



## **Africa's Foreign Relations through Systemic Change at A Glance**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Human civilizations are characterized by diverse spoken languages, writing patterns, and living standards, which are influenced by distinct cultural fantasies and situated in different climatic habitats on Earth. Over the centuries, these civilizations have experienced wars, achieved nobler peace, and developed friendly foreign relationships as a means of self-defense against aggressive foreigners.

Foreign relations, also known as international relations, adhere to ethical principles and are shaped by the concepts, terms, and perspectives of civilizations throughout history. It can be argued that foreign relations are inevitable and sometimes necessary between two or more civilizations to prevent wars. Africa's foreign relations are currently undergoing significant changes due to various factors. The emergence of new global powers like China, India, and Brazil challenges the traditional dominance of the Western world in the international system. Africa's increasing economic and political influence towards integration and democratization yielded changes. Additionally, African countries are increasingly engaging in South-South cooperation, partnering with each other and differently abled developing nations to address common challenges. Non-state actors such as civil society organizations and businesses uplifted Africa's international affairs.

These systemic changes are leading to a more diverse and multipolar world order, giving Africa a stronger voice and agency. African countries are now pursuing self-made foreign policy agendas, which often align with intra-continental and inter-continental interests. This shift promotes a positive narrative on Africa's foreign relations, highlighting the systemic changes taking place. It is particularly important to consider Africa's recent claim to the 21st century and America's inclusive approach towards Africans.

***Keywords: Africa, Foreign, Partnering, Perspectives, Principles, Relations, Systemic, Terms.***

### **1. Every Research Has The Beginning of Unique Index**



## 2. INTRODUCTION

The systemic changes in Africa's foreign relations are creating new opportunities and challenges for the continent. African countries need to take advantage of these opportunities to promote their development and interests. They also need to be prepared to tackle the challenges, such as managing their relationships with new partners and addressing complex security threats.

Under given are the introductory trends in Africa's foreign relations.

- Diversification of partners: African countries are increasingly diversifying their foreign policy partnerships, beyond traditional donors and partners in the West. China has emerged as a major economic and political partner for many African countries, and other emerging powers, such as India and Brazil, are also playing a more prominent role in Africa.
- Increased regional integration: African countries are increasingly working together to address common challenges and promote regional integration. This is evident in the growing importance of the African Union (AU) and other regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).
- Focus on development: African countries are increasingly prioritizing development in their foreign policy agendas. This is reflected in their focus on issues such as trade, investment, and technology transfer.
- Security cooperation: African countries are also working together more closely to address security challenges, such as terrorism and transnational crime. This is evident in the growing number of African-led peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations.

According to Rita Abrahamsen (2017, pp.125-139) that bringing Africa into IR (International Relations) cannot be simply a question of 'add Africa and stir', as the African Continent does not enter the discipline as a neutral object of study but it (Africa) is already overdetermined and embedded within the politics and structure of values of the academe, which are in turn influenced in complex ways by changing geopolitics.



*Image Source* : Rita ABRAHAMSEN | Professor (Full) | University of Ottawa, Ottawa | Graduate School of Public and International Affairs | Research profile <<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Rita-Abrahamsen-2>><Abrahamsen R is Author of Africa and international relations: Assembling Africa, studying the world. African Affairs. 2017 Jan 1;116(462):125-39. <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adw071>>

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY / METHOD FOR AFRICAN FOREIGN RELATIONS

According to Bob-Milliar, George. (2020), heterodox research methodologies will dominate the field of African studies for many years to come whereas Africanists researchers should not allow their disciplinary or epistemic rules hold them back from using innovative methodologies to contribute to the intellectual output of the African Continent He also averred that in the search of



*Image source*: < Research profile<<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/George-Bob-Milliar>> <Bob-Milliar, George. (2020). Introduction: Methodologies for researching Africa. African Affairs. 121. 10.1093/afraf/adaa011. <DOI:10.1093/afraf/adaa011>

context-based approaches to research, an ever-increasing range of research methods have been developed. These draw on cultural frameworks including improvisation, indigeneity, creativity and innovation which are now commonplace. What emerges as central across this range of approaches is the endeavor to make research meaningful to the research participants.

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#### 4. AFRICA'S CHANGING FOREIGN RELATIONS OF LATE (2018 TO 2020)

In 2018, the African Union launched the Comprehensive Africa-China Strategy (CACS) to guide cooperation between the two continents. The CACS is based on the principles of equality, mutual benefit, and win-win cooperation. In 2019, the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) came into effect. The ACFTA is a free trade agreement between 54 African countries that aims to create a single market for goods and services on the continent. In 2020, the African Union established the African Peace and Security Council (APSC) to help prevent and resolve conflicts on the continent. The APSC is made up of 15 members, of which 10 are elected by the AU Assembly and five are appointed by the AU Commission. These are just a few examples of the many ways in which Africa's foreign relations are changing. These changes are having a significant impact on the continent's development and its role in the world.

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#### 5. AFRICA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS IN THE POST-COLONIAL IMPACT

Africa's foreign relations in the post-colonial era have been influenced by various factors, including the enduring impact of colonialism, the dynamics of the Cold War, and the continent's internal affairs. Following their independence, numerous African nations pursued a non-aligned foreign policy, aiming to steer clear of entanglements in the Cold War. However, as the Cold War intensified, several African countries became embroiled in the conflict, aligning themselves either with the Soviet Union or the United States. The conclusion of the Cold War ushered in significant changes in Africa's foreign relations. With the demise of the bipolar world order, African nations gained greater autonomy in shaping their foreign policies. Nevertheless, the conclusion of the Cold War also coincided with a decline in Western interest in Africa, resulting in reduced foreign aid. In recent times, there has been a renewed focus on Africa from Western nations, as well as emerging powers like China and India. This renewed interest is partly driven by Africa's expanding economic and strategic significance.

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#### 6. SYSTEMIC CHANGE, CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES IN EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The current global system is experiencing a period of systemic change, characterized by the emergence of new powers and the decline of the old order. This transformation is significantly impacting Africa's foreign relations. One noteworthy development is the ascendance of China, which has become a prominent economic and political force in Africa, now serving as its largest trading partner. China's investments in Africa have contributed to the continent's economic growth, but concerns have also arisen regarding China's expanding influence and the potential risks of debt-trap diplomacy. Another significant change is the diminishing influence of the United States. While the United States continues to play a major role in Africa, its power is diminishing due to its shifting focus towards other regions, such as the Asia-Pacific, and the rise of new powers like China. The global order's systemic change is also creating fresh opportunities for African nations. For instance, African countries can now leverage different powers against each other to secure favorable agreements. Moreover, African countries are increasingly assuming a leading role in global affairs, as demonstrated by their growing participation in international organizations like the G20.



<Fig. Continent of Africa>

The systemic change in the global order is generating challenges and opportunities for Africa's foreign relations. One of the primary challenges lies in the potential escalation of competition among major powers within Africa, which may result in conflict and instability across the continent. Furthermore, the emergence of protectionist policies in certain nations poses a threat to Africa's economies. Nevertheless, this systemic change also presents new prospects for Africa. For instance, African nations now possess the ability to leverage different powers against each other, enabling them to secure

favorable agreements. Additionally, African countries are progressively assuming a more prominent role in global affairs. Consequently, it can be inferred that Africa's foreign relations are currently experiencing a significant period of transformation due to the systemic change in the global order. This transformation brings forth both challenges and opportunities, necessitating careful navigation by African countries to maximize the benefits and minimize the associated risks.

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## 7. DIARESIS ERODES FRIENDLY FOREIGN RELATIONS: AN OBSERVATION AT A GLANCE

One can say that Systemic Change equals Transformative Shift in Friendly Foreign Relations. But, a phenomenon like 'Diarexis' may occur in foreign relationships which signals erosion of friendly and cooperative attitude toward foreign relations by one of the parties against the other. Africa's foreign relations are currently experiencing a transformative shift, driven by the emergence of new powers, the growing significance of regional and sub-regional organizations, the increasing influence of African voices in global discussions, and the deepening interconnectedness of the world. This shift is significantly impacting the manner in which African nations engage with the international community. As an illustration, Africa is now more inclined to seek partnerships in the East rather than the West. Moreover, African countries are increasingly collaborating to tackle shared challenges such as insecurity and poverty.



<Source of Image: Author's creative mind>

Additionally, African perspectives are gaining greater prominence in global debates, with countries like Nigeria and South Africa assuming more leadership roles. This systemic change in Africa's foreign relations represents a positive development for the continent, as it opens up fresh opportunities for African nations to advance their interests and achieve their development objectives. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that these changes are occurring within a complex and demanding global landscape. African countries must collaborate to navigate these challenges and ensure that the continent reaps the benefits of this transformative shift. In other words, the African countries concerned will need to work together to navigate challenges induced by Diarexis and ensure that their African Continent as a whole benefit from the systemic change that is taking place.

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## 8. CONCLUSION

Africa's foreign relations are experiencing significant transformation due to various factors. These include the emergence of new global powers like China and India, who are engaging with Africa on a larger scale and in innovative ways. Additionally, regional and sub-regional organizations such as the African Union and ECOWAS are gaining importance. African voices are also gaining prominence in global discussions on critical issues like climate change and trade. Furthermore, the increasing interconnectedness of the world has made it challenging for Africa to remain isolated from global trends and developments. These changes are reshaping the way African countries interact with the rest of the world. For instance, Africa is now more inclined to seek partnerships in the East rather than the West. African nations are also collaborating more closely to tackle common challenges such as insecurity and poverty. Moreover, African voices are gaining greater recognition in global debates, with countries like Nigeria and South Africa assuming more leadership roles. Several examples highlight the systemic change occurring in Africa's foreign relations. The African Union has emerged as a more effective and independent player in global affairs. African countries are working together more closely to advance their shared interests, including trade and security. They are also more likely to present a unified front in international forums. Furthermore, African nations are demanding greater respect and equality in their relations with the West. Additionally, they are forging new partnerships with emerging powers like China and India. These changes have

significant implications. Africa is becoming increasingly important in the global economy, exerting greater influence in global politics, and displaying more independence and assertiveness in its foreign policy. Most importantly, the continent is diversifying its international partnerships. The ongoing transformation in Africa's international relations is a favorable progression for the continent, presenting fresh prospects for African nations to advance their objectives and accomplish their developmental aspirations. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that these modifications are transpiring in a multifaceted and demanding global milieu. Hence, African countries must collaborate to surmount these obstacles and guarantee that the continent reaps the benefits of this systemic shift.

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