THE HITS AND MISSES OF RUSSIA-AFRICA TIE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Nchedo Josephine Oguine
Department of Political Science, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria
Email: josephineoguine002@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
Africa is the second-largest and most populous continent globally; in the last decade has witnessed Russian return under Putin’s administration. In this regard, Russia has changed its point of view over Africa to achieve its aim of being one of the global superpowers. Russia today is wealthier and more stable than it was at any point during the 1990s. The research methodology stems from the review and analysis of several strands of literature. The paper focused on examining the foreign policies of Russia for African states after the new millennium epoch that promoted its swift activities. The paper also fills the existing literature gap in the Russian foreign policy towards African states after the year 2000. It evaluates both countries’ Russian-African strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in socio-economic engagements. It also reveals that the activities of Russia in Africa gained more ground on the dysfunctional inability of African countries to integrate within normative situations. Lastly, the work recommends unity and African socialism among African countries.

KEYWORDS: Africa-Russia, Foreign Policy, Natural Resources, Russia-Ukraine, Development.

INTRODUCTION
In the scramble for Africa, Russia could not find a place in the 17th and 18th centuries to colonize Africa. African countries such as Ethiopia, Somalia, Mozambique, Angola, Egypt, and Libya took solace in the Soviet Union’s anti-imperialistic ideology. In the mid-19th century, the then Soviet Union supported anti-colonial movements in Africa as part of its ideology by providing military aid and advisors to ailing war countries after World War II. Russia increased its concentration on Ethiopia due to Western penetration into Africa by providing arms, military advisers, and medical aid. Positively affected relations between Russia and Ethiopia during the Italian-Ethiopian war. Russia has also offered technical assistance in gold mining operations, geological surveys, and career acquisition for Ethiopian students. After the revolutionary turmoil of 1917, these sills acquisitions gave the Ethiopians an edge over other African countries to serve as advisers to the Ethiopian government (Patman, 2009). In the 1980s, the economy of Africa was under strain, and the relations with the Western countries jeopardized the Soviet interest in Africa. Like other world superpowers, Russia has the same interest and mindset to influence Africa and exploit its enormous economic potential with untapped natural resources.

In the 21st century, several leaders, officials, and foreign ministers visited many African countries, including Kenya, Eritrea, and Ethiopia (Deich, 2009). In 2006, Russia hosted the G8 Summit. After the Summit, Putin persistently showed interest in Africa and opined to proffering solutions to Africa’s energy problem to enhance the continent’s development.

President Putin was the first Russian leader to visit Sub-Saharan Africa in 2007 and gestured Russia’s intention to expand business ties with the Africans. In 2015, President Vladimir Putin posited that “The Russian Federation is developing political, trade and economical, and military-technical cooperation, alliance in terms of security, humanitarian and educational friendship with Latin America and Africa states.” Societal evolution brought a new approach to handling contentious African issues to propel positive change to show Russia’s rising power internationally after Ukraine and the Syrian War. Besides Moscow’s superpower status as a leader in combating terrorism, her struggle against ISIS in Syria has strengthened the country’s quest to indirectly or direct render Russian military and economic assistance to the Somali and Malian governments to ensure a positive atmosphere for regional security (Ramani 2016).

Notably, Russia is the second-largest arms exporter globally, aside from the United States (SIPRI, 2016). Due to existing sanctions and other foreign policy priorities, Russia has improved its economic situation after the global financial crisis. Using arms sales as a panacea, Russia has active rebuilding political, military, and business relationships across Africa. Moscow has used this ideology of arms. First, business concessions in several African countries such as Sudan and Eritrea to gain more ground in the continent of Africa. Currently, the Russia-Africa policy is focused on bilateral trade and economic and political partnership and is interested in humanitarian services such as peace and education cum security aids (Giles 2013).
SWOT ANALYSIS EVALUATION OF RUSSIAN-AFRICA

Economic Activities
Russia and African countries thrived in economic ties. The diversification of geographical distribution in the range of goods traded in terms of raw material, fertilizer, pipes, and high technology equipment was adopted by both economies to boost bilateral trade relationships and economic activities. The tie is upheld by some African countries such as Senegal, Eswatini, Gabon, Cameroon, and investment agencies; it also has representatives in Madagascar, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa, Nigeria, and Ghana (Emelyanov, 2000). In 2019, The Joint declaration adopted at the first-African Summit in Sochi supported the increase of the volume of Russian-Africa trade. The secretariat of the Russia-Africa partnership forum in 2020 created an association of Economic Cooperation with African States (AECAS) by the President of the Russian Federation, and this unites Russian companies and financial institutions with trade activities in the African market.

Russian mining companies spread across Africa signed deals with twenty African countries to extract minerals such as the diamond in Angola, platinum in Zimbabwe, Aluminum in Guinea, Central African Republic gold, diamond, uranium, and the Democratic of Congo; diamond, copper, cobalt, and coltan. It also signed an oil deal with African countries like Algeria, Egypt, Mozambique, and Nigeria. Russian parastatals such as Rosneft and Lukoil accepted the negotiation deal because these resources are difficult to access and are located under deep water or in Arctic regions. Such partnership with Russia brings capital and technical know-how to tap into the aforementioned natural endowments. These agreements’ details made it confidential and difficult to evaluate the actual value or the trade benefits to African treasuries.

Russia is at the top list of sales of arms to Africa, and her arm deal activity covers 49% of the overall arms market in Africa, namely; Algeria, Angola, Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria, Sudan, Senegal, and Zambia are all top buyers of Russian arms in Africa (Fleurant et al., 2019). African nations are increasingly willing to purchase more sophisticated weaponry and military armories such as fighter aircraft, helicopters, tanks, and air defense systems to combat various forms of violence and regional and internal crises (Waruru, 2019). Russian arms are affordable, easy to maintain, durable, and reliable. It’s very rare for Russia to leverage its components as part of an “arms-for-resources” deal. Russia’s $20 billion in trade in Africa is heavily imbalanced for arms supply to African countries.

Rosatom project injected new energy and pragmatism into the Africa-Russia partnership tie. Russia has also negotiated many nuclear power deals on the continent; In 2020, Russia’s State Atomic Energy Corporation was not confined to fossil fuels. It is documented that only South Africa had an operational nuclear power plant. However, several African countries considered nuclear energy a more relatively cost-effective means of meeting growing energy demand. Rosatom, a Russian-owned Industrial player, provided a $25 billion loan to begin the construction of Egypt’s first nuclear power plant, which costs $60 billion in facilities. It has also sealed a deal to build two more in Nigeria. Nonetheless, Russia proposes negotiations with more than seventeen African countries with pilot nuclear energy plant projects in Ethiopia, Rwanda, Sudan, and Zambia (Sukhankin, 2019).

Education
During the Soviet era, the soft-power effort supported 50.000 Africans to gain tertiary education in their universities from the 1960s to 1991. It also gave 200,000 scholars from other African countries various training to aid the continent’s development. In the quest for Russia to assist the education of Africans, more than 8,000 African students gained full scholarships to study diverse courses in Russian high schools (Comins & Yermolayev 2015, para.5). For instance, its graduates include Thabo Mbeki, past President of South Africa; former President of Angola, Jose Eduardo Dos Santos, Bharrat Jagdeo, the Ex-president of Guyana, to mention but a few.

In the 21st century, over 20,000 students are enrolled in most Russian universities and cooperate with various Russia-Africa in university education. It offers a professional military education program for African military personnel, training about 500 African service members per annum. The limited number of courses in their career provides Russia a platform to impact meaningfully in civil-military training and technics in Africa, not nuclear engineering. Russia maintains a strong relationship with Africa and encourages a bilateral tie in education with Africa. Statistics have shown that annually, about 15,000 Africans study at Russian universities, mainly from Nigeria, Angola, Morocco, Namibia, and Tunisia (Arkhangelskaya & Shubin 2015)

Humanitarian Aid
One of the crucial aspects of assistance to Africa was reducing the debt burden for the states such as Ethiopia in the region heavily indebted to Soviet countries. Russia provided humanitarian aid to countries like Ethiopia, Mali, and Somalia on a debt waiver of $20 billion in Soviet-era debt (Fituni & Abramova, 2020). These aids have had a positive effect on the relations between Russia and countries of the region, gaining people’s hearts and minds. At the Russia-Africa Summit, Putin promised debt forgiveness and to duple trade with Africa in the next five years.
Furthermore, Russian foreign policy is preoccupied with several critical concerns, including the conflict in Syria, Ukraine, and relations with the USA, Europe, and China. The increasing involvement of the influential actors of the world politically and economically on the African continent is more of materialist tendencies. The relationships between the developed and developing countries have never been balanced (Comins & Yermolaev, 2015). Despite the renewed interest that Russia and Africa need, there are traces of imperialistic ideology, especially in arms sales, natural/minerals exploration, and nuclear energy cooperation.

**Disinformation Campaigns to Weaken Democracy**

Its annexation of Crimea and ventures into eastern Ukraine have increased Russia’s interest in Africa. It has provided an opportunity to advance Putin’s vision of the post-liberal international world order (Barber, 2019). Russia has shown a divergence interest in Africa at the political level because it’s democratically inclined. Therefore, it has employed a longer-term strategy of meddling in Western pro-democracy and non-support of human rights and election interference in African countries to dislodge the idea of adopting universal suffrage to select leaders. It did achieve this by challenging the democratic norms and the principles of a rules-based international order. It showed concern about Russian support for the authoritarian regime against democracy. The Russians nurtured a negative perception of democracy and politically viewed the system as a more effective, equitable, transparent, or inclusive form of governance. This worldview, in which all political systems hold moral and power equivalence, takes advantage of Moscow’s elite-focused, transactional, and unregulated model.

During the 2020 coup in Mali, jubilant supporters of the military’s action came onto the streets of Bamako to celebrate. Many Malian celebrators lifted the Russian flags and portraits of Vladimir Putin, chanting tribute to Putin for Malian-Russian collaboration and support. The act showed Mali’s robust joint, cultural, and historical ties. After the Mali incident, Russians sponsored disinformation campaigns in Africa; these began in 2018 with an intense effort to influence the presidential election in Madagascar. After signing a security cooperation agreement with Russia, it was achieved via social media in Central Africa Republic (CAR), thereby distorting democracy in Africa.

The disinformation campaign in Africa continued in Libya in 2019; to attract both domestic and international attention to viewers and followers to support the message of anti-west democracy in Africa (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2020). In the case of disapproval of the West, the United Nations, and the UN ideologies were the order of the day on Libyan social media networks like Facebook, Twitters to mention but a few. Russia’s disinformation efforts have commenced “franchising” the model entails creating an enabling environment for African countries be Pro-Russian and Anti-West campaigns. However, the Disinformation campaigns in other African countries are adding further strains to already fragile political systems.

**Conservative Actions**

At the Russia-Africa Summit in 2019, Vladimir Putin exercised some soft power gains by pledging millions of doses of COVID-19 vaccines to African countries to help inoculated African citizens. This high-profile outreach and conventional engagements kept the African continent on track, considering Africa’s most incredible geopolitical long- and short-term advantages and gains. Aside from Russia’s involvement in a series of conventional security, economic, and cultural initiatives in Africa. All these outreach and aids are in exchange for votes at the United Nations. Notably, the support for African countries constitutes the largest voting bloc in the United Nations.

**RUSSIA AND NIGERIA**

**Arms and Security Acquisitions**

From 2000, Russia became the largest arms supplier to Africa, accounting for 35% of arms export to the region. Russia has signed over 20 bilateral military agreements with African states to sell arms and security services to the area. African leaders take to the Russian armory because it’s relatively affordable, easy to handle, has low maintenance cost, and delivery-in-time tenets. For instance, when the US was lackadaisical in selling arms to Nigeria to fight Boko Haram in 2014, Nigeria turned to Russia upon human rights abuses by Nigeria soldiers. Nigeria placed an order for 12 Mi-35 helicopter gunships from Russia.

**Oil sector**

The oil boom in Nigeria since 1957 has relatively displaced agriculture, which was the foremost source of the nation’s revenue. In 2019, Russia-Nigeria had a bilateral trade tie to improve the efficiency of the Nigeria oil sector. Both governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding that seals the agreement to lift crude from the Nigeria oil company offshores to produce the finest products from the crude (Vanguard, 2019). The deal was to revitalize the epileptic oil refineries via a collaborative relationship between the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and a Russian based companies “Lukoil and Gazprom” to promote collaboration and rehabilitation between the two countries across the oil and gas value chain. The two countries’ partnership covers the upstream, midstream, downstream, and service sectors of the oil and gas industry. The aim of these ties foresees the movement of
the crude in deep offshore exploration to enhance the refining of production products. The synergy helped make petroleum products readily available since the various refineries are worn and malfunctioning.

The inefficiency in the technology of Nigeria nation to manage the refineries and relatively lapses on the side of the leaders over time led to the entire deplorable State of these facilities. It very imperative to mention that after the USA and Europe opted out of the purchase of Nigeria’s crude, between 2015 and 2020, India was one of the largest buyers and consumers of her crude; spending about $10,000 to $30,000 per day (Financial Times, 2022). Sequel to Russia auctioning its petroleum at a cheaper crude rate, cum accepted payment in India rupees against the dollar made the Indians call off her agreement with Nigerian and opted for Russian oil and gas. The economic implication of Indians opting out of the deal due to Russia’s decision to sell more oil to Indians at a discounted official Brent crude oil price of $107 per barrel in 2022 led to a backdrop in the Nigeria oil earnings (Financial Times, 2022).

The saying of what “affects one country affects the other” in a nutshell; “no nation is an island.” Nigeria’s dependence on foreign countries such as Russia for purifying crudes can throw a developing nation out of balance and has a triple effect on the economic development; the multiplier effect on the government, exporters and consumers of these products faces a hard-hitting situation. The Russia-Ukraine crisis that commenced on 24 February 2022 has thrown the Nigerian nation into a limited supply of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), as vessels supplying the products face delays in leaving the warring zones as scheduled. This situation negatively impacted the NNPC’s ability to meet its crude oil supply obligation to the nation and the downstream sector.

Furthermore, shipowners avoid allocating vessels to receive, transport crude, and bring back refined products to and from Russia due to hits by air fighters on sailing ships. Also, the refusal to offer vessels to sail across the Black and Mediterranean Seas attracts huge premiums from the insurers to move the crude and refined products. The escalating tension in the war zones led to a significant increase in the freight rate; the freight rate on tanker vessels rose from $10,000 to $30,000 per day (Financial Times, 2022). Sequel to Russia’s conduct in selling her crude, it is pretty obvious it is scrambling for a broader market to maximize her revenue. Concerning the tie between the Russian and Nigerian governments to refine her crude has no balance of trade; instead, it’s more of Russian interest.

Education
The Second Russia-Africa Summit in Sochi, attended by 40 African leaders, abetted Nigeria to build a stronger tie with Russia to expand human capital development. The Nigerian government admitted that the relationship (link) should go beyond trade and business to address security challenges like counter-terrorism, poverty eradication, human trafficking, illicit financial flow, climatic change, and migration. In a nutshell, aside from nation-building, it is imperative to establish a humane and inclusive affiliation. In 2020 had a Bilateral Education Agreement via the Federal Scholarships Board to offer a scholarship, fully funded to fewer more than 78 students to take up courses in different areas of specialization such as general medicine, aeronautic engineering, chemical technology, nuclear physics, and technology, mechatronics and robotic and nanotechnology and microsystem engineering (News Agency of Nigeria, 2021).

The idea of education and technological advancement is one both countries craved to revitalize and add value to the educational sector and explore new ideas that support technical advancement and innovation. The bilateral agreement holistically expanded human capital development and enhanced research and development in Nigeria. However, looking at the slim opportunities for tertiary education allocated to many African countries, Nigeria benefits from the Russia-Nigeria full scholarship representing a steady growth of Nigerian recipients on the undergraduate and postgraduate scholarship awards. So far, more than 200 Nigerian university students have benefited from the Bilateral Education Programme (Deutsche W. 2011).

Rosatom-Nigeria
The “Rosatom Nigeria” project comprised the adoption of nuclear power to revitalize and expand the power sector. It intended to use the small and modular reactors to fix off-grid power challenges and restore Nigeria’s electricity power chain. It aims at using science and technology to enhance socio-economic development in Nigeria in terms of building and infrastructure maintenances. Furthermore, the Russian government collaborated with Nigeria via the project to initiate an effective action plan to enhance an environmentally friendly society to contain pollution that affects the ecosystem.

Inferences of Russian activities in Africa
Africa’s weak legal and regulatory policies, such as Wagner Disinformation and elite base diplomacy of the influence and the influencer, have expanded Russian activities in Africa. Lack of unity among African leaders and, long-term stay in the office and, ill-administration oppression of the masses have triggered a high level of protest and violence in the form
of terrorism, insurgency, and a times coup to overthrow the existing government. In this regard, Russia displayed a reputational concern with its intervention. The fact remains that Russian meddling in the conflict of Africa is more of profit-seeking through the sale of arms, rendering security advice or services. Nigeria is the 11-largest oil producer globally and the largest producer in Africa and produces high-value, light crude oils due to its low Sulphur content (NNPC, 2000).

Therefore, the bilateral agreement on the inflow of crude and outflow of refined products across the Mediterranean/Black Sea cannot be balanced. It’s one of the ways to have a “slice of cake” from Nigeria’s resource endowment. Russia secured seaports to access the Black Sea cum expand its capacity to be a disruptive force along the coast of Africa for naval and maritime activities. The Russian ideology of anti-democracy is a weapon to destabilize the Western ideas on democracy and human rights laws on the African continent. The Russian government advocates authoritarianism over democracy. From 2018 to date, the war-torn African countries like Mali and Mozambique, to mention but a few, have experienced political instability and retard economic growth and development. This has become Russia’s bases of argument; it posited that “democratic norms, and values” such as the rule of law, fighting corruption, enhancing sustainable economic growth and living standards of her citizens. All of these have direct implications for African society and development.

The Russians aimed at reversing democratic governance, norms to authoritarian leadership where the principle of blind submission to authority, rejection of plurality as opposed to the individual of freedom of thought, separation of powers, democratic opinions, and action rules. It supports disinformation campaigns by meddling in the electoral processes, subverting democracy, propping up illegitimate leaders, and continued violence in war-torn nations. The resultant impact on the Fragile countries is long-term political, economic, and developmental lapse.

Russia is the key player in global trade and an added advantage; It is the 14th largest global economy exporting oil, coal, wheat, and sunflower seeds. Sanctions Acts are detrimental effects on international trades; the imposed sanction increases penalties on Russia for its destabilizing economic and political activities in Africa. These sanctions represent not punishments or a deterrent against future aggression but an intervention in active conflicts.

The Global Fragility Act (GFA) was passed in 2019 by the U.S government to improve global security and reduce the threats of conflict spillover by creating a way to wake the fragile states to provide odds. However, Russia has used Syria to establish a base in the middle east and fight a proxy war with the United States to gain diplomatic and economic recognition. The (GFA) provided countries faced violent protest, governance failure, exacerbated by the Coronavirus pandemic, and democratic recession. In the fragile/weak states, the political elites created weakness, divided society, abet corruption, low productivity, and thuggery.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
The Realist theory emphasizes that ‘States’ are the most important actors in global politics. It pursues power to secure states’ interests. It’s of the view that states and governments should exercise supreme or sovereign authority over a defined territory (Morgenthau, 1978). The countries at the Core control the activities of the countries at the periphery for their interest using the Expert power. For Realists, the pursuit of power and political interest is separate from the economic sphere, moral sphere, and any sphere of human endeavors. However, power consideration must come first; action taken in the name of economic wealth must be evaluated on how it contributes to or undermines the national interest. Realists, for example, may be concerned about their State’s economic ties with other countries in terms of trade agreements and direct investments and making them dependent on them.

The ideologies of moral principles and human rights policies are not accepted by the realists as the power of dependent States might even be threatened. This proved that conflict and coercion to achieve its aim remains a dominant feature in this perspective. Furthermore, economic analysis rarely explains why the protectionist measures were adopted in the first place or explores the dependencies that these policies generate as such policy reform will continue to yield counterproductive results (Harvey, 2003).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Since 2006, Russia has sought to build her presence and role in Africa after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The age of imperialism and scramble for Africa had a significant impact on the continent of Africa and left a considerable legacy that was both positive and negative concerning contemporary society. Russia-Africa tie made impact in terms of project/infrastructural development and humanitarian aid to African countries. These projects and aid were given in return for natural resources out of Africa. The scholarship awards across different regions in Africa benefit many people who subjugate Africans to be loyal to the Russians and build a sphere of influence on the continent by promoting foreign policies against the USA and European
Unions. The terms of trade were very imbalanced between Africans and Russia. The economic policies favored the Russians and expressed much superiority against the Africans.

Also, Western education is a tool that changed Africa’s social and economic values in terms of developmental processes. It instilled confidence and appropriate knowledge to improve the growth of African society to reject poverty, diseases, and ignorance in all sectors of the economy. In this context, the influencers use the referent and expert powers to control and manipulate the activities of the Africans. The Actor (Russians) attracted Africans by rendering humanitarian and developmental aid to them to build loyalty. These trigger leadership heights because of the high level of expertise, capabilities, and abilities to transfer knowledge, skills, and information to the beneficiaries for a reasonable duration and purpose. The Actors (Russians) refused to share acquired knowledge, skill, and experiences to avoid self-defection or become experts. Occasionally holders of their type of powers can be rigid, dogmatic, and even selfish. Aside from the positive values of the Russian scholarship aid, western education colonizes the mind of the Africans to adopt western ideologies and culture, thereby abandoning the African culture and tradition. There is a need to go back to the drawing board and promote African education as much as the western knowledge plays out.

African societies face economic impact from Russian activities. The Russians primarily focused on the “gains” that accompany their exploits. The focused and initiating policies and technologies that support the extracting of resources such as gold, diamond, cobalt, platinum, magnesium, and crude, to mention a few from Africa (Deich, 2009).

The disinformation campaign disrupts Africa’s internal political and social systems to thwart the U.S policies and objectives. Where democratic values, be it hate speech or voters’ manipulations, are poorly upheld by the State. The idea mostly created vote support for Russia in the united Union Congress. Notably, in 2019, countries contributed 30 out of the 79 votes support for Russia in the United Nations Congress (Kremlin Document, 2019); this idea is mainly for political gains. To show concern for fragile states, diplomatic, economic, and security deals have been stuck in several countries like Angola, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and Mozambique to show concern for fragile states. This deal involves the contribution of many to infrastructural investment, political cooperation, counter-insurgency training, weapon exchange, and campaign and policy advice. Its also tailored to meet the desires of the local elite and, most notably, a Top-Down interest.

The mercenaries’ support activity financed by Russia to deal with Libya, Syria, and eastern Ukraine conflicts was for personal interest. The UN investigators accused the Wagner group of abetting human abuses in fragile countries. The operations of the Wagner mercenaries in Mali were in line to push disinformation about France’s counter-terrorism operation in the country. The Kremlin’s effectiveness in seeding its preferred vaccine narratives among African audiences underscores its concerted effort to undermine them. It discredits western power by pushing or tapping anti-western sentiments across Africa. All those above political and economic aids to the continent ball down to the personal interest of the Russians.

Furthermore, the social-economic ideas introduced by the Russians were more of capitalism. Against all odds, propagate excessive individualism and exploitative activities in the vulnerable countries, divide the society into hostile groups that generally promote inequality via strict foreign policies create competitiveness instead of encouraging cooperation and balance of trade between countries. The divided society has propelled disunity in most African nations; these gaps have given the Russian the edge to employ diverse manipulative tendencies to explore gains from the African continent. Therefore, the paper advocates much for unity among Africans to achieve a common goal to enhance the Africanization of the continent. African countries should strive for liberation. An Independent society is self-reliant and has the freedom from other nations’ economic and cultural dependences.

Additionally, contemporary African countries are characterized by corruption, exploitative nature, selfishness, and uneven distribution of resources within the nation; these ill behaviors attributed to Africans have retard development and growth on the continent. There is a need for discipline of minds and self of African leaders to promote sanity in the system. Also, the idea of African socialism should be advocated. It entails sharing African resources in an African way distinct from classical socialism.

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The author made substantial contributions to conception and design, acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data; took part in drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; agreed to submit it to the current journal; gave final approval of the version to be published.
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AUTHOR BIO – DR. NCHEDO JOSEPHINE OGUINE (PhD)

Dr. Nchedo Josephine Oguine (PhD) is a Doctor of Political Science with a major in Political Economy and Development Studies. She holds Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Economics, Master of Science (M.Sc) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) degrees in Political Economy and Development Studies. Though, her research primary domain is Political Economy and Development Studies, she has published standard research works in the field of agriculture, Comparative Politics, Political Philosophy and Theories, Public Policy Analysis in reputable international journals.

Outside of the scope of developmental problems, she has research contributions in the areas of Political Ethics and International Relations.

She is a member of the American Economic Association (AEA), International Political Science Association (IPSA), African Association of Political Science (AAPS), the International Association of Political Science Students (IAPSS), and the Nigerian Association of Political Science.