

A Differentiated Courtship?



A Regime-Type Analysis of Russia's African (Arms) Trade, 2012-2019

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Overview of the Research

- **RQ:** Does Russia trade more (generally and with regards to arms specifically) with democracies or authoritarian/hybrid regimes in Southern Africa?
- **2012 to 2019** – pre-COVID; beginning of second Putin presidency up to Sochi Summit.
- Two literatures: in the wake of the WTO, trade is global irrespective of regime type **vs** regime-type matters in trade deals, especially in trade of arms.
- Data sourced from UN TradeMap (trade) and the Economist Intelligence Unit (regime type classifications).
- Study thus determines both the magnitude (raw and proportional trade volumes) and the direction (rate of growth) of Russia's regime-type trade with these 16 states, determining the trajectory per regime type over the period 2012-2019.

Overview of the Findings

The findings of this study on Russian exports to SADC states indicate that there is indeed a differentiated courtship.

Overview of the Findings

- Russia's **overall** trade was concentrated among SADC's democracies (56%) for the period under study, followed by its authoritarian regimes (29%) and then its hybrid regimes (15%).
- Moreover, while Russian arms trade was more concentrated among with democracies (54%), this figure was followed closely by authoritarian regimes (40%), mainly due to Angolan imports.
- Thus, despite democracies representing the bulk of the region's buying power (58% in terms of GDP), hybrid and authoritarian regimes have a disproportionate claim on Russian overall and arms-specific exports to the region (at 46% total), a greater proportion than their buying power would predict.

Overview of the Findings

- Interestingly, moreover, **hybrid regimes were more likely as a group to purchase Russian arms**. In other words, the purchasing of Russian arms is more spread out across hybrid regimes than the other two regime types.
- A total of 60% of countries classified in this category bought Russian arms at some point in the period under study, whereas only 40% of democratic regimes and 33% of authoritarian regimes did so.
- Hybrid regimes' overall trade with Russia declining, while arms-specific trade as a sector has been growing.

Overview of the Findings

- Russia's trade with Southern African countries exhibited the highest growth with regimes that are classified as hybrid or authoritarian (Hypothesis 2 in the article).
- Particularly, a high growth rate was observed between Russia and authoritarian regimes.
- Having moved from a recorded \$12 million to \$338 million, growth in trade with authoritarian regimes between 2012 and 2019 represents a growth of 369.4%, mostly due to growing trade with Zimbabwe since 2014 and the DRC since 2015, as well as sustained momentum in trade with Angola.
- Trade with democracies moved from \$211.6 to \$702, thus growing by 231%. On the other hand, hybrid regimes moved from \$94 million to \$82 million, showing a decline of 12%.

Implications and Further Questions

- As hybrid regimes tend to be transitional (either moving towards authoritarianism or towards democratisation) future work could link this trend to the direction of each country's improvement or decline in the countries' democratic scores.
- It is clear from the analysis that these countries source the bulk of their weapons from other suppliers, not Russia alone.
- China, Germany, France and the US notable suppliers as well.
- Who's courting whom, when and for what?

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