultural models and applying double standards. Consequently, public opinion is divided between advocating for a redefinition of relations with France on more balanced terms and calling for a complete break, depending on the political and social context of each country [53].

In spite of such support, the Western security approach failed to limit the expansion of armed groups or to address the structural causes of the crisis, leading to a decline in public trust in traditional partnerships. Henceforth, large segments of society in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger began to view the French presence as part of the problem rather than the solution, perceiving it as an extension of erstwhile colonial forms of influence rather than as an equal security partnership. This later contributed to the reconfiguration of regional alliances and the search for alternative security partners [54], as such repercussions are tantamount to growing anti-French sentiment and the outbreak of popular protests

against its military presence, as seen in Niger in 2021 and Burkina Faso in 2022, with similar protests emerging in other countries such as Chad [55].

5.7. Political Militarization and Coups (2021–2022)

During the period 2021–2022, Burkina Faso witnessed a gradual paradigm shift toward the “*militarization of political legitimacy*,” which, unfortunately, the military junta construed as a doctrine of necessity, as it emerged as a central actor in reshaping the power structure and redefining the sources of legitimacy [56]. This trajectory was embodied in the coup that ousted President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré in 2022, followed later by the removal of the transitional leadership under Paul-Henri Damiba, reflecting the depth of institutional turmoil and the erosion of mechanisms of democratic civilian transition [57]. This transformation can be interpreted within the framework of a “*hybrid state failure*” model, in which the fragility of civilian legitimacy intersects with the rising role of the military institution as an actor perceived as a corrective to the crisis, despite its lack of long-term institutional stability. Although these coups were initially met with a degree of popular acceptance, this support remained contingent on the military authorities’ ability to deliver tangible security outcomes amid the deteriorating security situation [58]. This reveals the nature of an “*instrumental legitimacy*” grounded primarily in security performance rather than in democratic norms and civilian institutions [59].

5.8. Determinants of Russian Burkinabe Rapprochement and Foreign Policy Transformations

The Sahel region is undergoing an accelerating strategic transformation driven by persistent political instability and the rise of military coups, leading to a restructuring of regional security alliances in response to growing cross-border threats, particularly in the tri-border area. Hitherto, amid renewed great-power competition and growing Western and Russian engagement in Africa, Russian private military and security companies—most notably the Wagner Group—have emerged as an alternative security actor in the region [60]. Such a polarized model is increasingly perceived as an option that allows Sahel states to diversify their security partnerships and reduce reliance on the Western liberal approach, which is often criticized for adopting a neo-colonial, paternalistic posture. The growing influence of the Wagner Group is closely linked to the gradual decline of Western military

presence and the repositioning of its forces in the region, reflecting a broader shift in the regional security architecture [61].

6. THE PLAUSIBLE SOLUTIONS-THE WAY FORWARD

The international system has undergone rapid transformations over the past decade, reshaping patterns of competition among major powers, particularly in regions of growing geopolitical and strategic significance, most notably the African Sahel [62]. This region has shifted from a marginal space in international calculations to a central arena where security, economic, and political interests intersect, driven by the rise of terrorist threats, the spread of military coups, and the increasing importance of natural resources and regional and global influence routes. Consequently, Burkina Faso has emerged as one of the Sahel states most affected by these transformations, particularly following the political change that led to the establishment of a transitional authority that redefined foreign policy priorities and the country's network of international alliances [63].

Contextually, the military councils in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger adopted a discourse opposing French and broader Western influence. This shift has led to a reconfiguration of international actors' positions in the region and the withdrawal of several Western stakeholders [64]. This trajectory represents a significant geopolitical turning point, reflecting a broader redefinition of priorities. These states have increasingly sought alternative strategic partners—particularly Russia and China—that are seen as more aligned with their conceptions of security and sovereignty, especially in light of the perceived failures of traditional partnerships in counterterrorism efforts [65].

For decades, France maintained its position as the most influential external partner in Burkina Faso, relying on its colonial legacy, political and cultural ties, and military and security cooperation, which formed one of the pillars of its presence in West Africa. However, the declining effectiveness of the French approach in addressing security challenges, coupled with growing popular and official criticism of the effectiveness of this role, has opened the door for other international powers to reposition themselves within the region, most notably Russia, which has sought to expand its presence through a variety of diplomatic, security, political, and economic tools [66].

Russia has consolidated its presence through security and military instruments, including private military companies, while China has focused on investments in infrastructure and natural resources. This has contributed to the growing complexity of the international competitive environment in the Sahel and to the reshaping of security and development approaches in the region. This dynamic unfolds within a broader regional context extending across a sensitive geographic space from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea. This area is marked by increasing geopolitical and economic significance, alongside rapid population growth that further exacerbates challenges related to stability and security[67].

Under transitional rule, Burkina Faso moved toward adopting a more independent foreign policy, diversifying external partnerships and reassessing traditional alliances in line with national security requirements and the restoration of sovereignty over political decision-making. This shift has been reflected in growing levels of cooperation with Russia, both at the security and political levels, alongside a redefinition of relations with France. This has created a process of strategic realignment within the state and reshaped the contours of international competition across the entire Sahel region [68].

This shift is not limited to a change in Burkina Faso's foreign policy orientation; rather, it reflects a broader pattern of transformations within the international system, in which traditional forms of influence are declining in favor of new configurations based on diversified partnerships and intensified competition among global powers for influence in developing states. Accordingly, examining the drivers of Russian–Burkinabe rapprochement and the transformations of French influence is significant not only because of the specificity of the Burkinabe case itself, but also because it provides an analytical framework for understanding the reconfiguration of power balances in Africa, as well as the extent to which domestic dynamics in transitional states shape the restructuring of international relations [69]. Our investigation, through text, asserts that Russia consolidated its presence through private military companies. Still, unfortunately, sources provide little empirical detail on the scale, operations, or local perceptions of these actors. This weakens the explanatory power compared to the rich documentation of French failures.

Building on this, the present study aims to analyze the political, security, and economic factors that have contributed to Burkina Faso's shift from a traditional

partnership model with France toward a new trajectory of rapprochement with Russia. It also examines the implications of this transformation for the structure of international influence in the Sahel region and for the future of great-power competition in West Africa. To achieve this, the study employs approaches from international relations, geopolitics, and foreign policy analysis, enabling a scientific explanation of ongoing transformations beyond conventional descriptive frameworks [70].

7. CONCLUSION

This article analyzed historical and contemporary academic and grey literature to establish the nature of Russia-Burkina Faso military cooperation, and how the country is responding to this nascent partnership with Russia. While military cooperation between Russia, on the one hand, is still evolving, it is concluded that as their relationship strengthens, it weakens the relationship between the USA-led Western allies in West Africa and Burkina Faso. Hence, it is too early to draw concrete conclusions; Russia's military cooperation with the two countries is currently at its highest level. It may significantly shape the responses of other bordering countries in the future, especially if the cooperation is broadened to include sectors beyond security. The article asserts that while Russia has demonstrated enthusiasm to cooperate with Burkina Faso, especially to enhance its military capabilities and eradicate terrorism, terrorists continue to cause insecurity, indicating those efforts are yet to bear tangible fruit.

The French Republic has suffered a political backlash in the region after she was accused of maintaining an exploitative colonial legacy; Russia may endure similar consequences if its cooperation with Burkina Faso fails to capture the on-the-ground African realities, expectations, and aspirations. Unlike the colonial top-down approach adopted by the French Republic, albeit rejected, Russia must instead adopt bottom-up, consultative policies and measures that will entrench a sense of sovereignty and belonging among Burkinabes and Nigeriens. In that case, Russia will be seen as a dependable partner, and not one imposing its interests on Africa.

Although Russia may not have invested vast resources in Africa as the USA, China, and others have, it concludes that the African continent needs and appreciates constructive partnership, not aid that perpetuates inequality and entrenches dependency. The donor-

recipient model adopted by the West has not only failed in Africa but is demeaning and assumes that Africa has no agency, which is misleading and inaccurate. The article argues that the preference for Russia in the Sahel is premised on the fact that it will not impose the “*big brother*” attitude often associated with Western hegemony.

Acknowledgements

The authors express their sincere appreciation to all individuals and institutions whose academic discussions, professional insights, and publicly available resources contributed to the completion of this study. The authors also gratefully acknowledge the Editorial Office of the *Al-Biruni Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* **Noor Al-Ilm Printing, Publishing and Distribution**, for granting a full waiver of the Article Processing Charges (APCs), which facilitated the publication of this work. The APC waiver had no influence on the study design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of the findings, manuscript preparation, or the decision to submit the manuscript for publication.

List of Abbreviation:

(AQIM): Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb; (ISGS): Islamic State in the Greater Sahara; (JNIM): Jama ‘at Nasr al-Islam wal-Muslimin; (ACLED): Armed Conflict Location & Event Data; (IIAG): Ibrahim Index of African Governance; (ECOWAS): The Economic Community Of West African States; (AGCC): Africa Global Chamber of Commerce; (EU): European Union; (USA): The United States of America; (PMC): private military company; (ANC): African National Congress; (UNSC): United Nations Security Council; (AU): African Union.

Author Contribution:

All authors contributed equally to the main contributor to this paper. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript prior to submission.

Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

The authors hereby declare that no generative artificial intelligence or AI-assisted technologies were used at any stage during the preparation of this manuscript, including language editing, proofreading, or content development. The authors take full responsibility for the originality and integrity of the work presented in this publication.

Funding:

This study did not receive any financial support, grant, or external funding from any public, commercial, governmental, or non-profit organization. The research was conducted without financial sponsorship. The only support provided was a full waiver of the Article Processing Charges (APCs) granted by **Noor Al-Ilm Printing, Publishing and Distribution**, through

the Editorial Office of the **Al-Biruni Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences**. This waiver had no influence on the study design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of the findings, manuscript preparation, or the decision to submit the manuscript for publication.

Conflicts of Interest:

“The authors declare no conflict of interest.”

References

- [1] Bouragba, Abdessamed, & Fadhila Aissat. (2025). "A geopolitical study of the Sahel region." *Revue de Recherches et Études Scientifiques* 19, no. 1: 642-662. <https://asjp.cerist.dz/en/article/263027>
- [2] Varela, M., D. Bulska, R. Bilali, and R. Xu. (2025). "Does Social Cohesion Predict Justification of Extremist Violence? Evidence From the Sahel Region in Burkina Faso." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 55, no. 6: 1117–1130. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.3144>
- [3] Baldaro, E. (2021). Rashomon in the Sahel: Conflict dynamics of security regionalism. *Security Dialogue*, 52(3), 266-283 . <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010620934061>
- [4] Shabafrouz, Miriam. (January 2010). Oil and the Eruption of the Algerian Civil War: A Context-sensitive Analysis of the Ambivalent Impact of Resource Abundance. GIGA Research Programme: Violence and Security. GIGA WP 118/2010. https://edoc.vifapod.de/opus/volltexte/2010/2085/pdf/wp118_shabafrouz.pdf
- [5] Bere, M. (2024). "Terrorism in the Sahel." In *The Routledge Companion to Terrorism Studies: New Perspectives and Topics*, edited by M. Abrahms. London: Routledge, 2024. file:///C:/Users/DELL/Downloads/10.4324_9781003540168_previewpdf.pdf
- [6] Harmon, S. (2010). "From GSPC to AQIM: The Evolution of an Algerian Islamist Terrorist Group into an al-Qaida Affiliate and Its Implications for the Sahara-Sahel Region." *Concerned Africa Scholars* 8 : 12–29 <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/From-GSPC-to-AQIM%3A-The-evolution-of-an-Algerian-an-Harmon/450ae6e29d7e9031911ff8e6c393439ab666eacb>
- [7] Raleigh, C., Nsaibia, H., & Dowd, C. (2020). *The Sahel crisis since 2012* (Version 1). University of Sussex.p1 <https://hdl.handle.net/10779/uos.23478347.v1>
- [8] Yameogo, Souleymane. (2026). Hierarchies of Political Fear: Democratic Legitimacy under Chronic Insecurity-Evidence from Burkina Faso. No. czx97_v1. Center for Open Science, <file:///C:/Users/DELL/Downloads/Hierarchies%20of%20Political%20Fear-Democratic%20Legitimacy%20under%20Chronic%20Insecurity%20-%20Evidence%20from%20Burkina%20Faso.pdf>
- [9] Revisiting French Influence in Francophone Africa: A Case of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. (2025). *The Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, 47(2), 41-52. <https://doi.org/10.35293/srsa.v47i2.5486>
- [10] Wendwoaga Anselme Kiemtoré and Amber Murrey. (2026) 'Prendre notre destin en main': anti-imperialism and sovereignty in Burkinabè political discourse from Thomas Sankara to Ibrahim Traoré. *Review of African Political Economy*. Vol. 53(188):259-268. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62191/ROAPE-2026-0013>

- [11] Wangraoua, W. Vanessa Estelle. (2025). "The role of the Russian Federation in ensuring the security of Burkina Faso at the present stage." *Conflictology/nota bene* 4 (2025): 81-92. <https://journals.rcsi.science/2454-0617/article/view/366958>
- [12] Wangraoua, W. Vanessa Estelle. (2025). "The role of the Russian Federation in ensuring the security of Burkina Faso at the present stage." *Conflictology/nota bene* 4 (2025): 81-92. <https://journals.rcsi.science/2454-0617/article/view/366958>
- [13] Brandon S. Haynes, (2025). Political Alignment of Sahelian Jihadist Groups: Analysis of their Motives, Advisor Amy Skoll, Publisher California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, Degree Level Undergraduate, p3-10. <https://scholarworks.calstate.edu/downloads/w6634d50q>
- [14] Amberg, F., De Allegri, M., Ridde, V. *et al.* (2025). The evolution of facility-based deliveries at primary healthcare centres during an insecurity and conflict crisis in Burkina Faso: a geospatial analysis. *Confl Health* **19**, 78 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-025-00723-8>
- [15] Kafando, W.A. & Sakurai, T. (2025) Effects and mechanisms of armed conflict on agricultural production: Spatial evidence from terrorist violence in Burkina Faso. *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 76, 24–44. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1477-9552.12613>
- [16] International Crisis Group, (accessed May 2, 2025). "Burkina Faso: Stopping the Spiral of Violence," Africa Report n°287, February 24, 2020, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/sahel/burkina-faso/287-burkina-faso-sortir-de-la-spirale-des-violences>
- [17] Nsemba Edward Lenshie (16 Dec 2025): Autocratic resurgence, ECOWAS interventions and geopolitical entanglements in West Africa, *Politikon*, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02589346.2025.2600211>
- [18] Ola, T. P. (2026). Understanding the (Re)emergence of Military Rule in the Coup Belt. *Africa Review*, 18(2), 117-134. <https://doi.org/10.1163/09744061-bja10350>
- [19] "None Can Run Away" War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity in Burkina Faso, Human Rights Watch, 2026. ISBN: 979-8-88708-279-0. https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2026/04/burkinafaso0426%20web_1.pdf
- [20] Debevec, L., Banhoro, Y. (2024). Burkina Faso. In: Jafari, J., Xiao, H. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Tourism*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74923-1_695
- [21] Congdon Fors, Heather, Ann-Sofie Isaksson, Annika Lindskog, and Mohammad Sepahvand. (2026): "A war against education?: Violent conflict and the supply of schools and teachers in Burkina Faso." Working Paper in Economics 860 1-61. <https://lup.lub.lu.se/search/publication/47fd2747-a449-4967-8158-d7969605df88>
- [22] UNICEF, (accessed September 5, 2025) "Burkina Faso Humanitarian Situation Report No. 10 - 1 January-31 December 2024," February 22, 2025, <https://reliefweb.int/report/burkina-faso/unicef-burkina-faso-humanitarian-situation-report-no-10-1-january-31-december-2024>
- [23] World Bank, (accessed on January 29, 2026). Burkina Faso, <https://www.worldbank.org/ext/en/country/burkinafaso>
- [24] Karagiannis, G., Paleologou, SM. (2025). Governance and economic growth in Africa: evidence from linear, nonlinear and dynamic panel analysis. *Empir Econ* **69**, 39–75. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00181-025-02726-z>
- [25] Audinet, M. (2025). 'Down with neocolonialism!' Strategic narrative resurgence and foreign policy preferences in wartime Russia. *European Journal of International Security*, 1–22. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2025.10011>

- [26] Ramontja, Naledi. (2025). "Africa-Russia military relations: navigating evolving dynamics, policies, and challenges." *Journal of African Foreign Affairs* 12, no. 1: 137. <https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.31920/2056-5658/2025/v12n1a7>
- [27] Sundelson, A. E., Gronvall, G. K., Ackerman, G., Limaye, R., Watson, C., & Sell, T. K. (2025). Diplomacy disrupted: A mixed-methods analysis of Russian disinformation at the Ninth Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, 44(1), 28–48. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/pls.2025.3>
- [28] BARKAN, ROBERT. (2025). "ANALYSE DE L'IMPACT DE L'AIDE SOVIÉTIQUE À L'AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (ANC) ENTRE 1976 ET 1991." <https://archipel.uqam.ca/18535/1/m18885.pdf>
- [29] Bond, Patrick. (2026). "Uni-Polar, Multi-Polar or Non-Polar Politics?." *The Global Left in a Multipolar World: Towards a Planetary Politics of Justice and Survival* (2026): 105. [https://books.google.jo/books?hl=ar&lr=&id=oK_TEQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=RA1-PT106&dq=%5B29%5D%09++Bond,+Patrick.+\"Uni-Polar,+Multi-Polar+or+Non-Polar+Politics%3F.\"+The+Global+Left+in+a+Multipolar+World:+Towards+a+Planetary+Politics+of+Justice+and+Survival+\(2026\):+105.&ots=DGbuobQnk7&sig=m6JLVHBIIPV7OuZi1pENJdHNHtY&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.jo/books?hl=ar&lr=&id=oK_TEQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=RA1-PT106&dq=%5B29%5D%09++Bond,+Patrick.+\)
- [30] Al-Humaidawi, N. T. O., & Al-Taie, M. S. K. (2026). THE AMERICAN–RUSSIAN COMPETITION OVER IRAQ DURING THE PRESIDENCIES OF GEORGE W. BUSH AND VLADIMIR PUTIN (2000–2003). *Veredas Do Direito*, 23(7), e236346. <https://doi.org/10.18623/rvd.v23.6346>
- [31] Nyere, Chidochashe. "Africa–Russia relations interrogated." *Africa's Strategic Partnerships with BRICS*, Chapter 5: (2025): 69. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Gustavo-De-Carvalho-5/publication/395994567_The_strategic_rollercoaster_Navigating_the_ups_and_downs_of_Brazil-Africa_relations/links/68dbdc9402d6215259b74dd8/The-strategic-rollercoaster-Navigating-the-ups-and-downs-of-Brazil-Africa-relations.pdf#page=98
- [32] Chan, Y. H. (2025). Soviet chinese co-operation: evaluating the experience and effectiveness of soviet military advisers and armaments in China, 1937-1943 (Master's thesis, University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada). Retrieved from <https://ucalgary.scholaris.ca/items/413aaf02-b518-4786-8a2b-a86b7dd3ace1>
- [33] Niringiyimana, J. (2025). Silencing the Guns in Africa: Hindsight, Insight and Foresight Capabilities. In: Erameh, N.I., Breakfast, N.B., Ubi, E.N. (eds) *Silencing the Guns*, Volume 2. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-96-7159-5_4
- [34] George, Daniel C. and Alverdian, Indra (2025) "Repositioning North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO): The New Security Dilemma on Trans–Atlantic Relations Amid Shifting Global Geopolitics," *Journal of Strategic and Global Studies*: Vol. 8: Iss. 1, Article 4. DOI: <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/jsjgs/vol8/iss1/4/>
- [35] Simane, B., Kapwata, T., Naidoo, N., Cissé, G., Wright, C. Y., & Berhane, K. (2025). Ensuring Africa's Food Security by 2050: The Role of Population Growth, Climate-Resilient Strategies, and Putative Pathways to Resilience. *Foods*, 14(2), 262. <https://doi.org/10.3390/foods14020262>
- [36] Kanet, R. E., & Moulioukova, D. (2022). Russia's return to Africa: a renewed challenge to the West? *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 38(5), 427–439. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1060586X.2022.2034357>
- [37] Neethling, Theo.(2020). Assessing Russia's New Interaction with Africa: Energy Diplomacy, Arms Exports and Mineral Resource Markets. *The Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, 42(2), 15-42. <https://doi.org/10.35293/srsa.v42i2.72>

- [38] Adam Potočňák & Miroslav Mareš .(2022). Russia's Private Military Enterprises as a Multipurpose Tool of Hybrid Warfare, *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 35:2, 181-204, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2022.2132608>
- [39] Kohnert, Dirk. (27 March 2022). The impact of Russian presence in Africa. GIGA Institute for African Studies, Hamburg.MPRA Paper No. 112564, https://mpr.aub.uni-muenchen.de/112564/1/MPRA_paper_112564.pdf
- [40] Bamidele, S. & Eramah, N. I. (2025). Moscow's African relations: Unveiling Russia's strategy in Africa and its impact on global politics. *Security and Defence Quarterly*, 51(3), 112–129. <https://doi.org/10.35467/sdq/206969>
- [41] Jaklin, D. C. (2026). The Wagner Group: Paramilitary–Intelligence Nexus and Its Role in the War in Ukraine. *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 39(2), 452–469. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08850607.2025.2498276>
- [42] Billy, A. (2025). A Critique of the U.S. Global War on Terror in the Sahel. *African Security*, 18(4), 376–398. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19392206.2025.2552094>
- [43] RICHMOND, Amy, Richard WOLFEL, Christiana FAIRFIELD, Rick GRANNIS, and Peter GRAZAITIS. (2026) "FRAGILE STABILITY: THE IMPACT OF GEOPOLITICAL INTERESTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY ON BURKINA FASO'S POLITICAL LANDSCAPE." *Folia Geographica* 68, no. 1 (2026): 5. https://openurl.ebsco.com/EPDB%3Agcd%3A9%3A19116361/detailv2?sid=ebsco%3Aplink%3Acrawler-gcd&id=ebsco%3Agcd%3A194026719&crl=c&jrnl=13366157&link_origin=scholar.google.com
- [44] Poble, Dmytro K., and D. O. Medynska. (2025). "Foreign policy of the United States and France in the Sahel countries: contemporary aspect." <https://dspace.onu.edu.ua/home>
- [45] Mohammed, Rahali. (2025). "DECLINING FRENCH INFLUENCE IN THE SAHEL: STRATEGIES AND REPERCUSSIONS." *JOURNAL FOR IRANIAN STUDIES* 9, no. 22 (2025): 99. <https://rasanah-iiis.org/english/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2025/11/Issue-22.pdf#page=100>
- [46] Fasinu, E. S., Asesoke, S. A., & Eloche, J. A. (2025). The Legal and Diplomatic Implications of France's Security Disengagement from the Sahel: A Case Studies of Niger, Mali, and Burkina-Faso, 2021–2024. *Journal of Contemporary International Relations and Diplomacy*, 6(1), 95–115. <https://doi.org/10.53982/jcird.2025.0601.05-j>
- [47] Ofori-Ayeh, David . (2022). Proliferation of Non-State Armed Groups and their impact on state fragility and insecurity in the Sahel Region of Africa, Master Thesis, CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, Institute of Political Studi, P37-60. <https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/171350/120410489.pdf?sequence=1>
- [48] Supervisor: Professor Christian Kaunert. (June 2024). enquiry of the discrepancies between the juntas' securitising discourses and the abuses over the civilian population in Burkina Faso between September 2022 and May 2024, Presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of International Master in Security, Intelligence and Strategic Studies, <https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/197746/120482965.pdf?sequence=1>
- [49] Sandor, A., & Berlingozzi, L. (2026). Grassroots Geopolitical Imaginaries in the Sahel: Civil Society Security Narratives in Burkina Faso and Niger. *Geopolitics*, 31(4), 1400–1428. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2025.2498381>
- [50] Simasiku, Ricky Simasiku. March 2025. French military intervention in the Sahel: Assessing the prospects for lasting security through military force in Mali since 2013. A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Administration (Political

- Studies) in the Department of Political Studies, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, University of the Western Cape.P33-40.
<https://uwcscholar.uwc.ac.za:8443/server/api/core/bitstreams/4bbf0309-3825-4d0f-81b0-2f057968a417/content>
- [51] Abass, A. (2025). Assessment of France Counter-terrorism Operation in Mali; Through the Lens of the Military Strategy. *Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies*, 5(3), 117–130. <https://doi.org/10.12700/jceas.2025.5.3.395>
- [52] Lanaspá Tambo, Alba Patricia. (2025). "Geopolitics in the Sahel Region: Role of Different International Actors and the Implications for Interregional Stability." <https://titula.universidadeuropea.es/handle/20.500.12880/12222>
- [53] Cline, Lawrence E. (2025). "Sharing Intelligence: The Case of the Sahel." *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 1-18. Cline, L. E. (2025). Sharing Intelligence: The Case of the Sahel. *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08850607.2024.2442397>
- [54] Ajala, Olayinka. (2021). "Botched Coup in Niger Points to Deep Fissures in the Country." *The Conversation* (2021, April 2). Accessed August 9, 2023. <https://theconversation.com/botched-coup-in-niger-points-to-deep-fissures-in-the-country-158330>
- [55] Petidis, P. (2024). "The Sahel Intervention as a Case Study of France's Security Policy in subSaharan Africa." Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), Policy Paper #157/2024. Accessed March, 2024. <https://www.eliamep.gr/wpcontent/uploads/2024/03/Policy-paper-157-.pdf>
- [56] Tangui IZZ and Tenkoul A (2026) The consequences of governance by military authorities in Africa: the cases of Burkina Faso (since September 2022), Mali (since 2020), and Niger (since 2023). *Front. Polit. Sci.* 8:1738884. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2026.1738884>
- [57] Giacomo Cifelli, Russia's BRICS+ & SCO Strategy (Brussels: EPIS, 2025). <https://epi-thinktank.com/publications/russias-brics-sco-strategy>
- [58] Eugene Rumer, Richard Sokolsky, and Andrew Weiss, *Global Russia: The Return of Global Russia* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2025). <https://carnegieendowment.org/projects/the-return-of-global-russia-a-reassessment-of-the-kremlins-international-agenda>
- [59] Sunday Owen Abang , Ekong Akpan Essien ,(2026). Oluwatimilehin Dorcas Olayinka. 2026. Military Government and Regional Cooperation in the Sahel Region of West Africa: An Overview . *AKSU Journal of Administration and Corporate Governance*, Volume 6, Issue 2, 2026; P-ISSN:2805-4083; E-ISSN: 2811-1981 . https://aksujacog.org.ng/articles/26/03/military-government-and-regional-cooperation-in-the-sahel-region-of-west-africa-an-overview/aksujacog_06_02_02.pdf
- [60] Jemlak , M. M., & Momoh, Z. . (2025). The Influence of the Wagner Group on Regional Security in the Sahel Region. *Kashere Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 3(3), 452–460. Retrieved from <https://www.journals.fukashere.edu.ng/index.php/kjpir/article/view/803>
- [61] N-A, May 2024, Mercenary Geopolitics: Russo-African Security Cooperation and Alliance Reconfiguration In the Sahel, Presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of: International Master in Security, Intelligence and Strategic Studies (IMSISS), P2, <https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/191964/120477537.pdf>
- [62] Eva Magdalena Stambøl, Almamy Sylla & Signe Marie Cold-Ravnkilde (2026) Anticolonial Imaginaries in Mali: The Longue Durée of Sovereignty, Security, and Geopolitics, *Geopolitics*, 31:4, 1261-1286, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2025.2523411>

- [63] Ndiaye, B. (2024). A Shift Of The Collective Security Architecture In West Africa. The Defence Horizon Journal. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-96801-1>
- [64] Adam Sandor & Laura Berlingozzi (09 May 2025): Grassroots Geopolitical Imaginaries in the Sahel: Civil Society Security Narratives in Burkina Faso and Niger, Geopolitics, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2025.2498381>
- [65] Thomas Gomart, ed., Europe–Russia: Balance of Power Review (Paris: Institut français des relations internationales, 2025). https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/2025-11/ifri_gomart_ed_europe_russia_2025_1.pdf
- [66] Susannah Patton and Jack Sato, Russia Resurges: Asia Power Index Report 2025 (Sydney: Lowy Institute, 2025). <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/2025-asia-power-index-report>
- [67] Fasinu, E. S., Aseseke, S. A., & Eloche, J. A. (2025). The Legal and Diplomatic Implications of France’s Security Disengagement from the Sahel: A Case Studies of Niger, Mali, and Burkina-Faso, 2021–2024. *Journal of Contemporary International Relations and Diplomacy*, 6(1), 95–115. <https://doi.org/10.53982/jcird.2025.0601.05-j>
- [68] Katica Janeva. (2023). The Dynamics of Influence Warfare in Francophone Africa: Analyzing External Powers’ Strategies and Impacts, *European Perspectives – International Scientific Journal on European Perspectives*, Volume 14, Number 12 (26), pp. 77-100, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.60073/euper.2023.10.05>
- [69] Eneasato Benjamin Onyekachi, Anikwe Johnson Azubike and Ogbuka Ikenna Matthew (2026). ECOWAS Sanctions and Military Coups: A Critical Assessment of their Effectiveness in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. *INOSR ARTS AND MANAGEMENT* 12(1):1-18. <https://doi.org/10.59298/INOSRAM/2026/121.118>
- [70] Julia Voo and Virpratap Vikram Singh, Russia’s Information Confrontation Doctrine in Practice (2014–Present): Intent, Evolution and Implications (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2025). <https://www.iiss.org/research-paper/2025/06/russias-information-confrontation-doctrine-in-practice-2014present-intent-evolution-and-implications/>